



# HENLEY CHORAL Society

# HERE'S THE PITCH

Issue 32  
June 2014

## From the Editor

The rain is lashing down as I write – so it must be nearly time for the Summer Concert! It's been a very busy period since the last Newsletter in December. Two sold-out concerts, a great Workshop and lunch, lots of hard work by everyone in rehearsals and lots of hard work by the many volunteers who keep HCS ticking along.

In this edition you will find a rather too insightful description of the typical SATB choir, which Melissa found on the internet; a recollection of a Workshop with the Lea Singers – Ben's choir in Harpenden, attended by some members of HCS; a profile of Sally Bornhoft, Soprano Rep; and a reflection from our very own 'Mrs Music' (Wendy Hawkins) on the very well-deserved honour of receiving the Henley Town Medal for services to the community.

You will also find the usual collection of dates, reminders and information plus some pictures shaken out of my email inbox. You will also see that the Newsletter includes the new 'look' for HCS in the form of the logo above and the strapline inside.

Please do consider contributing to the next Newsletter in December. Your contribution could be a review of a concert you have enjoyed, a drawing or cartoon, a story about what a piece of music, or a musical experience, has meant to you – anything really! Please send your ideas for contributions and any feedback on the Newsletter to [angelalaw@everysense.co.uk](mailto:angelalaw@everysense.co.uk). Needless to say, any errors or omissions are entirely the responsibility of the editor.

Angela Law, Alto and Editor

## Summer is a time for Friends

'Brush up your Shakespeare  
Start quoting him now  
Brush up your Shakespeare  
And they'll all kowtow'

I've been reminded of these lines from *Kiss me Kate*, Cole Porter's interpretation of 'The Taming of the Shrew' as we've brushed up all manner of interpretations of the bard as well as the odd German folk song. It has been a treat to learn part songs and madrigals. Let's keep selling those tickets to make it three sold-out concerts in a row. There will be a 'Fizz and Friends' reception before the concert. HCS Friends is growing in size and enthusiasm under Friends' Secretary, Susan Edwards. In return for a minimum donation of £20.00, (though many Friends are far more generous) Friends of HCS receive advance notice of concerts (useful now that concerts are selling out!) invites to social occasions, reduced prices for some events, and, above all, the satisfaction of knowing they are helping to bring talented musicians and singers to Henley. If you know someone who would like to become a Friend – or you would like to become a Friend yourself – it's not too late to do so and bag an invite to the 'Fizz and Friends' reception on June 14th. Simply get in touch with Susan Edwards on 01491 571073 or [s.i.edwards@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.i.edwards@reading.ac.uk)

Editor



HENLEY CHORAL Society

SAT 14TH JUNE / 7.30PM

## SUMMER CONCERT Shakespeare & Summer Songs

FEATURING

Benjamin Goodson, *conductor*  
David Smith, *pianist*

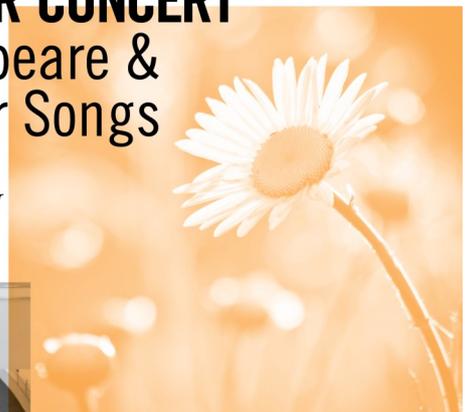


Christchurch Centre, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1AG

Tickets £15.00 under 18s - £10.00  
Ticket Secretary Jan French 01491 572795  
Gorvett & Stone, 28 Duke Street, Henley-on-Thames

[www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk)

Registered Charity Number 276728



**'Unequivocally one of the most naturally gifted conductors I have encountered.'**

PAUL SPICER, PROFESSOR OF CHORAL CONDUCTING, BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE



## The Young Person's Guide to the SATB Choir

Melissa says: I found this article on the internet and it is reproduced here without any changes or corrections. The author is anonymous — perhaps understandably!

In any chorus, there are four voice parts: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. Sometimes these are divided into first and second within each part, prompting endless jokes about first and second basses. There are also various other parts such as baritone, countertenor, contralto, mezzo soprano, etc., but these are mostly used by people who are either soloists, or belong to some excessively hotshot classical a cappella group (this applies especially to countertenors), or are trying to make excuses for not really fitting into any of the regular voice parts, so we will ignore them for now.

Each voice part sings in a different range, and each one has a very different personality. You may ask, "Why should singing different notes make people act differently?", and indeed this is a mysterious question and has not been adequately studied, especially since scientists who study musicians tend to be musicians themselves and have all the peculiar complexes that go with being tenors, French horn players, timpanists, or whatever. However, this is beside the point; the fact remains that the four voice parts can be easily distinguished, and I will now explain how.

THE SOPRANOS are the ones who sing the highest, and because of this they think they rule the world. They have longer hair, fancier jewellery, and swishier skirts than anyone else, and they consider themselves insulted if they are not allowed to go at least to a high F in every movement of any given piece. When they reach the high notes, they hold them for at least half again as long as the composer and/or conductor requires, and then complain that their throats are killing them and that the composer and conductor are sadists. Sopranos have varied attitudes toward the other sections of the chorus, though they consider all of them inferior. Altos are to sopranos rather like second violins to first violins - nice to harmonize with, but not really necessary. All sopranos have a secret feeling that the altos could drop out and the piece would sound essentially the same, and they don't understand why anybody would sing in that range in the first place - it's so boring. Tenors, on the other hand, can be very nice to have around; besides their flirtation possibilities (it is a well-known fact that sopranos never flirt with basses), sopranos like to sing duets with tenors because all the tenors are doing is working very hard to sing in a low-to-medium soprano range, while the sopranos are up there in the stratosphere showing off. To sopranos, basses

are the scum of the earth - they sing too damn loud, are useless to tune to because they're down in that low, low range - and there has to be something wrong with anyone who sings in the F clef, anyway.

THE ALTOS are the salt of the earth - in their opinion, at least. Altos are unassuming people, who would wear jeans to concerts if they were allowed to. Altos are in a unique position in the chorus in that they are unable to complain about having to sing either very high or very low, and they know that all the other sections think their parts are pitifully easy. But the altos know otherwise. They know that while the sopranos are screeching away on a high A, they are being forced to sing elaborate passages full of sharps and flats and tricks of rhythm, and nobody is noticing because the sopranos are singing too loud (and the basses usually are too). Altos get a deep, secret pleasure out of conspiring together to tune the sopranos flat. Altos have an innate distrust of tenors, because the tenors sing in almost the same range and think they sound better. They like the basses, and enjoy singing duets with them - the basses just sound like a rumble anyway, and it's the only time the altos can really be heard. Altos' other complaint is that there are always too many of them and so they never get to sing really loud.

THE TENORS are spoiled. That's all there is to it. For one thing, there are never enough of them, and choir directors would rather sell their souls than let a halfway decent tenor quit, while they're always ready to unload a few altos at half price. And then, for some reason, the few tenors there are are always really good - it's one of those annoying facts of life.. So it's no wonder that tenors always get swollen heads - after all, who else can make sopranos swoon? The one thing that can make tenors insecure is the accusation (usually by the basses) that anyone singing that high couldn't possibly be a real man.. In their usual perverse fashion, the tenors never acknowledge this, but just complain louder about the composer being a sadist and making them sing so damn high. Tenors have a love-hate relationship with the conductor, too, because the conductor is always telling them to sing louder because there are so few of them. No conductor in recorded history has ever asked for less tenor in a forte passage. Tenors feel threatened in some way by all the other sections - the sopranos because they can hit those incredibly high notes; the altos because they have no trouble singing the notes the tenors kill themselves for; and the basses because, although they can't sing anything above an E, they sing it loud enough to drown the tenors out. Of course, the tenors would rather die than admit any of this. It is a little-known fact that tenors move their eyebrows more than anyone else while singing.

THE BASSES sing the lowest of anybody. This basically explains everything. They are stolid, dependable people, and have more facial hair than anybody else. The basses feel perpetually unappreciated, but they have a deep conviction that they are actually the most important part (a view endorsed by musicologists, but certainly not by sopranos or tenors), despite the fact that they have the most boring part of anybody and often sing the same note (or in endless fifths) for an entire page. They compensate for this by singing as loudly as they can get away with - most basses are tuba players at heart. Basses are the only section that can regularly complain about how low their part is, and they make horrible faces when trying to hit very low notes.

Basses are charitable people, but their charity does not extend so far as tenors, whom they consider effete poseurs. Basses hate tuning the tenors more than almost anything else. Basses like altos - except when they have duets and the altos get the good part. As for the sopranos, they are simply in an alternate universe which the basses don't understand at all. They can't imagine why anybody would ever want to sing that high and sound that bad when they make mistakes. When a bass makes a mistake, the other three parts will cover him, and he can continue on his merry way, knowing that sometime, somehow, he will end up at the root of the chord.

Found by Melissa Maple, Soprano and Chairman

## Town Medal for Mrs Music

I must admit I was slightly bemused, if not worried, when the Mayor phoned to ask if he could come and see me. I had no idea what he could possibly want. However, when he sat down and said that Henley Town Council had decided at their meeting the previous night to award me the Town Medal, I was dumbfounded and slightly embarrassed. Apparently, Toni Aitken recommended me for the award about a year ago; Andrew had written a biography for her and, having heard nothing, imagined that it had been passed over. I like to think that I know what is going on in certain quarters, but this was certainly a very well kept secret and I had no inkling of it whatever.

The presentation in the chamber of the Town Hall was lovely: friendly and relaxed, but with just the right touch of formality. I had been able to invite family as guests and also representatives of some of the organisations I have been involved with. There were speeches from the mayor and Liz Hodgkin and I had the chance to thank everybody who has supported me, including the live-in child-minder and housekeeper, Andrew.

It is certainly a great pleasure to be honoured like this, on behalf of so many people, for something I love doing.

Wendy Hawkins, Soprano, Deputy Chairman and Membership Secretary



## Let us go singing

One early spring day when the sun was shining but the cold March wind was a reminder that spring had barely started, a band of singers from HCS set off across the shires to Harpenden. We were responding to an invitation from the Lea Singers and Ben Goodson to join them at a workshop on Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*. The Lea Singers, Ben's small, highly-talented choir in Harpenden have a well deserved musical reputation in Harpenden, St Albans and far beyond. There are roughly 25 singers, all auditioned and, apparently, re-auditioned every few years, so Felicity and I learnt in the pub afterwards. So, very different from HCS and many of the other singers who had also joined up for the day. We were all given a magnificent, warm welcome starting with tea, coffee and a fantastic array of home-made cakes that the Lea Singers' sops had master-minded.

But enough of weather and food: the focus of the day was the workshop on Brahms' *Requiem* which the HCS last sung in November 2004. As most people, if not all, had sung the work before and the Lea Singers were preparing to sing the *Requiem* in concert,

we focused on improving our interpretation of the music, the German text and sensitive singing. Hurrah, hardly any note bashing, as I recall.

It was a real pleasure to sing with the highly competent Lea Singers and to learn from Ben's sensitive musicality as he shaped and improved our singing during the day. Just before lunch, we listened to the Lea Singers singing the 4th movement *Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen*, a real treat and heart-breakingly beautiful. I don't think I was the only one moved to tears.

It was a great musical day when we were able to think about improving our singing, lots of fun ... and great cakes. Many thanks are due to Ben and the Lea Singers for inviting us and providing such an inspirational experience. Talking with some of the Lea Singers in the pub afterwards, we all expressed a hope that we might do more joint singing in the future. I'm sure all who went would thoroughly recommend the experience: it was a truly joyful day.

Susan Edwards, Alto and Friends' Secretary



**Sing. Enjoy. Support.**

Become part of Henley Choral Society

[www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk)

Registered Charity Number 276728

**Gill Green**

**Pianoforte Tuner/Technician**

Little Ditton, Colonel's Meadow, Oxford Road,  
Marlow, Bucks SL9 2NW

Tel: 01628 485942

## Diary Dates

Saturday 14th June 2014, 7.30pm	-	Summer Concert, Christchurch Centre
Monday 16th June 2014, 7.30pm	-	Summer Party, 1 Western Road, Henley
Monday 8th Sept, 2014, 7.30pm	-	Rehearsals recommence
Saturday 11th Oct 2014, 7.30pm	-	Quiz Night! Pither Hall, Christchurch Centre
Tuesday 9th Dec 2014, 7.30pm	-	Christmas Concert, St Mary's
Saturday 14th Mar 2015, 7.30pm	-	Spring Concert
Saturday 6th June 2015, 7.30pm	-	Summer Concert

## RULES FROM THE RISERS



The "Wear anything Black and Bling" Experiment wasn't entirely successful!  
Pippa

Rule 13: Choose your costume carefully!

'RULES FROM THE RISERS' SERIES BY PHILIPPA FARINA  
FROM MEMBER CHOIR THE CHESHIRE CHORD COMPANY

[WWW.CHESHIRECHORD.CO.UK](http://WWW.CHESHIRECHORD.CO.UK)

Treasurer and Bass Stephen Fisher spotted this cartoon in 'High Notes,' the Making Music membership magazine and submitted it to the Newsletter. Ask him why - I couldn't possibly comment! Editor

## Join the manhunt

I've been stared at in the street and laughed at in pubs. All part of day's work when putting up posters that shout 'Men Wanted!' The campaign to recruit more men to bolster the existing stalwarts and create a more balanced choir and sound is working. We had a significant number of additions to the Tenor and Bass sections for the Spring concert. Inevitably, some people decide HCS is not for them, or they get too busy with other commitments, and sometimes people just don't like the choice of music for the next concert, and drop out, so the search for the next generation of male singers is ongoing. Do your bit and think of any men you know who may be interested. The Survey of members last year showed most members have sung previously at school, in further education or in other choirs, so that sort of experience may be a useful indicator of someone who would enjoy HCS. If you know any men who may be interested, put them in touch with Membership Secretary Wendy Hawkins on 01491 576929 or [awaj@waitrose.com](mailto:awaj@waitrose.com) or encourage them to come to a rehearsal. New Tenors and Basses are welcome any time, though the start of the Autumn and Spring terms are obvious times. Help save me from humiliation on the streets of Henley!

Angela Law, Alto and Publicity team member



HENLEY CHORAL  
Society

# MEN



## Henley Choral Society needs YOU

And there are *no* auditions

Come back to singing or get into singing.  
Men welcome to join at any time.

**Don't delay – come and sing in Henley's choir**

Call Membership Secretary Wendy Hawkins

01491 576929 or [awaj@waitrose.com](mailto:awaj@waitrose.com)

Rehearsals Monday's from 7.30 - 9.30, d:two, Marketplace, Henley

**You know you want to – we'll be waiting for YOU!**

**Sing. Enjoy. Support.**

Become part of Henley Choral Society

[www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk)

Registered Charity Number 276728

## Raise money for HCS – for free!

Every time you buy something online you could be raising money for Henley Choral Society – and it won't cost you a penny! So far we have raised £120.00 and there are 13 people registered. I suspect there are more people in HCS who shop online so please do join us to help raise lots more money with no effort!

Over 3000 retailers including Amazon, M&S, Waitrose, House of Fraser and more, **will donate a percentage of what you spend to Henley Choral Society when you shop with them via <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/henleycs>**  
On average, each retailer will donate 5% of the cost of your shopping.

### Step One - Register

It takes less than a minute to sign up via:

<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/henleycs>

### Step Two - Shop via Easyfundraising

Whenever you shop online:

FIRST go to easyfundraising and log in,  
THEN find the retailer you want to shop with at the top right of their website. It's easy!

(Even easier - click 'yes' for easyfundraising to be always present in your toolbar, with no need to keep logging in, so you can go straight to any website, e.g. Amazon, without remembering to do anything at all and easyfundraising automatically tells you how much you are raising.)

## Help yourself to improve

### Free resources

- [www.cyberbass.com](http://www.cyberbass.com)  
Free resource where you can play and download SATB parts to aid practice at home.
- <http://johnfletchermusic.me.uk>  
Same as above, enjoyed by Francis Piesse.
- [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)  
Listen to performances - anything and everything & varied quality!
- you can buy SATB rehearsal CDs (or download MP3 Files from their websites) at:
  - [www.saffronprompt.com](http://www.saffronprompt.com) Tel: 01799 586269;  
Address: Quintus Benziger, Great Stampford, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 2NY
  - [www.choraline.com](http://www.choraline.com) Tel: 0845 3045070;  
Address: Music Dynamics Limited, Stroud House, Station Road, Stroud, GL5 3AP

## Profile of Sally Bornhoft, Soprano Rep

Where do you start when asked to write a profile of yourself? Suddenly you feel very uninteresting! So all I can do is give you a little bit of information about myself that you might not already know, so here goes....

Being the youngest of three with two brothers, 5 and 7 years older than me is probably why I was always dancing and singing around the house to get attention! Every Saturday morning I'd be sent off to the local stage school to perform and that's where my love of performance and music started.

I joined the local church choir when I was nine and became head chorister with a conductor who shouted loudly if we made mistakes. Every Sunday I would lead the choir in and sing at matins and evensong. We sang at weddings on Saturday afternoons for which we got paid 50p; even if members of the choir, myself included, took it in turns to faint during the service on those long gone sweltering hot days of summer!

I did all my grades in Piano and Flute with a few singing lessons along the way; singing in the school choir and stage productions.

My musical pastimes lapsed while I was at University; where I discovered a love of exercise and seemed to

find other distractions to occupy my time! Following university a career in Learning & Development for Santander overtook too.

It was after moving to Henley 9 years ago that I came to a Henley Choral Society Christmas Concert and realised that I really missed singing and how it can take you away from the worries of the day. I joined shortly afterwards with the first rehearsal I came to being for St John's Passion in German!

I have two boys, 6 and 8 years old who are the reason why I often attempt to sneak in slightly late to rehearsal after a hasty handover to my other half as he walks in the door at 7.15pm!

I still love exercise and being out in the fresh air and I've recently started Fitwise, my Personal Training business in an attempt to avoid returning to a 'proper job'. So you may see me out running come rain or shine either on my own or with clients.

I've been a member of HCS for about 7 years I think and that time has flown by with meeting a lovely group of friends and every year having a new exciting musical challenge. This year becoming Soprano rep with Meg means I'm really getting involved and enjoying getting to know everyone better too.

Sally Bornhoft, Soprano Rep

## HCS QUIZ NIGHT!

**Get ready for HCS Quiz Night: Sat 11th Oct, 7.30pm Pither Hall, Christchurch Centre. Tickets £10.00 including fish & chip supper. All welcome! Make up teams on the night. (And it's not just music questions.) If you have a great quiz question, please send it (plus the answer...) via email to Robin Batchelor-Smith [orcharddenecottage@btinternet.com](mailto:orcharddenecottage@btinternet.com) or to Toby Greenwood via [greenwoodtoby@hotmail.com](mailto:greenwoodtoby@hotmail.com). Watch out for flyers advertising the Quiz Night – and get swotting!**

## HCS Committee

Chairman	Melissa Maple 07710 402234	Publicity and Press team	Claudia Klaver Emma Beesley
Music Director	Benjamin Goodson <a href="mailto:bafg@ymail.com">bafg@ymail.com</a>	Programme Editor	Cate Avery
Accompanist	David Smith	Friends' Secretary	Susan Edwards
Secretary	Fi Harding	Ticket Secretary	Jan French
Treasurer	Stephen Fisher	Soprano Reps	Sally Bornhoft Meg Ashby
Librarian	Felicity Bazell Jana Hutchins	Alto Rep	Jenny Fleming
Membership Secretary	Wendy Hawkins 01491 576929	Tenor Rep	Paul Clayden
Publicity and Press team	Angela Law 07769 654012	Bass Rep	Bernard Carter
		Please contact your voice reps if you have any questions or comments.	

## The year to date in pictures



**Plus - see HCS on video!**

Did you know there is a video of HCS in rehearsal for Christmas 2013? It was filmed for Sarah Weldon, Soprano, as part of her Oceans Project. See it on Vimeo - just cut and paste <http://vimeo.com/81513176> or search Henley Choral Society Vimeo.