



**HENLEY CHORAL**  
Society

# **Henley Choral Society**

## **Members' Handbook 2016-7**

**Sing. Enjoy. Support.**

Become part of Henley Choral Society

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

Registered Charity Number 276728

*This Members' Handbook has been written by various members of the choir. It contains information about HCS, what we are, what we do, how we achieve our goals and how all members can play their part. It includes information that has been previously available as separate handouts. These are about the process of members joining the choir, rehearsals and concert etiquette, and the role of Voice Reps. Further information may be added and the Handbook will be regularly updated. I do hope you find it useful.*

*Susan Edwards, Chair of HCS 2017*

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# Overview of the Choir

## The main events

We perform three concerts most years, in December, March and June singing a range of music that includes well-known choral works as well as less familiar work. Our repertoire can be found at [henleychoralsociety.org.uk](http://henleychoralsociety.org.uk). We sing with top professional orchestras and soloists and all our concerts are very popular: they are often sold out. Members play an important part in spreading the word about concerts and selling tickets.

## When and where?

Weekly rehearsals are 7:30pm until 9:30pm most Monday evenings during term time usually in

Room 2, 55-57 Market Place, Henley.

A schedule will be given to you and is also available on the website.

## How much?

Our subscriptions are in line with other similar choral societies: £130 per member for the year (September 2016 to July 2017), payable not later than 1<sup>st</sup> November. This may be subject to change annually. Members joining in January or after the spring concert pay a reduced rate. Membership for students and under-26 is free! Subscriptions may be reduced or waived in special circumstances, but there is no reduction by reason only that the member does not take part in the rehearsals or concerts. If you have problems in paying or you are off sick for a considerable time, please speak to the Chair or the Treasurer in confidence.

## How to pay

**Please pay on time.** You are strongly encouraged to pay your subscription by bank transfer. This is the most efficient payment method as it reduces our bank charges, reduces work for the Treasurer and the number of trips that have to be made to the bank.

Bank details of Henley Choral Society are:

Sort Code: 405240 Account No: 00015504

Reference/Roll No: *[Ensure you show here whose subscription this is and which voice section you are in: e.g. "SopSubs A&B Snodgrass"]*

## How the choir operates

### and how you can play your part

This section of the Handbook gives you some background information about the organisation and running of the choir. You will see that there are lots of ways you can get involved, help the choir function, get to know your fellow singers better and feel part of a very friendly community. I do hope this gives you an understanding of the choir and some of the work involved. Perhaps you will see something here that you feel you can get involved with. Henley Choral Society has a strong ethos of volunteering, new faces are always welcome and our success depends on everyone playing their part.

### The Website

Have a look at our website: [www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk). The members' section is password-protected (ask a committee member or voice rep).

### Constitution

Henley Choral Society is a registered charity (No 276728) and is governed by a constitution re-written in 2015 and revised in 2016. Ultimate responsibility for the Society's governance lies with the Officers: the Chair; Vice-Chair; Secretary (HCS); Secretary (HYC); and Treasurer, who have the functions and duties of charity trustees for the purposes of the Charities Act 2011.

### Musical director

The Musical Director (MD) is appointed by the committee. His role is to guide and tutor the main choir and the Henley Youth Choirs to reach the highest possible musical standards. He takes weekly rehearsals of the choirs and conducts performances. In consultation with the committee, he chooses the musical programmes and appoints the soloists, musicians and other performers for concerts and workshops.

Peter Asprey is our current MD. His biographical details are available on the website.

### Committee

The management of the Society is delegated to the Committee, which also includes voice representatives (VRs) and members elected annually to particular posts.

Committee members who are nominated and voted for at each AGM are responsible for planning and reviewing events; raising and spending money; discussing choice of music for our concerts; planning social events and making decisions that arise from time to time. Our MD may attend some committee meetings but is not a member of the committee. Below are some notes on some

of our committee roles. Perhaps you could volunteer to join one of the small teams or take over a job when it becomes vacant.

**Voice reps (VRs):** each vocal section has one or two representatives whose task is to relay the ideas and comments from singers in their section to the committee and/or to the MD. The VRs keep track of attendance of the singers in their section. If you are unable to attend a rehearsal, then it is really appreciated if you can let your VR know. From time to time the VRs may seek opinions on a specific topic and report back to the committee and they are always asked to provide a list of who is singing at each concert. Please be sure to respond to their requests. VPs are crucial in keeping good communications going within the choir, are the first port of call for queries and give a report at every committee meeting.

The committee also includes people who are doing some of the jobs listed below. Some jobs are done by an individual and some by a small team with the team leader attending committee meetings. Everyone responsible for these tasks is welcome at committee meetings but as long as the committee is kept informed, attendance is not compulsory.

**Librarian:** orders all the musical scores after discussion with the MD, the Chair and the committee; organises the sale and hiring of scores and the return of hired scores. S/he also provides scores for members of the orchestra and soloists who perform with us. This involves forward planning and patience. Maybe you could offer help issuing new scores when we start a new work at the beginning of each term. This is always quite a hectic evening. Most importantly, ensure you return your hired scores after erasing all your markings. Late returns cost the Society money so be sure to return on time!

**Publicity:** the publicity team deals with advertising our concerts with banners, press releases, posters and fliers. They produce the copy for all the various promotions, write press releases and write notes for the concert programmes. The team are always on the lookout for ways to advertise our concerts and are keen to hear about possible sponsors. They also advertise recruitment drives and workshops and keep our website up-to-date. All this work helps to ensure we maintain a vibrant profile and attract good audiences to all our concerts.

**Programme editor:** the editor prepares or co-ordinates the content of the concert programmes: what we are singing; translations of what we are singing; notes about the music and artists; up-to-date information about the choir and officers and information and names of Friends of HCS; acknowledgement of sponsorship; notice of future concerts, and advertisements.

**Concert Managers:** our concert managers lead the team of real heroes who prepare our concert venues. Concerts in Henley usually take place at St Mary's or Christ Church Centre. When we sing at St Mary's, we use our own staging which we invested in several years ago. The staging is robust and sturdy and it takes a team to load it into a van, unload it, assemble it in the church and then, after the concert dismantle it and take it back to storage. In addition to the stage building,

there are always plenty of other essential jobs at concert time and we always need lots of volunteers to help, whether we are singing at St Mary's, Christ Church Centre or Reading Concert Hall. Do take the opportunity to join in the fun of preparing and clearing up! We always put out a call for help and often a sign-up sheet a couple of weeks before each concert. Many hands ...

**Ticket sales:** s/he co-ordinates sales of tickets for concerts and other HCS events. Tickets are sold directly by the Ticket Secretary, through Gorvett & Stone and on-line via the HCS website. Most of our tickets are sold through members of HCS and therefore it is important that we all play our part. Taking your share of the responsibility of selling tickets is really important (see also below).

**Newsletter editor:** our Editor elicits, edits and produces a yearly fun newsletter for the choir and Friends of HCS. Please consider providing material, drawing, cartoon, joke, article or photograph.

**Membership secretary:** the Membership Secretary plays a crucial role as s/he is often the first person in the Society a potential member speaks to. All who wish to join HCS need to contact the Membership Secretary who will advise as to whether the choir has vacancies. We have been running a recruitment drive for tenors and bass singers in order to build a balanced choir and from time to time, we run a waiting list for other sections. If you have friends who are interested in joining, do encourage them to contact the Membership Secretary.

The Membership Secretary also in conjunction with the Treasurer keeps the list of members so be sure to let her/him know if your contact details change. It is also important to ensure your Voice Rep has your correct contact details so you can be kept up to date with communications about the choir activities. As a registered charity we are obliged to keep an up-to-date list of members.

**Secretary for Friends of HCS:** we have around 60 loyal supporters of HCS who generously support us by their annual financial contributions, attendance at our concerts and promotion of the choir among their friends. The Friends' Secretary keeps in contact with the Friends, ensures they have timely notice of all our concerts and helps to recruit new Friends. Maybe you know someone who would become a supporter of the choir and would be willing to be a Friend.

## **Other jobs for us all**

In addition to these important posts, there are many other tasks that are done, some weekly, some at concert times. Each week, the chairs need to be put out and then stacked away at the end of rehearsals. It is very helpful if you can check that your section has the necessary chairs out before the rehearsal starts. Many 'old hands' know how the chairs need to be restacked at the end of the evening (3 rows of stacks of 10 chairs facing the wall) but help in doing this is always appreciated. Checking that the hall is left clean and tidy or learning how to operate the remote control for the windows, ensuring lights are off are also jobs that are done every week. As we approach concerts, help is needed to distribute leaflets, put up posters and most importantly, to sell tickets. We also provide

refreshments at workshops and our concerts. Perhaps you could help with this. There are always lots of tasks to be done and everyone is expected to contribute.

**Selling tickets.** Every concert costs HCS money but ticket sales do not cover the full cost of putting on concerts. This is also true for large professional music makers in well known venues. We all have to seek subsidies but ticket sales are crucial. It is important that we all play our part in selling as many tickets as possible. If you like to sing in concerts, and of course we all do, then you are expected to take your share of the responsibility of selling tickets. Minimally, we expect to sell around 350 – 400 tickets for concerts in Henley, around 500 tickets for concerts at Reading Concert Hall. It is therefore important that *every choir member sells at least 3 tickets*. A good way to do this is to make sure your friends, relatives, work colleagues and neighbours know the date of our concerts well in advance as we do. All dates are on your rehearsal schedule so you can give your friends and relatives plenty of notice of all concerts.

It is up to you to enthuse about the music and invite friends and family, to write the dates in their diaries and reserve a ticket. We have had many concerts that have been a sell-out. It would be wonderful if this could always be the case!

**Advertisements:** We are grateful to local businesses and others who support us by advertising in our concert programmes. We can all help by asking suitable friends and acquaintances if they might advertise their businesses in our programme. The programme editor and the publicity team have the job of contacting and following up potential advertisers on behalf of HCS.

**Social events:** From time to time we have social events, quizzes, outings to musical events and every year a summer party. All the events require a team of helpers to ensure that everything goes with a swing – and we always need a host for our summer garden party. If you have an idea for a social event or fund raising, do talk to your voice rep or any member of the committee. Do join in our social events and help build a truly collegiate atmosphere.

**Recruiting Friends of HCS:** do you know someone who really enjoys our concerts? Do you have friends who might like to support the choir by giving an annual donation? Maybe you know someone who has left but wants to keep in touch? If so do get in touch with the Secretary for the Friends of HCS or your VR and ask about signing up supporters.

**Other support:** neither our ticket sales nor our annual subscription cover the cost of our concerts and we are always looking for local business or professionals to support the choir. If you have an idea, talk to your voice rep about possibilities.

# Rehearsal Etiquette

## Before each rehearsal starts

- Please sign the Voice Register (Soprano & Alto only), sort out music, buy raffle tickets and collect any handouts on arrival to help speed up administrative matters.
- Try to position yourself so that you can face the conductor without turning your head. It is good to get used to sitting in different parts of the section and next to different people!
- Always bring and use a pencil (*not pen*) and an eraser to mark up your score.
- Mobile phones must be off or on silent mode – *not vibrate*.
- Rehearsals starts promptly at 7.30pm. Please arrive in good time to deal with the above business /socialising in advance and be in your seat by 7.29 at the latest in time for the warm up!

## During each rehearsal

- There is a warm-up at the beginning of each rehearsal. This incorporates elements of vocal technique to encourage healthy singing.
- Please do not talk unless to ask the Musical Director a question about the music. If the conductor is dealing with a particular section of the choir, other sections should pay attention and be aware of what is being rehearsed and the musical points arising from it.
- It is very important to make pencil markings in your score to remind you of all the conductor's directions. You should mark in where you are told to breathe (or not), changes to printed dynamics, indications as to the colour of sound required, and helpful tips about vocal technique for specific passages.
- The break will be between 10 and 15 minutes, which *includes* the raffle, choir notices, chatting and anything not done before the rehearsal. If you have any non-HCS matters you would like to bring to the attention to the choir, you are welcome to hand out information at the end of the rehearsal but please do not use the break – there is simply not enough time!

## After the rehearsal

- Members go to the local pub – currently The Argyle in Falaise Square. Don't be shy – do join us – you will be sure of a warm welcome!

## **Before the next rehearsal**

- You will be told what will be covered at the next rehearsal and are expected to spend time on practice and preparation. Our aim above all is to sing as well as we can - you will find the music is much more 'within you' and rehearsals are more productive and enjoyable if you put in some practice time.
- You will be sent links to online resources and CDs to help you to practise. People learn at different rates but you should probably allow for, on average, at least one hour practice a week. Please ask your voice rep if you need more information; information may also be found on the website. It is essential that you are able to commit to practise regularly.
- We learn and grow together so consistent attendance is important. Please contact your voice rep if you know there is a rehearsal you cannot attend. If you are unable to attend 80% of rehearsals it will be at the discretion of the conductor whether you are able to participate in the concert.
- If you wish to sing in a concert, it is essential to attend at least 80% of the rehearsals *and* the two rehearsals (usually Friday evening and Saturday afternoon) immediately before each concert. If you are unable to attend either of the last two rehearsals you may not be able to sing in the concert. The decision will be the conductor's.
- Feel free to contact your voice rep or the musical director if you have any queries or feedback on anything related to music of HCS - we welcome your feedback!

**Workshops** We run a Saturday morning workshop most terms. These may be taken by our MD or a visiting musician. It is a chance to concentrate on vocal technique, sight reading, theory of music or tricky bits of the music we are rehearsing, and, importantly, have fun singing together. Your membership fee covers these fine events and all members are strongly encouraged to attend. Someone often organizes a lunch for the choir at a local restaurant. Maybe you could do this next time?

## Concert Etiquette

**Concert etiquette is important.** Our appearance and behaviour at a concert creates a powerful impression. It is important to look and act as professional as we actually are – and it's easy, too!

### Standard dress codes

- Depending on the concert, concert dress for men consists of either:
  - dinner jacket with appropriate trousers, white dress shirt and black bow tie, black shoes
  - black shirt, smart black trousers, black socks, black shoes
- Concert dress for women consists of a black outfit, either a top and smart trousers or a dress. Tops and dresses should have sleeves and look smart, discreet and professional. Please, not too much flesh or 'bling' on show. A discreet, dark-coloured handbag may be taken on stage but this should be as small as possible. There is a danger of a bag slipping between the staging so do try to manage without. Belongings are always secured while we are on stage.
- At Christmas women add a small red accessory – earrings, necklace, hair-band, scarf, belt – and men add red tie or red handkerchief.
- If the concert dress varies from the above it will be made clear to you in advance. Please stick to the code and ask your voice rep if you are uncertain. If you don't have an item, discuss with your voice rep – it might be possible to borrow it.

### Folders

- Unless told otherwise for a specific concert, your music should be in a black folder. The Librarian has black folders for sale and you will be reminded of the need for this as a concert comes up.

### Entering and leaving the stage

- The choir will line up off stage and then file onto the platform, row by row, back row first. When in place you should hold your folders closed to your chest. Members in each row should stand until the whole row is on stage, then all sit down together. The choir stands and opens its folders as the conductor comes onto the stage. At the end of the concert, the choir will sit down as the conductor leaves the stage. The procedure for coming onto the stage is reversed for leaving: the front row leaves first. Be prepared for the conductor to ask the choir to stand for the curtain calls.
- Don't worry! Entering and leaving and sitting and standing during the performance will be covered at the final rehearsal.

## **While on stage**

- Please don't: talk or fidget, wave to friends and relatives in the audience, eat or drink (this includes water – professional singers manage without water on stage – so should we).
- Be sure not to flick over to the next page at the end of a movement, or be tempted to turn pages unnecessarily. Do not move until the conductor lowers his hands. You can be seen!
- The choir should stand to acknowledge applause but only applaud orchestra, soloists etc. when seated. Members of the choir should *never* applaud while standing.

## **Interval**

- During the interval, members may socialize with the audience but should return in good time to line up for the second half of the concert.

## **Music**

- If you have hired music you will be told as a concert approaches what the arrangements are for returning it. Please return hired music on time and with all markings removed, otherwise HCS is charged for its loss. If hired music has to be returned immediately after a concert you are asked to rub out any unnecessary pencil marks on the score at the end of the concert. If at a later date please remember to rub out all pencil marks on the score before returning.

## **Above all**

Relax, enjoy it, keep your eyes fixed on the conductor and give it your all! The audience has paid to come and see a performance and we owe it to them and to ourselves to deliver one. And we all love singing!

If you have any questions at all in the run up to a concert, please ask your voice rep.

## What you can tell a prospective new member

### Have you got what it takes?

Don't worry. Unlike some societies, we do not require an audition, although an ability to read music is helpful. You should also be prepared to commit to at least 80% of rehearsals; to practising at home every week between choir practices; to strive to improve your singing and to have fun. Come along, sing and enjoy yourself. You will find us to be a friendly bunch. All you really need is a joy for the music.

If you know someone who would like to join, please ask them to contact the Membership Secretary.

## Henley Youth Choir

Henley Choral Society is proud to host Henley Youth Choir. In 2014 a number of members of HCS, with Benjamin Goodson, the Musical Director at the time, planned a series of workshops for children. Their aim was to get at least 15 children to sign up for a series of workshops but within a very short time there were over 50 children attending each week. This led to the creation of a junior youth choir and a senior youth choir. These rehearse on Mondays before the adult choir rehearsals.

Henley Youth Choir has performed at a number of different events: Henley Youth Festival; Henley's Advent Calendar; on the bank of the River Thames during the Royal Regatta; as part of the prestigious Henley Festival. In addition, they have joined HCS for Christmas concerts: the afternoon concert involving both the Junior and Senior Youth Choir singing with the adult choir, and the evening concert when the Senior Youth Choir joins the adult HCS choir. From a fantastic start, the youth choirs continue to go from strength to strength.

The Henley Youth Choir is self-funding via membership fees, grants from the local council and local businesses and from generous donations from members of Henley Choral Society. The small group of HCS members who put so much energy into running the HYC are doing a fantastic job not only for children of Henley and surrounds but are also enriching HCS, the parent group. We need to invest in the future of music and our youth choirs are one way we can do this.

*If you would like to donate or help with HYC, please speak to Fi Harding, Manager and Administrator of HYC.*

## HENLEY CHORAL SOCIETY - COMMITTEE

As of October 2016

<b>Music Director</b> Member (ex officio)	Peter Asprey	
<b>Accompanist</b> Member (ex officio)	David Smith <a href="mailto:djuxtsmith@hotmail.com">djuxtsmith@hotmail.com</a>	07815 688009
<b>Chair</b> Officer	Susan Edwards 14 Milton Close, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1UJ <a href="mailto:edwardssusan59@gmail.com">edwardssusan59@gmail.com</a>	01491 571073
<b>Vice Chair</b> Officer	Joanne Harris <a href="mailto:joanne.harris77@gmail.com">joanne.harris77@gmail.com</a>	01189403525
<b>Treasurer</b> Officer	Yolanda Goldthorpe <a href="mailto:yolandagoldthorpe@hotmail.com">yolandagoldthorpe@hotmail.com</a>	07766 880738
<b>Secretary</b> Officer	David Cairns Bramblewood, Turville Heath, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 6JY <a href="mailto:david@cairns.co.uk">david@cairns.co.uk</a>	01491 638296
<b>Secretary HYC</b> Officer	Fi Harding <a href="mailto:fi.harding@sky.com">fi.harding@sky.com</a>	07947 658252
<b>Librarian</b>	Felicity Bazell Greenfield Manor Cottage, Christmas Common, Oxon, OX49 5HF <a href="mailto:felicitybazell@btopenworld.com">felicitybazell@btopenworld.com</a>	01491 613672
	Jana Hutchins <a href="mailto:jana.hutchins@btinternet.com">jana.hutchins@btinternet.com</a>	01491 575351
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Wendy Hawkins <a href="mailto:awaj@waitrose.com">awaj@waitrose.com</a>	07542 655055
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<b>Publicity &amp; Press</b>	Emma Beesley <a href="mailto:ebeesley74@yahoo.co.uk">ebeesley74@yahoo.co.uk</a>	07912 011512
<b>Friends' Secretary</b>	Arthur Weir <a href="mailto:arthurweir@btopenworld.com">arthurweir@btopenworld.com</a>	01491 638294
<b>Tickets Secretary</b>	Jan French 1 Western Road, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 1JL <a href="mailto:guy404@btinternet.com">guy404@btinternet.com</a>	01491 572795
<b>Website Admin.</b>	Catharina Reynolds <a href="mailto:cathreynolds.home@gmail.com">cathreynolds.home@gmail.com</a>	0118 940 4779
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	Angela Law <a href="mailto:angelalaw@everysense.co.uk">angelalaw@everysense.co.uk</a>	
<b>Temp Concert Manager</b>	Nick Richardson <a href="mailto:nick@clicknick.com">nick@clicknick.com</a>	07715 098903

<b>Soprano Representative</b>	Jenny Wager <a href="mailto:jennywager@hotmail.com">jennywager@hotmail.com</a>	0118 932 0127
<b>Deputy Soprano Representative</b>	Meg Ashby <a href="mailto:p.ashby588@btinternet.com">p.ashby588@btinternet.com</a>	01491 641401
<b>Alto Representative</b>	Jana Hutchins <a href="mailto:jana.hutchins@btinternet.com">jana.hutchins@btinternet.com</a>	01491 575351
<b>Deputy Alto Representative</b>	Judy Greenwood <a href="mailto:judygreenwood@btinternet.com">judygreenwood@btinternet.com</a>	0118 972 2861
<b>Tenor Representative</b>	Paul Clayden <a href="mailto:p.clayden3631@btinternet.com">p.clayden3631@btinternet.com</a>	01491 575598
<b>Deputy Tenor Representative</b>	Andrew Hawkins <a href="mailto:awaj@waitrose.com">awaj@waitrose.com</a>	01491 576929
<b>Bass Representative</b>	Bernard Carter <a href="mailto:bernx.carter@gmail.com">bernx.carter@gmail.com</a>	01628 483192
<b>Deputy Bass Representative</b>	Francis Piesse <a href="mailto:francis.piesse@gmail.com">francis.piesse@gmail.com</a>	01491 579812

#### **OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS**

Carol Brook-Partridge	01491 575505	<a href="mailto:cbrookpartridge@googlemail.com">cbrookpartridge@googlemail.com</a>
Peter Ashby	01491 641401	<a href="mailto:p.ashby588@btinternet.com">p.ashby588@btinternet.com</a>
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