

# Members' Handbook: September 2010



*Welcome to the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society!*

## **General**

The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society (RTWCS) was founded in 1904. It is a registered charity (no. 273310) and is affiliated to Making Music – previously known as the National Federation of Music Societies (NFMS).

For many years the Society has had links with the Bachchor of Wiesbaden, the German twin-town of Royal Tunbridge Wells, and exchange visits take place in both directions on a regular basis.

The Society is managed by a Committee: the full Constitution can be found on our website at [www.rtwcs.org.uk](http://www.rtwcs.org.uk)

Our website is an important way of keeping all members informed about the Society's affairs and communicating up to date news on items of interest. Members can always find there the latest information about concerts and rehearsal schedules, and it will repay frequent visits.

## **Membership**

Anyone interested in joining the Society is invited to complete a simple form which can be found on our website, which asks for an indication of previous experience (if any) and contact details.

If you are interested in joining the Society you will be most welcome to come along to rehearsals for a couple of weeks to see if you are comfortable before being expected to make a decision.

Depending on their level of experience, prospective members may be asked to take a simple, private, voice test which will help us decide which voice part you should sing, and where it would be most appropriate to seat you within your voice section.

There is an annual subscription for the September–April season, with concessions for younger members.

For the 2009–2010 season the subscription was £90, and, subject to ratification at the September 2010 AGM, the Committee envisages no increase in this figure for the 2010–2011 season. Members may pay their subscription in two £45 instalments if they find this more convenient (October and January).

For members joining for only a part year (e.g. in January) this figure is reduced to £45.

For members aged under 25 the annual subscription is reduced to just £25.

In addition, in recent years the Society has responded to the wishes of members by extending its activities through the April – July summer period (see below); members who choose to participate in this summer season pay an additional nominal summer subscription which was £30 for the 2010 season (and a £10 concessionary rate for singers under 25).

### **Concert calendar**

The Society normally gives two major concerts each year – in late Spring and late Autumn – with a programme of major choral and orchestral works.

At these concerts our normal concert dress is:

*Ladies:* black skirts or trousers, black long-sleeved tops; if worn, jewellery must be unobtrusive.

*Men:* dinner jackets or dark lounge suits, black bow tie, white shirts.

The period from April through to September is our 'low season', and normally the only activity during the 4 summer months is a Summer Sing concert in June or July, which is a more informal and less challenging programme. As well as appealing to seasoned singers, this is an ideal opportunity for younger people and less experienced singers to find out whether they enjoy the experience of choral singing. It's also an enjoyable opportunity for us to welcome new members who may not have been able to join us earlier in the year.

Finally, in mid-December we present a Christmas Concert in a local church, where traditional carols are interwoven with more modern works.

### **Rehearsals**

Rehearsals normally take place at St. John's Church Hall (between St. John's Road and Amherst Road) on Monday evenings from 7.30 pm until 9.30 pm, with a ten minute break.

Members are asked to do their best to attend all rehearsals. Although we understand that there will sometimes be unforeseen difficulties, our striving for musical excellence means that any member missing a significant number of rehearsals may be asked to satisfy the Musical Director that he/she is up to performance standard as a condition of taking part in the concert.

There is usually an extra rehearsal on the Friday immediately prior to our concerts, which participants are urged to attend wherever possible, and an orchestral rehearsal on the day of the concert which everyone taking part in the concert is expected to attend.

Members should always have a soft-leaded pencil and eraser with them at rehearsals, to annotate their scores with the directions of the Musical Director.

Rehearsals for the Summer Sing begin in May.

### **Registration**

The Registrar records each member's details, and keeps a record of attendances; members are asked to be sure to tick their names in the register at the beginning of

each rehearsal.

Members are asked to notify their Line Representative in advance in case of absence from a rehearsal.

Members are also asked to be sure to let the Registrar know promptly of any change of address or other contact details (e-mail address, telephone contact numbers etc).

### **Social activities**

We have traditionally held an Annual Dinner in January – and an “End of Season Supper” in April. In addition from time to time there are other one-off events such as organised walks and so on.

There has also been a tradition for many members of gathering in Mount Edgcombe Hotel after Monday evening rehearsals, for informal chat and drinks.

### **Finance**

Detailed accounts are presented at the Annual General Meeting, which is normally held at the start of the season in September.

### **Publicity and ticket sales**

The expenses involved in staging concerts with a full orchestra and professional soloists are high and we therefore count on members to do all they can to ensure large audiences:

- by selling as many tickets as possible to family, friends, neighbours and any other connections. Our target over the years has been to expect each member to sell at least four tickets each for each concert. As an alternative a donation equivalent to the price of several tickets is something that many members feel able to offer.
- by spreading the word and displaying and distributing flyers leaflets and posters as widely as possible wherever they can.

### **Music and folders**

Vocal scores are available for hire from the Librarian for a nominal charge at the start of rehearsals for each concert. Occasionally it may be necessary to ask members to buy their own scores.

Each member is responsible for his/her own borrowed music, and will be expected to reimburse to the Society for any score that is lost or damaged.

Folders are to be used to hold sheet music and scores for the actual concert performances. Members are expected to purchase folders from the Librarian at the current subsidized price of £3 each (actual cost to the Society in 2010 was £5), and are responsible for the care and use of their folder, and its replacement at full cost if lost.

At the end of each concert members are asked to leave all borrowed music and scores on the stage for collection by the Librarian. Anyone unable to take part in the concert is responsible for returning their score to the Librarian in person within a week of the concert. Members who return their scores late to the Librarian may incur fines, reflecting the charges the Society incurs from the lending library.

### **Dialogue with the Committee**

Each voice section (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) has one or more Line Representatives who are available to answer any queries or deal with any problems you may have, and to liaise with the Committee and Musical Director to promote the smooth running of the Society.

The Society values any suggestions and ideas which could improve the functioning of the Society, both musical and organisational.

Members are encouraged to make their suggestions and ideas – or any query they may have – known either directly to a member of the Committee, or through their own section's Line Representative. It's very important that all members have the chance to contribute both musical and organisational input to our affairs.

### **Website**

Members are encouraged to use our website ([www.rtwcs.org.uk](http://www.rtwcs.org.uk)) to stay up to date with information which, by definition, will change between editions of this Handbook (such as names and contact details of Officers and Committee members)

We encourage members to consult regularly the "members' section" of our website which is regularly updated with information about current events, special notices about rehearsals and other miscellanea.

*We hope very much that you will enjoy your experience of singing with us!*

*Royal Tunbridge Wells*  
**CHORAL**  
**SOCIETY**



The Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society is a member of NFMS ("Making Music") and is a Registered Charity No 273310.

For further information about the Society visit our website: [www.rtwcs.org.uk](http://www.rtwcs.org.uk)