

April 2009

City of Oxford Choir - information for new members

Welcome to the City of Oxford Choir! It is great to have you as a new member and we hope that you enjoy your time with us.

Here is some practical information about the choir. If any question that you may have is not answered, do ask any member of the committee who will be happy to help. You can either find them during a break at rehearsal or phone or email them. Their contact details are on the choir membership list (see below).

Your contact details

Our Concert Manager, Jim Hines, keeps a list of the addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of all members of the choir and this is regularly circulated to all members of the choir. He will give you a form to fill in when you join and you need to do this before you take away any music.

We tend to use email for communication of, for example, rehearsal dates and times, concert dates, and other information which will be of interest to choir members.

Do let Jim know as soon as possible of any change in your details so that the list can be updated.

The choir website

www.oxfordchoir.org

Lots of information about the choir is contained on the choir website including details of our forthcoming concerts and reviews of previous ones, so do check the site when you can.

There is a members' section of the website where you can find rehearsal and concert dates as well as rehearsal schedules. The more that members can access information through the website the less work our Secretary has to do by emailing us!

Membership subscription

The annual membership subscription is £141. The subscription is sometimes increased following a vote by members at the Choir. Please pay by cheque made payable to the City of Oxford Choir.

If you would prefer to pay in termly instalments of £47 then this is possible. Sue Gill is the Treasurer. She does a great job of chasing for money owed, but if you can pay her before she has to ask then that would be fantastic.

The full year is normally payable (we do make exceptions e.g. for maternity leave!) even if you are not singing for a term: this is because the membership fee essentially covers the stipend which we pay our Musical Director. We rely on ticket sales for our concerts as well as fund-raisers to pay for the other expenses of the choir, for example the cost of

April 2009

accompanists (organists, pianists, chamber groups), the cost of our rehearsal venue and the cost of our concert venues.

As a charity, we have always maintained, however, that people should not be prevented from singing because of their finances. If you cannot manage the full fee please speak in confidence with the Treasurer or the Chair to make an alternative arrangement. No-one else will know.

Usually all music is sourced by Sylvia Hinton, our Librarian, (with the hire fees paid for out of choir funds) and provided to members but very occasionally members will buy music themselves. If this poses a problem for you please talk to the Treasurer or the Chair.

Rehearsals

We rehearse in the music room of Magdalen College School, Oxford, from 7.30 to 9.30 pm on Monday night. Please be on time as we always have a lot to get through!

The school is on the southern side of Oxford City Centre and its postcode is OX4 1DZ if you want to find the location on the internet. The entrance to the car park is on Iffley Road and there is plenty of parking.

Choir members often go to a nearby pub, the Cape of Good Hope, after rehearsal so do come along! It's just over the road at the Plain where Iffley Road meets Cowley Road.

It is expected that you attend every rehearsal but clearly there will be occasional times when you are ill or where a rehearsal conflicts with, for example, a work engagement or family event. If you know in advance that you cannot attend a rehearsal for any reason, please tell our Musical Director, Duncan Aspden, or email him. If you are unable to attend unexpectedly on the day, please phone Sylvia (Oxford 775709) and let her know.

Where a choir member has been absent for more than three rehearsals in any one term their performance in the concert is at the Musical Director's discretion.

Choir number

Sylvia assigns each member a number, and all your music for each concert will have this number on it. She puts out music at the beginning of rehearsals early in each term so just pick up the music with your number on as you arrive.

You will also be given a maroon coloured music folder which will have your choir number on it. This will be loaned to you for the duration of your time with the choir and you will need to use it for all choir performances.

Rehearsal refreshments

During the break in our rehearsals we have a glass of fruit juice and a chance for a chat. Choir members take it in turns to provide the juice and the cups.

Concerts

We usually perform three times a year at the end of each academic term in one of the Oxford College chapels or an Oxford church. We are always looking for new suitable venues, however, so if you know of one do let a committee member know.

The concerts are almost always on a Saturday evening and we have a "dress" rehearsal on the afternoon of the concert in the venue. The dress rehearsal usually begins at 2 pm.

As well as termly concerts we sometimes perform at other events, for example conferences or weddings, and if you know of an event which we could sing at do let a committee member know.

Jim Hines manages each concert. As you can imagine there are lots of things which need to happen before the concert can take place for example setting out chairs, arranging refreshments for interval drinks, transporting and putting together staging and folding programmes. The choir shares out these tasks, ably co-ordinated by Jim who will ask for volunteers well before the concert.

Dress for concerts

Men: black tie suit or black single breasted suit with white shirt, black bow tie and a red handkerchief in the left breast pocket, black socks and black shoes.

Women: black long-sleeved blouse or shirt, black ankle length skirt or long trousers, black tights/socks and black shoes. You are welcome to wear jewellery but it is preferable if it is not too sparkly because of the lighting in the concert venues!

Tickets for our concerts

Eric Dunford is in charge of ticket sales and several weeks before the concert he will give every choir member two tickets to sell. Please do sell them, and if you can sell more than 2 then that would be great! Choir members are allowed to sell their two tickets at the discounted rate.

It is very helpful if you can sell your tickets as early as possible and give Eric the money for them because he can then know in advance the likely audience size. In the unlikely event that you know that you cannot sell your tickets, please give them back to Eric as early as you can.

What happens if you are unable to sing in a concert?

We hope that you will put the dates of concerts in your diary early so that you will always be able to sing, but we recognise that sometimes the concert date may conflict with another important event, or you may be away with work or busy on a specific project which means that you are unable to sing in a particular term.

April 2009

If this is the case, please let Sylvia know **as soon as possible**. She needs to know because she is in charge of ordering all the music for concerts which she sometimes does as early as 6 months before a specific concert. Music costs money so if Sylvia does not have to order copies that we do not need then we don't waste money.

Duncan also needs to know because the number of people for each part will affect his decisions about the music we sing.

The constitution of the choir

The choir has a constitution which governs the way that it operates. If you would like to see a copy, please ask a committee member. The constitution provides that we have an Annual General Meeting once a year. The AGM usually takes place in the middle of the autumn term on Monday rehearsal night following a shorter than usual rehearsal. It is the choir's chance to nominate and vote in new members of the committee, debate issues of interest or concern and hear reports from the Musical Director, the Chair and the Treasurer and is followed by a glass of wine.

The Committee

The Committee members are:

Chair:	Tony Brett
Treasurer:	Sue Gill
Secretary:	Diana Rayner
Librarian:	Sylvia Hinton
Tickets:	Eric Dunford
Concert Manager:	Jim Hines
Publicity Manager:	Harriet Griffin
Committee member:	Jo Carter