

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

**Start of Season Newsletter: 2018/2019**

The football season is now well underway so it must be time for choir to kick off again! Our first rehearsal is on Monday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> and we look forward to welcoming all existing and new members to another exciting year.

**Message from our Chairman**  
**Alan Spencer**

Dear fellow Members,

Its good to welcome you all back after what I hope proved to be a refreshing and enjoyable summer break. For any new members joining us I hope you will enjoy being part of the Choral Society.

This September sees the arrival of our new Musical Director, Robyn Sevastos and on your behalf I offer her a particularly warm welcome. Robyn brings with her a wealth of experience in conducting choral music and I am sure we shall all find singing under her leadership to be an exciting and rewarding experience.

Our opening rehearsal on September 3<sup>rd</sup> will see the return of Craig, our resident accompanist who has made a good recovery from the injury to his thumb he suffered a few months back. It will be good to see his happy and familiar face behind the keyboard once again. Welcome back Craig!

As in previous years we shall be performing two concerts in the Assembly Hall in November and April next year. Our November concert will again be on Remembrance Sunday and this year it is especially poignant as we shall be commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of the first World War. Our programme will feature two choral works with a WW1 association, The Spirit of England by Elgar and Dona Nobis Pacem by Vaughan Williams. The orchestra will also be performing The Walk to the Paradise Garden by Delius. We shall be dedicating this concert to the memory of our past President Guy Huntrods, known and loved by those who knew him and who was such a great supporter of the Choral Society in so many ways. Several members of his family will be attending this concert and we must ensure that we give them a memorable performance worthy of Guy's memory.

For our April concert we expect to be joined by the Salomon orchestra and look forward to singing with them again when we perform Puccini's Gloria and Verdi's Four Sacred Pieces. For those who are unfamiliar with the Puccini work I can promise that you will find it a very enjoyable sing!

Our Christmas concert will again be at Goudhurst in early December and we have already booked the Tunbridge Wells United Reformed Church at the end of June next year for our summer concert. The last two summer concerts have proved both successful and very enjoyable, not least for the interval refreshments which went down very well with the audience!

You will find attached to this Newsletter a note of the two way commitments between the Choir and the members. You will see that one of the points concerns the expectation that members should endeavour to purchase at least two tickets per concert. A really good audience not only encourages us when we perform but enables us to meet the very considerable costs involved in putting on concerts in a large venue such as the Assembly Hall. Let's make sure that we all get busy buying tickets this season!

As always I am supported by a hard-working Committee and I thank them for all they do behind the scenes. I would particularly single out Trevor Hurrell our General Secretary who has recently tendered his resignation and who has given me tremendous help during my time as Chairman. I am pleased that Janet Noble has agreed to become Acting Secretary and look forward to her being confirmed in this position at the AGM. In addition, three of our ordinary Committee members retire this year and any nominations for their replacements will be very welcome. This also applies to the important position of Publicity Officer which remains unfilled since Melissa's resignation a year ago.

On a personal note this will be my last Start of Season message as I have decided to stand down as Chairman after being in post for four years. I am very pleased that Michael Selway our Vice-Chairman has agreed to take over my job as from this year's AGM and I wish him every success for the future.

I believe we have an exciting and challenging season of music-making ahead which should make for an enjoyable time for us all in the Choral Society.

Alan Spencer

**Message from our Musical Director  
Robyn Sevastos**

Dear Choir Members

As we prepare to start a new season I would like to say how much I am looking forward to joining you all. It will be an exciting time as we get to know one another and begin our relationship. My aim will always be to do the best for and get the best out of the choir.

My first concert with you is a baptism by fire as we tackle two challenging but amazing pieces of music. They both hold such meaning and I know we will all do our best to provide a fitting tribute to dear Guy.

We will work hard, achieve great things, and have some fun along the way, I know.

Here's to making music!

Robyn

**Calendar of key events 2018-2019 season**  
**(full rehearsal schedule on website)**

Monday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> 7.30pm – first rehearsal at St John’s Church Hall, working towards our performance of Elgar’s The Spirit of England and Vaughan Williams’ Dona Nobis Pacem in November.

Regular rehearsal times are from 7:30 to 9:30pm, with a break of ten minutes to catch our breath.

Our librarian, Diana Blower, will have copies of both scores available for hire at this time, at a cost of £5 per set. If you were to bring the correct change that would be most appreciated. For members wishing to purchase their own copies, Diana advises that we shall be using the **Novello** edition of Elgar and the **Oxford** edition of Vaughan Williams.

As an aside, members may be interested to learn that the Dona Nobis Pacem featured in the Proms earlier this summer and a repeat is going to be shown on BBC4 on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Please do remember your soft pencil and eraser for all score annotations and conductor notes, especially vital if using the hire copies.

Sunday November 11<sup>th</sup> – Remembrance Concert – *In Memoriam* Guy Huntrods

The concert will take place at 3.00pm in the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells with as usual the final rehearsal being held at 10.00am the same morning.

Monday November 19<sup>th</sup> 9.00pm – Provisional AGM date

Our rehearsal will finish earlier than normal so as to allow time for the AGM to be held on the same evening. The Convening Notice and Agenda will be sent out to all Members nearer the time.

As noted in the Chairman’s address above, a number of Committee positions will fall vacant at the AGM, details of which will be listed in the Agenda. If you are interested in helping out or know of any suitable candidates we could approach to fill these vacancies, please do contact any Committee member.

Sunday December 9<sup>th</sup> 6.30pm – Christmas concert, St Mary’s Church Goudhurst

**REHEARSALS SUSPENDED UNTIL MONDAY JANUARY 7<sup>th</sup> 2019**

Monday, December 24<sup>th</sup> – Carols at Hotel du Vin (details to be confirmed)

Monday January 7<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 7.30pm – rehearsals resume at St John’s Church Hall, working towards our Spring concert.

Sunday April 14<sup>th</sup> at 3pm – Spring Concert at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells Programme to include Puccini’s *Messa di Gloria* and Verdi’s *Four Sacred Pieces*. As in previous concerts, there will be a final run through that same morning and possibly a separate orchestral rehearsal the week before. All details to be confirmed.

Sunday, June 30<sup>th</sup> 2019 – Summer Concert

Full details of programme and venue to be confirmed

## **Subscriptions**

The committee is pleased to confirm that, subject to ratification at the AGM, the annual subscription for the 2018-2019 season will remain at £135 (or two instalments of £70, payable in September and January.) The subscription for students and under-25s is £25.

The subscription income does not cover all the choir's costs and we are grateful to those who can afford to pay a little extra on top of the standard subscription, by way of a donation.

As a charity we are able to claim tax back on donations and part of the subscription under the Gift Aid scheme and received over £2,000 last year. If you are in a position to sign a Gift Aid form, please will you check that we have one from you?

Subs can be paid online, by post or in person (cash or cheque) at rehearsals.

If you are happy to pay by online transfer this would be very much appreciated.

Account name RTWCS  
Sort Code: 40-52-40  
Account no: 00017884

Please use your name as the “reference” and email Ailsa ([ailsamcmahon@hotmail.com](mailto:ailsamcmahon@hotmail.com)) to let her know.

Cheques should be made payable to RTWCS and can be sent in advance to:

Ailsa McMahon, Treasurer RTWCS, 7 Broadwater Down, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5NJ.

Please note Ailsa will not be available in person until the second rehearsal of the season, September 10th.

## **Website**

If you use the Google Chrome website browser you will see that it now marks the RTWCS website as Not Secure, and other browsers are likely to follow suit before too long. This is a technical change made by Google to encourage all websites to adopt the secure https protocol rather than plain http. Please be reassured that the Choir's website is no less secure than it was before this notice was added, and when time allows the website will be changed to a secure https site that will remove the notice.

This is also a suitable moment to remind Members that our website is an easily accessed source of information or news about any aspect of the Society's affairs and is continually updated.

<http://www.rtwcs.org.uk>

## **Parking at St John's**

Our rehearsal host, St John's Church, holds its Parish Council meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each calendar month. As a courtesy to facilitate their parking, Members are asked on these evenings to refrain from parking on any part of the area to the north of the church, the side with adjoining lawn. The main car park will continue to be available.

**And finally ...**

..... A request to check your music folders. Diana advises that we are one hire copy short of the Vaughan Williams Folk Songs that we sang at the summer concert. We'd be very grateful if you would take a moment to look and, if the rogue copy comes to light, to hand it back in as soon as possible. The Society is charged if we are unable to return the full complement of music. Many thanks in advance!

## Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society and its members

### RTWCS –the commitment we give to members

- To provide a stimulating and rewarding musical learning environment to rehearse and perform choral and other music
- To offer rehearsals weekly on Monday evening between 7.30 and 9.30 between September and June in an accessible Tunbridge Wells location
- To give members an opportunity to sing a varied and enjoyable programme that may at times challenge singers
- To make the music being performed in any season available to hire at a reasonable cost
- To be open and friendly and welcome new members encouraging participation in the choir and on-going music making
- To typically perform 4 concerts over the year, 2 major concerts in Spring and Autumn as well as a Christmas concert and a summer sing
- To endeavour to provide soloists and an orchestra of good quality to complement the choir
- To maintain the membership fee at a level that is not prohibitive and encourages participation across a diverse community

### The commitment Members give to RTWCS

- To regularly attend rehearsals, ideally 80% of the rehearsals offered for each concert, enthusiastic to sing, learn and enjoy music making
- To turn up to rehearsal on time, equipped with music, a pencil and eraser and never use a pen or highlighter on hired music
- To respect both the musical director and other members by not chatting during rehearsals, other than during social breaks
- To practise individually or with other choir members between rehearsals in order to optimise learning at group rehearsals
- To sing in the concerts
- To pay the fees as set, either in one lump sum at the beginning of the season or in two instalments, September and January
- To endeavour to purchase at least 2 tickets for each concert
- To participate where possible in social and fundraising initiatives that help build a sense of choir community and also raise funds