

Royal Tunbridge Wells
CHORAL
SOCIETY

Start of Season Newsletter: 2024/2025

I hope that you have all had a wonderful summer and that you're raring to go now that September is almost upon us. A very warm welcome to our 2024/25 season and especially to our new members - we're very much looking forward to meeting you and making music together.

Term starts next **Monday, September 2nd** at our usual venue of **St John's Church Hall, Amherst Road** and the rehearsals will start at their regular time of **7.30pm**. Our rehearsals run for two hours with a short break to catch our breath. We don't have refreshment facilities, I'm afraid, so do bring along a bottle of water to keep you going.

KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Our first concert will be at **3pm on Sunday, November 10th** at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells. We shall be performing Mendelssohn's Oratorio "Elijah".

At Christmas, we'll be at St James, Tunbridge Wells on **Saturday, December 14th**. Final touches are being put to the programme but the intention is to use extracts from Bach's Christmas Oratorio as our centrepiece - more details as the season progresses. And although this is a change in venue from our visits to Goudhurst for many years, we shall be continuing our traditional choir tea between the afternoon rehearsal and concert.

After the Christmas break, term will restart on **Monday, January 6th 2025**.

We shall be rehearsing for a concert performance at the Assembly Hall Theatre at 3pm on **Sunday, April 13th 2025**. Usually, our concert takes place after the Easter weekend, but this year it falls on Palm Sunday, the week before. Our programme will be Stainer's Crucifixion, along with Williamson Procession of Palms.

And to round off our season there'll be a Summer Sing on **Saturday, June 28th 2025**. Once again, this will be held at Holmewood House School Theatre. The programme will be Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's "Hiawatha" and John Rutter's "Feel the Spirit".

MUSIC

Scores for all our concerts are available for hire from our Librarian, Judith Henderson, at the beginning of each term.

First in line is music for Elijah; these will be ready and waiting for your collection at rehearsals for the next few weeks. There's a modest charge of £1 and if you could have the exact change ready that really helps to keep the line moving!

For those who like to use their own scores, we shall be using the New Novello edition.

Whenever using a hire copy, please do remember to use a soft lead 2B pencil when noting any of Robyn's rehearsal directions. Judith and her trusty team of library elves have to ensure that all of these marks are erased before the scores are returned to the hiring library so if we can make this task a little easier where possible it would be most appreciated.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subject to ratification at the AGM later in the term, it is proposed that the subscription for 2024/25 remains at its current level of £150. We hope that this is welcome news given the continuing cost of living squeeze and that you feel it represents extremely good value for money when considered against thirty five scheduled rehearsals and four concert opportunities.

Subscriptions are due at the beginning of the season and can either be paid if full or in two instalments, with £75 in September and £75 in January. The subscription for students and under-25s remains at £25 and there is a new discounted category for members between 25 and 35 years of age of £50.

Our preferred method of payment is by on-line transfer with details below.

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

If you could use your name as the "reference" for the transaction and email our [Treasurer, Ailsa McMahon](#) to let her know that your sub is coming through that would be much appreciated.

As a charity we are able to claim tax back on any donations and part of the subscription under the Gift Aid scheme. If you are in a position to sign a Gift Aid form, please check that we have one in place from you - if not, they are available on request from the Treasurer. [For information, the tuition element of this year's sub is calculated as £11].

SOCIAL EVENTS

I appreciate it's rather short notice but an early date for your diary is next weekend **Sunday, September 1st** when we shall be holding an impromptu **Last of the Summer Wine party** from 2.30pm to 5.00pm in the garden at Leeds Meade, Five Ashes. A very informal affair, just an opportunity to meet up without having to look at the clock. Bring along your partner, something to share and, if the weather's nice, your cozzies too as there is a swimming pool if you fancy!

On **Saturday, September 14th** Barefoot Opera will be staging a performance of **Verdi's La Traviata** at Down House in Lamberhurst. You may recall that the choir was invited to provide some of the chorus support (and it's still not too late for you to join in if you wish, just let me know!) and the Society qualifies for discounted tickets to the show. Full information is available on their web site **barefootopera.com** and the 20% discount code you need is *[redacted – check with General Secretary]*

On **Friday, November 22nd** there will be a **Quiz Night** which will be held at St Peters, Bayhall Road, Tunbridge Wells. More specific details nearer the time.

Next spring, we're working towards holding a **Singing Workshop** day where we hope to explore the art of choral singing with emphasis on technique and style. Again, more specific details nearer the time.

WEBSITE

All of this information and more can be found on our website, especially with regard to future concert dates, rehearsal schedules, concert photographs, rehearsal notes and other useful snippets of information. It really is worth a bookmark on your browser.

There's also a choir WhatsApp group which is good for catching up on late changes, etc. It's easy to sign up - just mention it to **[Jane Walters, our Membership Secretary](#)** and registrar, who is acting as coordinator.

From time to time we may organise photography sessions for publicity and promotional purposes. The best of these appear on our website but may also be found in a wider context, for instance as concert publicity within the Assembly Hall's digital marketing site. ***If you would prefer not to be photographed,*** then please let me or any other committee member know. It's not a problem, we just need to know your preferences so we can accommodate them accordingly.

AND FINALLY

We said farewell last season to soprano Isobel Lowe, who has moved away from the area. She had been acting as Publicity Officer for the Society so we are looking for someone new to coordinate all the efforts necessary to promote our concerts as widely as possible. If this is an area you feel you could help with, please contact any member of the Committee for more

details. All assistance, whether occasional or regular, small scale or large, is vital to the smooth running of the Society and is very much appreciated.

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That's quite enough for the time being, I think – many thanks for reading through to the bitter end and as ever, if there's anything I've forgotten to mention or which needs clarification please don't hesitate to ask. We look forward to singing with you, shortly!

With kindest regards,

Janet Noble
General Secretary