

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS CHORAL SOCIETY - 122nd SEASON

I hope that you have all been able to enjoy the amazing summer and, as the weather begins to cool a little, that you're able to turn your thoughts once again to singing. A very warm welcome to our 2025/26 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 1st** 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 9th** at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells. We shall be performing "Annelies" by James Whitbourn.

This concert is being held as a memorial to Tunbridge Wells-born composer James Whitbourn (1963-2024). He was educated at Skinners School before winning a scholarship to Magdalen College Oxford. His work "Annelies" is a setting for soprano solo, mixed chorus and chamber ensemble of excerpts in English translation from the diary of Anne Frank (Annelies Marie Frank).

At Christmas, we'll be at St James, Tunbridge Wells on **Saturday, December 13th**. This year's centrepiece will be John Rutter's "where Icicles Hang" and we shall be continuing our traditional choir tea between the afternoon rehearsal and concert.

After the Christmas break, term will restart on **Monday, January 5th 2026**.

We shall be rehearsing for a concert at the Assembly Hall Theatre at 3pm on **Sunday, April 19th 2026** where we shall be performing Elgar's Dream of Gerontius.

To round off the season our Summer Sing will be on **Saturday, June 20th 2026**. Once again, this will (probably) be held at Holmewood House School Theatre. The programme will be designed around madrigals for a summer's evening.

MUSIC

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

First in line is the music for Annelies and these scores will be ready and waiting for your collection at rehearsals over the next few weeks. The cost to members will be £5 and if you could bring the exact change that will speed the process and enable the queue to move along quickly.

For those who prefer to use their own scores, we are using the Chester Novello edition. It's quite pricey [RRP £22.99] but if you're interested, I noticed that the Presto Music website seems to have a 25% discount running until the end of September!

Whenever using a hire copy, please do remember to use a soft lead 2B pencil when noting any of Robyn's rehearsal directions. We 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 2025/26 be increased slightly from £150 to £155. The reason behind this modest rise is to help meet our increasing costs and we hope that you feel it still 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 in full or in two instalments, with £75 due in September and £80 in January. The subscription for students, under-25s, members with disabilities and their supporting carers remains at £25 as does the discounted category for members between 25 and 35 years of age of £50.

Notwithstanding the above, the Committee is keen to acknowledge that subscriptions of any kind should never be a barrier to singing. If you are having any problems, Ailsa McMahon, our Treasurer, is happy to be available for a private chat on a confidential basis to see how we can help.

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 Ailsa (ailsamcmahon@hotmail.com) 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. [For information, the tuition element of this year’s sub is calculated as £12].

SOCIAL EVENTS

On **Friday, September 5th** Barefoot Opera will be staging a performance of **Donizetti’s Lucia Di Lammermoor** at Down House in Lamberhurst. You may recall that the choir was invited to provide some of the chorus support and the Society qualifies for discounted tickets to the show. Full information is available on their web site barefootopera.com and to qualify for a 10% discount, you need to use code **A5MPH7YT**.

The Society is taking part in an event **Kent Choral Celebrations** conducted by Stephen Barlow at Mote Hall in Maidstone on **Saturday, September 27th**. The programme includes Vaughn Williams’ In Windsor Forest and Brahms’ How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place as well as nine choirs performing their own repertoire. If you would like to sing in this concert, there are still places available (see me or any committee member at rehearsal) and audience tickets are available, at £10 with U16 free, from choralcelebrations25@gmail.com.

On October 24th, the United Nations Assembly is celebrating its 80th anniversary. A concert is going to be held on **Saturday, October 25th** to mark the occasion and members of the Society are invited to take part. More details will be made available as we get them.

Following on from a most successful event last November, plans are already afoot to hold another **Quiz Night** early in the New Year, probably again at St Peters, Bayhall Road, Tunbridge Wells. Again there'll be 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 web site 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

Over the summer we have had to say farewell to alto Judith Henderson who, for professional and personal reasons, will not be rejoining the choir in September. Not only a fine singer, she has also been outstanding in her role as Librarian for the Society over the last four years. You may recall that I emailed everyone earlier in the summer break asking you to consider whether or not you could help us fill this vital role.

I'm pleased to say that we are in discussions with one interested party but, as I mentioned in my appeal, this position is ideal for a small group approach so the search is still on for some assistant librarians to help with the more practical side of things. If this is something you feel you could help us with, then please just speak to me or Jane or to any other member of the Committee for more details. Everyone's assistance, whether occasional or regular, small scale or large, is vital to the smooth running of the Society and is always very much appreciated.

Thanks for reading through to this bottom of the page 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!

With kindest regards,

Janet Noble
General Secretary