



HENLEY CHORAL Society

A VERY WARM WELCOME TO YOU

Thinking of joining us?

Welcome, and well done for coming along to try us out!

Have you got what it takes?

Don't worry. Unlike some societies, we do not require an audition, although an ability to read music is helpful. Just come along, sing, and enjoy yourself. You will find us to be a friendly bunch. All you really need is a love of the music.

The main events

We sing three concerts most years, often well-known choral works. We sing with top professional orchestra and soloists and all our concerts are very popular – often sold out. It looks and sounds great and is very uplifting! Members play an important part in spreading the word about concerts and selling tickets.

When and where?

Weekly rehearsals are from 7:30pm until 9:30pm most Monday evenings during term time usually in d:two, 55-57 Market Place, Henley. A schedule will be given to you and is also available on the website, where you will find other useful information www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk

How much?

Our subscription costs are in line with other local choral societies: for 2026-27 it is £180 per member for the full choral year (September to July). In keeping with our charitable objective to encourage the next generation of singers, membership for 18–35-year-olds is free. Your membership includes all rehearsals and concerts and at least one free Workshop per year with a well-known choral tutor.

Music

You will be provided with music to use for your free rehearsal. Our librarian provides music to hire or buy for all concerts. We also ensure you are kept up to date with available free or paid-for rehearsal aids.

What next?

The first rehearsal is free. If you would like to join, please tell Membership Secretary Wendy Hawkins or your voice rep – details below. You will be given more information at your first rehearsal and can also find out more, including reviews of past performances, on the website. If you have any questions, ask any member to direct you to your voice rep. Once you have joined, if you would like to check that you are singing the correct voice part, then please ask the Musical Director to hear you before a rehearsal. This is *not* compulsory and is *not* an audition but is entirely at your request.

Again, a warm welcome to you!

Angela Law
Chair, Henley Choral Society
chair@henleychoralsociety.org.uk

Wendy Hawkins
Co-founder & Membership Secretary
andrew.wendy19@gmail.com

REHEARSAL ETIQUETTE

Before each rehearsal starts

- Please sign the Voice Register (Soprano & Alto only), sort out music, buy raffle tickets and collect any handouts on arrival to help speed up administrative matters.
- Try to position yourself so that you can face the conductor without turning your head. It is good to get used to sitting in different parts of the section and next to different people!
- Always bring and use a pencil (*not pen*) and an eraser to mark up your score.
- Mobile phones must be off or on silent mode – *not vibrate*.
- Rehearsal starts promptly at 7.30pm. Please arrive in good time to deal with the above business / socialising in advance and be in your seat by 7.29 at the latest!

During each rehearsal

- There is a warm-up at the beginning of each rehearsal. This incorporates elements of vocal technique to encourage healthy singing.
- Please do not talk unless to ask a question about the music. If the conductor is dealing with a particular section of the choir, other sections should pay attention and be aware of what is being rehearsed and the musical points arising from it.
- It is very important to make pencil markings in your score to remind you of all the conductor's directions. You should mark in where you are told to breathe (or not), changes to printed dynamics, indications as to the colour of sound required, and helpful tips about vocal technique for specific passages.
- The break will be between 10 and 15 minutes, which *includes* the raffle, choir notices, chatting and anything not done before the rehearsal. If you have any non-HCS matters you would like to bring to the attention to the choir, you are welcome to hand out information at the end of the rehearsal but please do not use the break – there is simply not enough time!

After the rehearsal

- Members go to the local pub – currently The Row Barge, West Street. Don't be shy – do join us – you will be sure of a warm welcome!

Before the next rehearsal

- You will get a weekly email from your rep covering relevant information and what we will be doing at the next rehearsal. You are expected to spend time on practice and preparation. Our aim above all is to sing as well as we can - you will find the music is much more 'within you' and rehearsals are more productive and enjoyable if you put in some practice time.
- You will be sent links to free and paid online resources / CDs to help you to practice. Please ask your voice rep if you need more information.
- We learn and grow together so consistent attendance is important. Please contact your voice rep if you know there is a rehearsal you cannot attend. If you are unable to attend 80% of rehearsals it will be at the discretion of the conductor whether you will be able to participate in the concert.
- Feel free to contact your voice rep with any queries or feedback on anything related to music at HCS and your experience - we welcome your feedback!

CONCERT ETIQUETTE

Concert etiquette is important

Our appearance and behaviour at a concert creates a powerful impression. It is important to look as professional as we actually are – and it's easy, too!

Standard dress codes

- Depending on the concert, concert dress for men consists of either:
 - dinner jacket with appropriate trousers, white dress shirt and black bow tie, black shoes
 - black shirt, smart black trousers, black socks, black shoes
- Concert dress for women consists of long-sleeved black tops and either a black skirt or smart black trousers. Please, not too much flesh or 'bling.' A discreet, dark-coloured handbag may be taken on stage but this should be as small as possible.
- At Christmas women add a small red accessory – earrings, necklace, hairband, scarf, belt – and men add red socks.
- If the concert dress varies from the above it will be made clear to you in advance. Please stick to the code and ask your voice rep if you are uncertain. If you don't have an item, discuss with your voice rep – it might be possible to borrow it.

Folders

- Unless you are told otherwise for a specific concert, your music should be in a black folder. The Librarian has black folders for sale and you will be reminded of the need for this as a concert comes up.

Entering and leaving the stage

- Typically at St Mary's the choir will line up off stage and then file onto the platform, row by row, back row first. When in place you should hold your folders closed to your chest. Members in each row should stay standing until the whole row is on stage, then all sit down together. The choir stands and opens its folders as the conductor comes onto the stage. At the end of the concert, the choir will sit down as the conductor leaves the stage. The procedure for coming onto the stage is reversed for leaving: the front row leaves first. Be prepared for the conductor to ask the choir to stand for the curtain calls.
- Don't worry! Entering and leaving and sitting and standing during the performance will be covered at the final rehearsal.

While on stage

- Please don't: talk or fidget, wave to friends and relatives in the audience, eat or drink (this includes water – professional singers manage without water on stage – so should we.) Very specifically do *not* bring metal water bottles on stage as they create a terrific row if they fall over.
- Please turn over pages very quietly when not singing and pay attention to orchestra and soloists to enhance the experience by the audience. Do *not* turn over the page at the end of a movement or piece until the conductor's hands have fallen.

- The choir should stand to acknowledge applause but only applaud orchestra, soloists etc. when seated. Members of the choir should *never* applaud while standing.

Interval

- During the interval, members may socialize with the audience but should return in good time to line up for the second half of the concert.

Music

- If you have hired music, you will be told as a concert approaches what the arrangements are for returning it. Please return hired music, otherwise HCS is charged for its loss. If hired music has to be returned immediately after a concert you are asked to rub out any unnecessary pencil marks on the score, if at a later date you are asked to rub out all pencil marks on the score.

Above all

Relax, enjoy it, keep your eyes fixed on the conductor and give it your all! The audience has paid to come and see a performance and we owe it to them and to ourselves to deliver one.

If you have any questions at all in the run up to a concert, please ask your voice rep.

Soprano reps
Magdalen Hoskins & Meg Ashby
sopranos@henleychoralsociety.org.uk

Alto rep
Jo Dickson
henleyaltorep@gmail.com

Tenor rep
David Bentley
davidbentley54@btinternet.com

Bass rep
Mike Kay
basses@henleychoralsociety.org.uk

Sing. Enjoy. Support.

Become part of Henley Choral Society

www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk