

# Escafeld Chorale

## Everything you need to know about Escafeld Chorale but were afraid to ask!

**Escafeld Chorale** has been part of the Sheffield music scene since 1969, when it was founded as the Fossdale Singers by music teacher Ron Law. From the early 1980s it developed and grew under the guidance of Francis Wells, until the baton was transferred to Peter Dutton in 2001.

This sheet answers questions new members may ask, and reminds existing members how the choir is organised. More formal information is given in our constitution, which is issued to all members.

**What sort of music do we sing?** Our repertoire spans a wide range of composers and choral styles, from madrigals and part songs to full-length requiem masses. From time to time we perform with other local musicians. We enjoy singing both Bach and Bernstein, not to mention Duruflé, Fauré, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Palestrina, Tippett and Vaughan Williams (to name but a few). If you have a particular favourite, mention it to Peter or your part rep.

**When do we rehearse?** On Tuesday evenings from 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. we rehearse at Banner Cross Methodist Church (except during school holidays). We take a break for refreshments and there's a rota for making the tea.

Concert dates are publicised well in advance and you are expected to attend (almost) all rehearsals in order to prepare adequately. We also have a final rehearsal at the concert venue, either on the day of the concert or a little while before. All concert venues are different and need careful seating plans. The primary aim is to achieve musical balance, though individual preferences are accommodated where possible. We normally sing in 'concert formation' for some weeks before a concert.

**Do I have to sign in each week?** Yes, please – there are signing-in sheets for each part. It also helps Peter plan rehearsals if you can put a cross against any dates when you know in advance that you won't be there. If you have to miss a rehearsal unexpectedly, it's still helpful to let your part rep or Peter know you won't be coming. The signing-in sheets also ask you to confirm your availability for forthcoming concerts.

**How long is the probationary period?** We retain a policy of no auditions, but do aim for high musical standards and there is a short probationary period of around two months for new members. There may be a waiting list for some parts, so prospective new members should contact Peter first.

**Can I talk to my neighbour while other parts are being rehearsed?** No! Save the chat for the tea break or the pub afterwards. If you have a particular

problem with the music, ask Peter to go over it, but save lengthy discussions for later.

**How can I practise in between rehearsals?** If your sight-reading isn't that good, make sure you pick up a practice tape so that we don't waste too much rehearsal time 'note-bashing'. Tapes/CDs for most concerts are often available at modest prices.

**How often do we give concerts?** We generally give four concerts a year: spring, summer, and two at Christmas. Our popular Christmas concerts (including seasonal readings and refreshments) are normally performed at Wentworth Church and at a Sheffield venue. Occasionally, we give additional concerts at other times of the year. Donations to charity are made from the proceeds of some concerts and we often go carol singing in aid of St Luke's Hospice.

**What about publicity?** You can help to publicise concerts by displaying posters/fliers at suitable locations, as well as encouraging your friends and family to come to concerts.

**What do we wear for concerts?** This is the dress code for formal concerts:

- **Women:** long, ankle-length, plain black skirt; long-sleeved, plain black, round-necked top; scarf (provided by the choir); black plain shoes.
- **Men:** black trousers; dinner jacket; black shoes; white shirt; blue bow tie (supplied by the choir); buttonhole as appropriate (supplied by the choir).

If you have problems getting hold of a long skirt or a dinner jacket, mention it to your part rep.

For less formal concerts, you may be asked to wear plain, single-colour, short-sleeved shirts/tops, with collars.

**How do I get the music?** The librarian usually obtains music through the library. If we're likely to use something several times, you'll probably have a chance to order your own personal copy – we make bulk orders to obtain a discount.

You are responsible for ensuring music is returned to the librarian after concerts. If the dog has chewed the music, or you have lost it, you will be charged for a replacement copy. Late returns may be subject to a library fine, for which you will be held responsible.

**Do I need anything else?** Concert folders are available for purchase at a discount. You'll also need a soft pencil (available at rehearsals if you forget yours) for writing in Peter's directions, and an eraser for revising them. Please try *not* to mark the scores heavily and *don't* use ink; libraries may impose a fine for 'defaced' copies of music.

**What is the semi-chorus?** Some pieces of music are best performed by a small number of singers – a semi-chorus – rather than by the whole choir. Peter will choose the right group of voices to achieve the intended effect. If you can sing your part without relying on others, and would like to be in a semi-chorus, then do let Peter know, especially when he asks for volunteers.

**My neighbour sings out of tune – what should I do?** If this is a persistent problem, have a word with your part rep, who will discuss the issue with Peter. In the unlikely event of such problems developing, choir members might be asked to review their membership. This might arise, for example, if an individual is unable to attain, or maintain, the musical standards of the choir as a whole at that time.

**Are there any social events?** Choir members and partners (and Friends of Escafeld Chorale) are encouraged to attend any social events. Meals

(sometimes with added entertainment), walks and other events may be organised from time to time. And if you fancy a drink after rehearsals, why not join those of us who usually patronise a local hostelry?

**How are subscriptions paid?** Subs are due at the beginning of September (see below for current rates). You may prefer to set up a standing order. The Treasurer has a supply of standing order forms and also information about concessionary rates. New members are not expected to pay subs until they have completed their probationary period.

**Who are the Friends of Escafeld Chorale?** The Friends scheme was set up in 2003 to encourage regular support for the choir's activities. An annual donation (see below) entitles Friends to two free tickets for each concert, and they are also invited to social events.

**Who is on the Committee?** As set out in the constitution, a committee is elected each year. If you want to get more involved, do put yourself forward for election at the autumn AGM – nomination forms are circulated in advance. The committee normally meets about four times a year, to plan future concerts and generally ensure that the choir is running smoothly. Committee minutes are displayed on the notice board outside the rehearsal room.

**What do part representatives do?** Each part has at least one representative on the Committee (see below). Part reps act as a two-way conduit for information, raising members concerns and canvassing members' views on various issues.

### **Subscriptions 2011–12**

Members: £66/year (£57 concessions/unwaged), plus £3 a term for tea/coffee  
Friends: £30/year

### **Concert dates 2011–12**

Christmas Saturday 10 December 2011, Holy Trinity, Wentworth, 7.30 p.m. (rehearsal 10 a.m.)  
Wednesday 14 December 2009, Holy Trinity Church, Millhouses, 7.30 p.m.  
Spring Saturday 24 March 2012, Holy Trinity, Millhouses, 7.30 p.m. (rehearsal in afternoon)  
Summer Saturday 30 June 2012, St Andrew's, Psalter Lane., 7.30 p.m. (rehearsal in afternoon)