
BROUGHTON CHORAL SOCIETY WELCOME PACK

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Welcome

We're delighted to have you with us, singing together is a great pleasure and privilege and we can't wait to share wonderful music with you. We are here to support you to sing your absolute best, to reap all the benefits of singing in a choir and to welcome you into a proud tradition of choral singing stretching back more than a thousand years.

About the Choral Society

The Broughton Choral Society aims to advance the study and practice of choral singing in the environs of Broughton, Peeblesshire. The Society was founded in 1998 by Fiona Reed, our first musical director, together with a group of madrigal singers originally from Tweedsmuir led by Roy McIntosh. We work with a professional conductor on programmes that hold the European and British choral traditions at their heart, we are not exclusive to this tradition, but it nonetheless forms the bedrock of our work, and we are immensely proud to continue the legacies of Vivaldi, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Brahms, Fauré, Bruckner, Strauss, Verdi, Wagner, Puccini, Vaughan Williams and many more. We are proud to work with living composers and arrangers, commission new works and arrangements and complement our programme of classical masterworks with modern gems by, amongst others, Gjeilo, Whitacre and Bernstein, from contemporary classical, musical theatre and film. We understand ourselves as the inheritors and custodians of more than a thousand years of music and most importantly, we really love singing together. We respect and value the diversity of both our repertoire and membership and believe that access to choral music is the right of anyone and everyone in our society. We welcome repertoire requests from members, we cannot always accommodate every single one, but our music director considers and responds to all suggestions carefully. The choral society is an inclusive space, and welcomes members of all genders, sexualities, backgrounds and experience.

Key Contacts

Chair: Jim Lindsay leads the committee of the Broughton Choral Society.

Music Director: Callum Hüseyin – callum.huseyin@gmail.com

Callum is happy to receive any and all musical questions!

Choir Secretary: Frances Leckie - secretary@broughtonchoralsociety.co.uk

Please contact Frances with practical questions around rehearsals, concerts, and resources.

Treasurer: Jane Buchanan-Dunlop – Jane handles all matters financial and can assist you with subs payment and co-ordinates donations.

Librarian: Graham Buchanan-Dunlop – Graham organises issuing all of our music and also takes the register as we enter rehearsal.

Other Committee Members:

Ruth Kirby

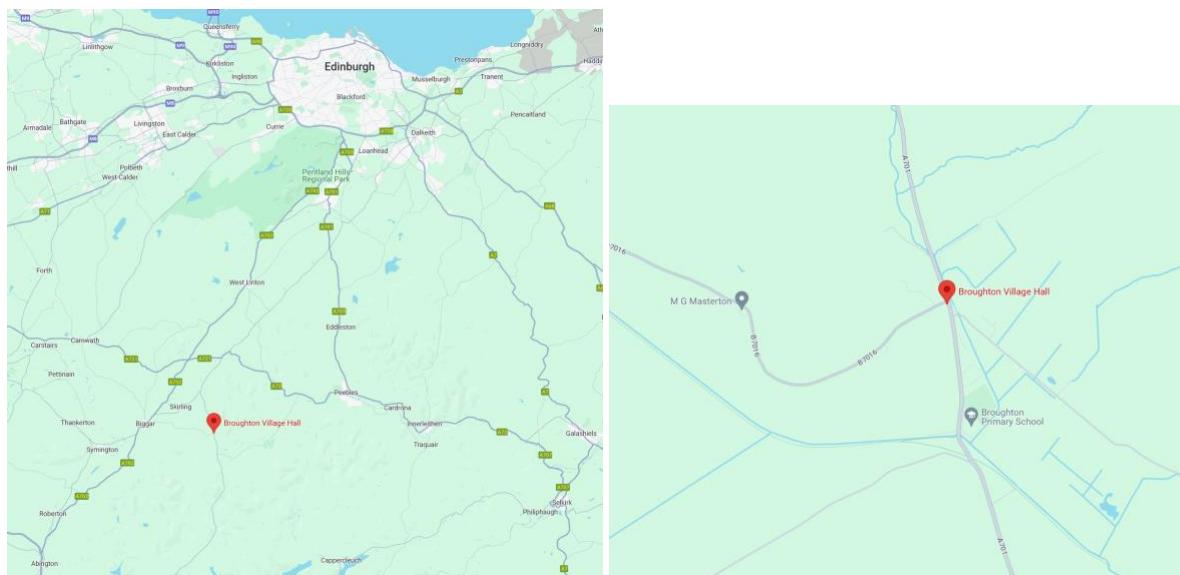
Christopher Lambton

Camilla Younger

Glenys Watt

Rehearsals

Rehearsals take place on Tuesdays from 1930-2130 in Broughton Village Hall, ML12 6HQ.



We ask that members arrive promptly, ready to begin singing at 19.30.

After a short warm up, we work for just under an hour, before we have a break (tea, coffee and biscuits provided!) at half time. Rehearsals finish at 21.30.

We ask members to aim for high attendance, we do understand that sometimes matters arise but we support each other by being present. We work hard to support all members with learning the pieces and ultimately, it is at the music director's discretion whether members have attained a sufficient standard to sing in our concerts. We do not require memorisation of the music, concerts are performed with scores.

As appropriate external soloists and instrumentalists attend rehearsals, usually closer to concert dates and we are always delighted to work with professional musicians.

The music director supports individual singers wishing to sing solos, whether this is in choral works, or between choir numbers, programming these are at the discretion of the music

director and committee and are decided on the basis of musical quality and appropriateness to the programme. Individual coaching from the musical director is offered.

The choir is divided into four sections: bass, tenor, alto and soprano. Beyond our usual Tuesday evening rehearsals, we do sometimes have sectionals, where each of the sections gets to work with the music director individually. In addition to this, we try to hold repertoire familiarity sessions before new projects, usually before a holiday so that the next large piece is set up before we start main rehearsals. We understand that not all members can necessarily make ad hoc times, so these sessions are not compulsory but we do try to arrange them at maximum convenience to members (usually weekends).

Our music director welcomes questions in rehearsal, whether they are about music theory/notation, vocal technique, how to follow a conductor, vocal health or other matters. We have an absolute zero-tolerance policy towards poor behaviour e.g. disruption, victimisation, personal comments on the singing of fellow members is taken very seriously. We are not interested in anything that spoils the music.

Resources and Materials

Physical copies of all the music we perform is provided by our librarian before each project. You will be issued a numbered copy, and this is yours to use for the duration of the project. You are encouraged to annotate your copies in pencil (please don't use pen so that copies can be cleaned after use!), and our musical director will advise you on useful markings you can make. Experienced members of your section will also be happy to help with this. We don't expect everyone to be able to read music perfectly on joining. Our MD will help you learn, and we have quite a few resources online for music reading – talk to us about these for access and feel free to ask lots of questions in rehearsals, if you're thinking about something, it's certain that others are too.

PDF copies of all our music are also available online, you should have been emailed a link to this, and [here it is again](#). Please contact us if you need help using the online resources. In particular these PDFs are useful if you want to print an additional copy to annotate more heavily (in pen for example!), or if you're travelling and want digital copies to look at.

Audio tracks: we also provide *learning tracks*, usually recordings of professional singers singing each of the parts. Very occasionally these will just be an instrument playing the vocal line, this is for new commissions, if no professional recording has yet been made. In many cases we also have sing along tracks with a full set of voices too. These can be found with the same link as the PDF files. However, we are also happy to copy them onto a thumb drive if you hand one in, clearly labelled with your name, address, and voice part.

Translations & Pronunciation Guides: when we sing in languages other than English, we provide translation and pronunciation guides, again in the same online folder as the PDF copies and audio tracks. We support our members in learning to sing in German, French, Italian and Latin which are the standard languages for classical choral music which is the bread and butter of our repertoire. When we sing in further languages, we also provide resources for them.

How do I know what kind of voice I have?

Singing is muscular and like any muscularity, subject to change over time. Training, aging, and health all have an influence on the voice. The categories outlined below are approximations, they are descriptive rather than prescriptive and the voice is malleable. It may be that after some time of training, someone who has been singing a high alto realises that they are in fact a soprano or a baritone heretofore convinced he can barely sing above the stave discovers a most marvellous head voice. We welcome and encourage self-reflection on the voice and experimentation with singing in different ranges. We ask that you commit to a particular part for a particular piece for reasons of practicality, but otherwise you are welcome to try different parts in different pieces.

The four main voice types:

Soprano

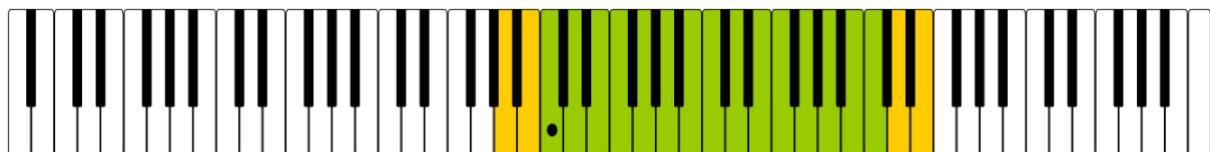


Figure 1 Soprano vocal range (C4–C6) notated on the treble staff and on piano keyboard in green with dot marking middle C



The soprano is the higher of the traditionally assigned female at birth voice categories. As the voice ascends it becomes clear and more bell like. As the voice descends, there is usually an increase in richness to the middle, before this reduces again, and the low notes are usually quite weak.

Alto

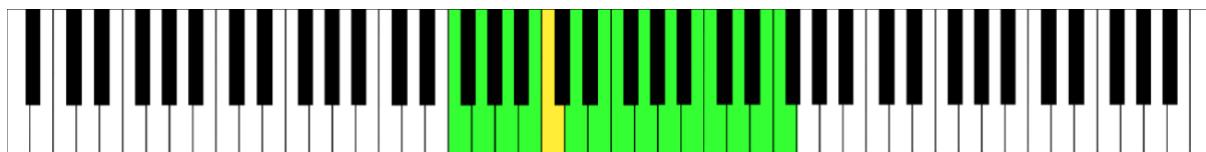


Figure 2 Alto vocal range, F3 to F5, notated on the treble staff (below) and on piano keyboard in green with the yellow key marking middle C.



The lower of the two assigned female at birth voice categories. The behaviour of the voice at the extremes of range are quite different to the sopranos. At the top, trained altos become extremely dramatic and at the bottom extremely rich. An assigned male at birth who sings in this range using falsetto is called a *countertenor* and is fairly rare in choral singing. Care must be taken for countertenors to blend well with altos and many countertenors can also sing Tenor or Bass in their chest voice.

Tenor



Figure 3 Tenor vocal range (C3–C5) notated on the treble staff (below) and on piano keyboard in green with dot marking middle C (C4). The numeral eight below the treble clef indicates that the pitches sound an octave lower than written. This is the standard clef for modern tenor parts in scores, although they read the upper voice on the bass staff in short score notation.



The tenor voice is the highest of the traditionally assigned male at birth voices. As the voice rises into the head voice (i.e. not using falsetto, but instead a full voice) it becomes pure but strong. True tenors get weaker towards the bottom, but many high baritones (see below) are comfortable singing tenor lines (perhaps using falsetto for the odd high note) and thus the lower pitches in the tenor part are usually secured by them. Increasingly, a number of assigned female at birth *contraltos*, alto singers who can sing rather low strongly sing the tenor part in choirs and this is entirely welcome.

Bass

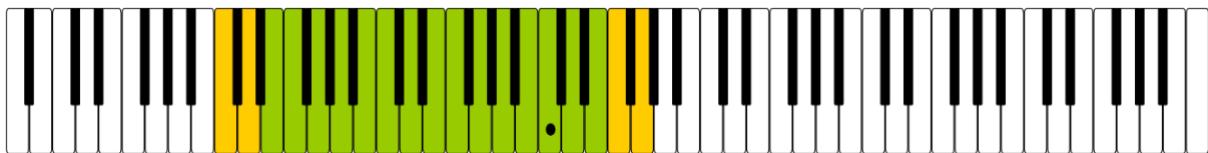


Figure 4 Bass vocal range (E2–E4) notated on the bass staff (below) and on piano keyboard in green with dot marking middle C (C4)



The lowest of the traditionally assigned male at birth voices the true bass is a wonderful gift to any choir. Western music is often described as bass generative. While the melody is important, it is the bass part that is of primary importance to harmony. The baritone is a higher category of bass, forming a bridge between the true basses and the tenors.

How to Practise

Ideally we recommend at least an hour of practice a week between rehearsals, usually best split into two slots. However, we know that some members are too busy to manage this every week while others find themselves doing far more because they enjoy it. So long as the voice is not over-strained singing is one of those endeavours in which you get out what you put in.

An example of a good practice schedule:

1. 5 minutes warming up with breathing exercises, such as sequential counts, or alexander technique posture. This moves on to vocalisation exercises such as long notes, scales, or patterns. Use any of the ones we do in the choir warm up or use resources like YouTube!
2. Seeing the lay of the land – it is advisable to spend 5 minutes or so singing through a piece. This is to remind oneself of the structure, certain passages that need work, and to check in with the voice.
3. Now it is time to work properly. Select a certain number of phrases to practise and try to sing them 3-5 times consecutively correctly before moving on to the next phrase. The pause and rewind buttons of the learning tracks are your friends! Good tips include stopping at breathing points, rather than continuing on. Set clear and achievable objectives for yourself, perhaps to pronounce words correctly, to sort out particular figures or to remember a line. You should spend the majority of your

practice time on this style of learning, about 15-20 minutes. It takes longer than one would like it to, but not as much times as one might be afraid of.

4. You have now earned the reward of singing through things for pleasure, find the spot in your practice place that suits your voice and sing things you love and enjoy the sound of your voice. Enjoy this for as long as you have.

It is important to remember, that as well as the notes, you should be strict with yourself on rhythm and tempo (using a metronome, either an app or a metronome device) and diction. If we are singing in another language, use the pronunciation guides and the tips from rehearsal. If you are singing in English, Julie Andrews is generally the best model to imitate. In languages we want clear vowels and precise consonants. Recall that we sing without microphones and thus a slight amount of exaggeration is needed, this might feel silly on your own, but the effect of it *en masse* is fantastic.

Remember your responsibility is learning your part, but it is the musical director's job to help you. Thus, bring questions and issues to rehearsal – once you've done all you can think of, make it the musical director's problem, after all, that is what we pay them for!

How to Read Music

If you are interested in learning how to read music, please look up the helpful information given in Wikihow: How to read Music. <https://www.wikihow.com/Read-Music>