



Ottery St Mary Choral Society

MEMBERS' HANDBOOK

2025/26

September 2025

Welcome

We are pleased to welcome new and returning members to the choir. We hope you will find this handbook useful. It contains the Section Rep contact details if you need to get in touch. We hope you enjoy singing with us and will join us for the planned skittles and quiz social events.

David Wade- Chairman

WHO'S WHO – 2025-2026

Musical Director: Malcolm Matthews BA. Cert.Ed.

Malcolm is a retired music teacher, and still teaches a number of private pupils at home. He was a member of the East Devon Arts Council during its time. Likes: playing and watching golf, tennis, football (a Plymouth Argyle supporter), crosswords, jigsaws and sudoku.. He has been our M.D. since 1999.

Accompanist: Richard Burdett

Richard Burdett joined us two years ago as rehearsal accompanist. As well as being a talented musician, giving great musical support to all voices, he has successfully integrated into the society.

Chairman: David Wade

David was appointed Chairman at the 2016 AGM. Born in Portsmouth, he studied at Manchester University and had a career in IT working for Fujitsu as a technician designing and then implementing corporate Microsoft-based solutions. Before moving to Devon, he lived in Slough and sang with choirs/choral societies in the Thames Valley, chiefly the Slough Philharmonic. In addition to singing, his musical interests include trombone and piano.

Committee:

Chairman	David Wade	07903 703727	davidrwade@outlook.com
Hon Treasurer	Liz Hooper	07811 485742	lizhooper16@hotmail.co.uk
Hon Secretary	Rob Clay	07531 905344	robandquillclay@live.co.uk
Membership Secretary	Bridget Oeppen	07815818698	bridget.oeppen@gmail.com
Publicity Secretary & Concert Programmes	Peter Hudson	07712 613182	hudsonpc674@gmail.com
Librarian	Julie Walters	07715040255	juliecarolinewalters@gmail.com
Social Secretary	Post Vacant		

Other posts include:

Soprano Section rep:	Kyle Hayes	07831 445008	jkh765cab@gmail.com
Alto Section rep:	Julia Thompson		juliamthompson192@gmail.com
Tenor Section rep:	David Pettitt	01404 815561	depettitt@btinternet.com
Bass Section rep:	Tim Savage	01404 812672	savages22@outlook.com
Website Manager	David Wade	07903 703727	davidrwade@outlook.com
House Manager (URC)	Pip Gascoigne-Pees	07855 861513	
Box Office	The Curious Otter Bookshop	01404 814469	
	Ticketsource	-----	Online via our website

Contact us using the Society's email address: osmcs@hotmail.co.uk

Covid Precautions

The climate in which Covid was a major disrupter to our lives has gone, but the infection is still around.

Please do not come to rehearsals if you are unwell, and suspect you may have Covid. If you are able to do a test, then please do so. If you have a cough or cold, these are sometimes mild symptoms, so don't come.

If you become unwell at rehearsal, go home and follow any NHS procedures that may be recommended.

Please keep your Voice Rep informed, in case you had inadvertently passed something on, and people need to be informed.

REHEARSAL NIGHTS

Rehearsals are held on Wednesdays in the United Reformed Church, Jesu Street, Ottery St Mary. Singing begins on the dot of 7.30 p.m. Music can be collected from the librarian when necessary. There is a fifteen-minute break after an hour for tea or coffee. **Please bring your own cup.**

Please always bring a soft pencil. At the librarian's request it should be no harder than 2B or 4B so that directions and notes made can be easily erased after the concert. A rubber is very useful too.

Rehearsals begin on the first Wednesday in September. The first session ends with the Christmas Concert, held on a Saturday early in December. The second session begins on the first Wednesday in January and ends with the Spring concert. *Please note, rehearsals continue through school half-term holidays.* These dates change occasionally to accommodate particular concerts and extra activities.

Car Sharing

Car parking space is scarce in Ottery. For rehearsal nights it is possible to park in Sainsburys car park, but during the daytime (e.g. concert days) there is a fine for over staying the two-hour maximum. A long stay car park is available at “Land of Canaan”.

Constitution

Printed copies of the constitution are available from the chairman. It is also featured on our website.

The Annual General Meeting is held in June or July. All committee members are elected for one year but can be re-elected annually at the AGM. There is no maximum term of office.

Name Badges

You will be supplied with a badge with your name and vocal part. Please wear it to all rehearsals. It greatly helps the friendly atmosphere of the choir. Keep it with your music between rehearsals so you don't forget to bring it on the night. If you lose your badge, Bridget Oeppen will supply a replacement at a cost of £1. She sings with the altos or can be contacted on 07815818698 or by email at bridget.oeppen@gmail.com

MUSIC

Scores

Hired vocal scores of the music to be sung are available from the Society's librarian (**Julie Walters**). You will be asked to indicate whether you will need a hired score or if you have one of your own. If you wish to purchase your own copy you are welcome to do so but remember that many works are published by two or more publishing houses. Check with the librarian which edition we will be using before buying.

Hired scores are collected in immediately after the conclusion of the concert performance. As we often enclose our music in folders for a concert, you are asked to remove music from the folders, and hand the folders in separately.

Deciding What We Sing

Members may make suggestions for future programmes to the Chairman during the course of the year. The coming year's programme is announced at the AGM. Members should be aware when requesting items that only a modest-sized orchestra can fit into our usual concert venue and that works needing large numbers of solo singers are also unlikely to be chosen for reasons of cost.

Carol Books

For our carols we use the Oxford University Press “Carols for Choirs” Book 1 (Green).

MEMBERSHIP

Annual Subscriptions

We are a community choir and no auditions are held. A love of music and a deep commitment to the Society and its activities are all that is required.

The subscription for 2025– 2026 is a single payment of £55 in September, or two payments of £30, in September and January respectively. Student (full time) membership is available @ £10 per term.

Please pay your subscriptions in the first month of each term.

Members are encouraged to pay using online banking:

National Westminster Bank

Account: OSM Choral Society

Account number: 72680547

Sort code: 51-61-23

Please use your surname as the reference

Rehearsal Only Membership

Those members who enjoy attending rehearsals, but do not wish to sing in the concert, are eligible for a complimentary ticket instead of their place on the concert stage.

Eligibility to Sing in Concerts

There is a requirement that all members should attend most rehearsals in preparation for a concert. Because of the size of the choir and the limited capacity of the stage in the Parish Church it may be necessary to limit the number of sopranos and altos for a particular concert still further. That decision would be made on the basis of individual attendance figures during the term, *so please ensure that your name is ticked off each week you attend on the register.*

Absence

If it is not possible for you to attend a rehearsal, please inform your section rep (contact details on page 2). Any prolonged absence should be notified to the Membership Secretary.

CONCERT DAYS

Order of Events at Church

- Our normal concert venue is Ottery St Mary Parish Church.
- Erection of the stage takes place on Friday afternoon before the concert. Able-bodied members and their friends and family (male and female) are sought in the weeks before the concert.
- General rehearsal from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm on Saturday, for all singers plus orchestra.
- Concert begins at 7.30 pm on the Saturday.
- Stage is dismantled and stored at the end of the concert. Volunteers, PLEASE stay till the job is complete.

Concert Dress

For men:

DJs, white shirts, black bow ties, black socks and smart black shoes. At the Christmas Concert red bow ties will be worn (supplied by the Society), not the traditional black.

For ladies:

Long black dresses with elbow length/long sleeves.

Alternatively: Long black skirt or smart trousers with black elbow length/long sleeved blouse. Coloured scarves supplied by the Society will be worn.

CONCERT TICKETS

Tickets are printed 3 to 4 weeks before the concert and are then available for sale at rehearsals.

EACH MEMBER IS EXPECTED TO SELL A MINIMUM OF TWO.

It is vital that members sell as many tickets as possible. Without this income our funds will be depleted and an increase in subscriptions would be needed to cover the shortfall! It is also more pleasurable to sing to a large audience than to an empty church.

Tickets are also sold both at:-

**“The Curious Otter” Bookshop in Mill Street, OSM
01404 814469. Opening hours 9.15–4.00 Mon-Sat
AND “TicketSource” on-line via our website**

Publicity Material

Programmes, A4 posters and A5 and A6 fliers are made available to members a few weeks before a concert. You are asked to display them prominently and liberally in your area, and in your car windows. *Please take as many as you can usefully place but remove them as soon as possible after the concert.*

SOCIAL SCENE

This year we had a very successful Quiz evening in April. We hope to be able to organise more occasions when members can socialize and get to know one another better.

There have been in the past occasional 'massed choir' events (often in Exeter Cathedral or the Royal Albert Hall) in which the society takes part. Nothing is currently on the horizon in 2025-26, but if the opportunity arises, we will let you know.

The Society is affiliated to "Making Music". Our representative is **Rob Clay**, who receives news items from that organisation

CHORAL SOCIETY WEBSITE

www.otterystmarychoral.org

The Society website is a valuable resource, packed with information for both members and non-members. It features the latest diary of events, and just about everything you need to know about the choir. There are links to selected YouTube versions of the music we will be performing at future concerts. The current version of the Members' Handbook is available for reference. You can also read about the rich history of the Society over more than one hundred years.

You can contact us on **osmcs@hotmail.co.uk**

Those of you for whom the internet holds no appeal, don't worry! The Society still operates as it always has, with all the information you need provided at rehearsals.

VOLUNTEER HELPERS

- Erection of the stage takes place on Friday afternoon before the concert. Able-bodied members and their friends and family (male and female) are sought in the week before the concert.
- Helpers are also sought to take down and put the stage away after concerts. Many hands make light work of this.
- We need helpers to check the tickets and take payments at the church door before concerts.
- More helpers are always appreciated to serve refreshments after concerts and to clear up afterwards.
- We have volunteers to provide our entry to the church Christmas Tree Festival, but they would appreciate help and we'll need more volunteers for this next year.

Dates for 2025 – 2026

Wednesday	3 rd September 2025	Rehearsals begin for Christmas Concert
Saturday	13th December 2025	CHRISTMAS CONCERT OSM Parish Church
Wednesday	17th December 2025	Carols at Otter Nurseries
Saturday	12th April 2025	SPRING CONCERT OSM Parish Church
Saturday	14th November 2026	CLASSICS GALORE CONCERT Great Hall Exeter University
Wednesday	8th July 2026	Annual General Meeting
Wednesday	2nd September 2026	Rehearsals begin for Christmas Concert

Concert Music for 2025 – 2026

Christmas 2025

**Schubert's Mass in E Flat Major
Selection of Carols**

Spring 2026

Joseph Haydn – The Creation

**Classics Galore
14th November 2026**

**A mixture of light classical
favourites**

