



Exmoor Singers of London Chamber Choir

INFORMATION FOR JOINERS

It is hoped that the following information will be helpful to those considering applying for membership of *Exmoor Singers of London* and useful, for their future reference, to those who do join us. Of course it cannot be comprehensive! Further information is readily available from fellow-members and from our website: www.exmoorsingers.org

“What am I getting myself into?”

Here is a highly-condensed pen-portrait of the group:

Exmoor Singers of London is an auditioned mixed chamber choir currently numbering 38 singers.

We are one of the country's top amateur choirs and we aspire to continue to improve. We are a repertory choir. We are a social group, with a voting membership and an elected committee, as opposed to a list choir. We are primarily self-funded. Our members are serious about attaining high choral standards, and must be sight-readers on entry, but an academic musical background is not expected. A number of our members take singing lessons; this is encouraged but not required.

Our repertoire is biased towards the serious end, but otherwise covers the widest chronological and stylistic range of music at which we can excel: this stops short of music relying on perfect pitch.

We rehearse in Imperial College, South Kensington every Sunday, normally from 6-9pm with occasional earlier starts, and rarely at other times. Our rehearsals are intensive and are focused on choral matters as individual note-rehearsal tends to be time-inefficient. Our post-rehearsal venue tends to be the Queen's Arms. A typical season might include 3-4 own-promoted concerts, the majority unaccompanied; 1-2 festival or competition appearances; 2-3 external bookings, the proceeds of which go to help fund our other activities; 1-2 musical evenings; and several other social functions.

“What do recent joiners say about Exmoor Singers?”

“Joining Exmoor Singers has been an extremely positive experience for me. I had only recently moved to London and was very keen to find a choir to sing with. I was extremely impressed by the choir's professional website and, having asked a few singing friends for advice, I decided that this was exactly the kind of choir I was looking for.

Having contacted the choir I was invited to attend their wonderful Christmas concert, followed by a trial rehearsal in the New Year. The trial rehearsal is a great idea as it gives singers the opportunity to decide whether the way that the choir works appeals to them and allows them to experience a normal rehearsal without the pressure of having to audition first. Having thoroughly enjoyed the trial rehearsal and been further impressed by the high standards of the choir I then returned the following week for an audition.

Since joining, I have found Exmoor Singers to be extremely welcoming and friendly. Everyone works hard and keeping the musical standards high demands commitment but there is also time to relax and socialise after rehearsals, over our weekend recording sessions and festivals and, most notably, during the choir's annual trip to Orford Ness!

If you are a keen singer looking for a choir which performs to the highest standards a wide variety of choral music and are prepared to be committed and enthusiastic then Exmoor Singers of London is the choir for you!”

Sarah Coffey, Soprano

“What is my commitment?”

Exmoor Singers of London expects you:

- **To support the great majority of our activities** (*because we are not a list choir, and because we are a repertory choir*)
- **To attend every rehearsal unless you really cannot, and in any event to attend the great majority of rehearsals** (*because we aim to attain high choral standards*)
- **To arrive on time for and ready to participate positively in rehearsals** (*because rehearsals are intensive*)
- **To give reasonable notice of unavailability** (*to permit effective planning of performances and rehearsals*)

- **To do necessary personal study between rehearsals** (*because individual note-rehearsal is time-inefficient*)
- **To pay promptly amounts you owe to the group** (*because we are self-funded*)

“What do I get in return?”

You can expect Exmoor Singers of London:

- **To arrange a varied and rewarding programme of musical and social activities**
- **To plan performances and rehearsals effectively**
- **To give you reasonable notice of performances and extended rehearsals**
- **To listen to your views and communicate significant decisions to you effectively**
- **To provide you with musical scores in good time where possible**

“What is this going to cost me?”

As already explained, Exmoor Singers of London does not receive regular sponsorship or public subsidy, so we have to budget to break even over the course of the year. Here is key information about the costs of membership:

- **Membership subscriptions**
Each member pays a **£40 (£15** students and unwaged) yearly membership subscription. This is not normally refundable if you leave during the year. The group’s financial year runs from 1 October to 30 September; singers who join mid-year pay a proportional subscription in the year in which they join.
- **Music**
Each singer is responsible for buying his or her own music. Usually, the librarian orders new scores in bulk and sells the music on to members, passing on the benefit of bulk discounts where available. We do not, in general, use hire scores even where these are available, finding it preferable musically for each singer to have his or her own copy and markings; furthermore, we often re-perform past repertoire. Given our wide repertoire and strong commitment to modern music, scores can occasionally be quite expensive, although this is a factor which is taken into account in programming works. Experienced singers and those who stay with the group for a long period will often be able to mitigate this cost by using music they already own. By way of example, the total music bill for a recent year was approximately **£75**, but it will of course vary from year to year, depending on the repertoire and cost.
- **Travel and accommodation**
Although the majority of our performances are in London, Exmoor Singers also performs out of town both in the UK and abroad. The costs of travel and accommodation in these cases are, generally, borne by the individual member. However, whenever these costs are likely to be significant – especially for overseas travel (1-2 times a year) – the group tries to make the most cost-effective mode of transport available to members (bulk-purchase airline tickets, private coach etc.) and normally passes on the benefit of any travel grants or sponsorship that may be obtained.
- **Tickets**
Members are, naturally, expected to sell as many tickets as possible for Exmoor Singers of London’s own promotions. However, we do not, as a rule, set a fixed target or ask members to buy a fixed number themselves.
- **Miscellaneous**
Each member needs a standard black music folder for performances, available through the group.