

The Heritage Singers
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Plans for expansion and change in 2009

It has now been 15 years since the foundation of the original Heritage Singers and in that time you can be proud of the fact that your singing has provided music for some 250 plus events in venues from the tiniest village churches to Cathedrals and festivals; without doubt carrying out our stated aims of 'maintaining and restoring the Anglican Choral Tradition in those churches without choirs'.

In recent years we have also extended our repertoire of concert music and begun to provide concerts for churches, (starting of course when we toured America). However as this was not part of our original remit and also since, on our limited rehearsal time, we do not always have the opportunity to put the best of concerts together, I have decided that we are going to make some changes in 2009 to re-order our resources. This will be only the second time in our history that we have made any changes, some of you will remember the smaller choir we have now emerging from its much bigger original parent choir.

The Heritage Singers will continue exactly as before with a slightly reduced number of events and with the emphasis on providing choral services for church services. There will be a new direction as we offer special services, similar to the All Souls Day event at Middleton some years ago, rather than the more traditional Evensongs of the past; these are becoming a quite rare breed nowadays. There will be a pattern of Passiontide services, summer services (including an away visit), autumn services and Christmas events almost exactly as now. In addition the choir will continue with weddings and other bookings when asked and an occasional concert in the course of a tour (such as the one at Dublin last year) may still appear. There will also be a future recording possibly of Christmas music for the New Year and there will be a continuous recruitment plan ongoing to ensure that this choir continues to thrive in its special field.

Alongside this will come a new choir, overlapping with and retaining the name; to be known as the **Heritage Masterworks Chorale**. It is being planned that this choir will only meet once a month for an intensive three hour rehearsal in order to prepare neglected masterworks from the choral repertoire for 4 concerts a year, and a recording when works are ready. Concerts will be held in unusual and town centre venues and the audience will be offered subscription tickets annually.

This choir will wear black shirts and trousers for both men and women, with the addition of ties or neck ties and it will be 16 to 24 singers chosen from a pool of 24. I am spreading the net far and wide for new singers and in order to obtain a very specific sound for this choir there will be auditions. Those singers who join, (although there is less commitment) will need to practise and learn their music between rehearsals.

This is the shape of the plans, obviously for the new choir they have yet to be completely worked out and there is a Facebook group (Masterworks Chorale) that you can join to register your interest and keep up with news.

I am committed to the success of both choirs and also to continuing to provide you all with the exciting and sometimes amazing singing opportunities we have experienced over the last 15 years.

The ethos that everybody is of the utmost importance in a choir will remain, for without all your hard work we would not have the amazing track record we can be justifiably proud of owning.