

Green Street Blues: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Thank you for showing an interest in our choir!

We've put together some FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS to give you a better idea about what we do, and help you decide if you would like to join us.

When and where do rehearsals take place?

Rehearsals take place every Tuesday evening between 7.30 p.m. and 9.45 pm at The Drive Methodist Church Sevenoaks, The Drive, Sevenoaks TN13 3AF. [You are welcome to arrive from 7.15pm and stay until 10.00pm to help set up and clear away and meet members.] We break for Christmas/ New Year, Easter and in the summer. Throughout the year we have several extra rehearsals in the run-up to special performances. These usually take place between 10a.m. and 4 p.m. on either Saturday or Sunday. You will be notified of all rehearsal dates well in advance.

How do I join?

You will be invited to come along to one of our normal Tuesday evening rehearsals where you will be made very welcome. Many people joined on their own so don't worry that you don't know anyone when you turn up – you soon will.....!!

One of the Committee Members will meet you and look after you for the evening. You will not do much for the first week except listen but assuming you come back for a second week (and most people do) you will be asked to sing a few scales and a simple song of your choice privately with the Musical Director, so she can judge the range of your voice and where you would best fit in the choir. You will then be allocated to one of the four sections in the choir and given the music and an audio CD or link to an MP3 file to learn one song. You will be helped to do this by your section leader and everyone else in your section so don't be afraid to ask.

When you are ready (3-4 weeks later) you will be asked to sing the song in quartet. Again, this will be done in private. We have all been through this process, so understand you may feel nervous, but before this happens you will have plenty of opportunities to practice to get used to hearing others singing with you. Just ask your section leader when you are ready to try singing with a quartet, we usually do this during the break. At your audition the Musical Director will assess your voice, the blend, how it fits or will fit with the chorus sound and if the MD is happy then – you're in!!

Do I need to be able to read music?

No – in fact many members don't read music. While it helps, particularly if you are learning a harmony part (anything that isn't the main melody), you will be given teach tracks (either MP3 files or CDs) as well as the music when you learn a new song.

How much does it cost?

Membership subs to the choir are currently £30 per month. This pays for most items of stage dress (see below), hire of the hall, insurances, music, fees for professional coaches who help us from time to time and LABBS membership (see below). A returnable deposit of £20 is required on receipt of costume.

In addition, we sometimes compete in a national barbershop competition which in recent years has been held in Bournemouth and Harrogate, when we pay our own expenses for the weekend [in the region of £300-£400] and is usually a two night stay. There may be other travel costs associated with other competitions and performances, but we try to keep the cost to a minimum.

Do we perform in public?

Yes, as well as attending the LABBs Convention (see below) over recent years we have taken part in several competitions and festivals e.g. Bournemouth Music Competitions Festival, Sevenoaks Summer Festival; Ewhurst Festival of Flowers Concert; Brandenburg Festival in London. We also perform at paid concerts, whether that be for the W.I., weddings, anniversaries, parties or local care homes and busk for charities at various times of the year.

What do I wear?

On rehearsal nights we wear ordinary casual clothes. If we have a visiting coach we usually wear our GSB T-Shirts with dark trousers and comfy shoes (everyone will be told if we are in GSB-mode). For stage and Sing-outs we dress up and you will be issued with choir clothing as necessary. You will need to buy your own stage shoes.

What happens if I can't come to rehearsal?

We all make every effort to attend each rehearsal, after all, who would want to miss out on the coaching and fun but "stuff happens" whether nice (holidays) or nasty (illness, emergencies, work commitments etc) so you should let your section leader, Chair and Membership Secretary know if you won't be able to attend. This stops us worrying that you've had an accident or some other disaster has befallen you on the way to Sevenoaks

What about social activities?

We try to celebrate GSB's birthday in January with a meal out in a local pub and often after sing-outs and competitions we take the opportunity to eat, drink and be merry together. We are a very sociable lot and you'll soon find out that you'll never be in want of someone to chat and have a laugh with during any of our social times

How does the Club run?

The club has a constitution and is run by a Committee which is elected every year at the AGM which takes place in January. Everyone is encouraged to do a Committee job or one of the other essential non-Committee jobs. We are all busy people and therefore sharing the jobs out means that the workload is spread and everyone is involved with the running of the Club. The Musical Director looks after the music side of the choir, and is supported by the Music Team – our MD leads the choir in all music related matters.

What is LABBS?

This is the Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers, the Association to which GSB is affiliated. For more information see www.labbs.org.uk

What is Convention?

Convention is the LABBS annual competition which takes place in October/November each year. There is a chorus and a quartet competition with gold, silver and bronze medals being awarded to the top three quartets and choruses.

Check out more about us and the music we sing on our website

www.greenstreetblues.org

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