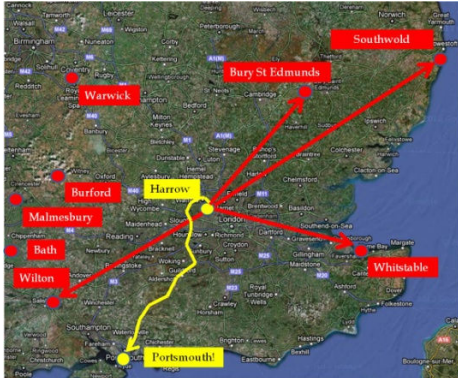


# Harrow Choral Society

## Away-Day to Portsmouth – Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2015

### What is an Away day??



Our annual Away-days are important and very popular events in our calendar. They provide us with the opportunity for an enjoyable, informal and relaxed day out together and to perform concerts in less familiar surroundings - and to audiences who don't know us. Destinations for recent Away-days have included Southwold, Whitstable, Bury St Edmunds, Wilton, Bath and numerous other interesting places.

Friends, partners and guests are extremely welcome to join us - and in fact they comprise an important part of the occasion. Although we have to give priority

to our singers, there is usually plenty of space and I don't think we've ever had to turn anybody away.

Typically, we depart from Harrow at about 9.00am in a luxury coach, stopping for morning coffee along the way. We usually organise some sort of optional sight-seeing or other activity before partaking of a leisurely 3-course lunch together and then continuing the journey to our chosen concert destination. Upon arrival, and after settling in, we usually hold a rehearsal which is followed by a brief period of free time before we prepare for and perform the evening concert. After the concert, if time permits, we may well adjourn to a local pub before re-boarding the coach and returning to Harrow.

The Away-day concerts have free admission but with a retiring collection in favour of a local charity and in return the charity help us to publicise the event and to attract an audience.

### Portsmouth

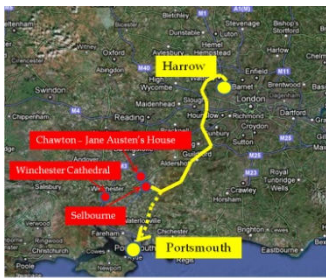
This year we will be going to Portsmouth where we will perform in the Anglican Cathedral. Portsmouth has a very interesting history, much of it associated with the Royal Navy. It is home to two thirds of the UK's surface fleet and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the most heavily fortified city in the world. It has the world's oldest dry-dock and is home to HMS Victory and the Tudor fighting ship Mary Rose.



Portsmouth is also the UK's only island city and is a very interesting mix of old and new, the Cathedral being a good example of this. In the 1920s it was a small old Parish Church but when the Diocese became independent of Winchester in the 1920s, an ambitious plan commenced to

enlarge it quite dramatically and make it a Cathedral. However, work stopped at the outbreak of the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war and didn't recommence until the 1990s. It was eventually consecrated in 2002. It's located near to the re-generated area of Gun Wharf – similar to St Katherine's Dock in London – and houses Spinnaker Tower with the highest viewing platform outside London.

## Stops along the way



We will be travelling by luxury, air-conditioned coach, departing from our usual rehearsal venue – St Alban's Church in North Harrow – at 8.45am on the morning of Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July. We'll drive round the M25 and then head off down the A3 to our first stop which is for coffee and biscuits at:



**The Queens at Selborne.** There's a very nice garden at our disposal but if the weather is against us the interior is also very pleasant and atmospheric.



**Jane Austen's House – Chawton.** Selbourne is quite close to our choice of two guided tours. One is Jane Austen's House at Chawton where she wrote three novels, including *Emma*, and where she re-worked *Pride and Prejudice* before publication. We will be met by a guide who will give us a presentation about the House prior to our wander around. If the weather is nice there is also a very pleasant short walk to the very pretty church where Jane Austen's sister Cassandra and her mother are buried.



**Winchester Cathedral** is the other tour choice. It was started in 1079 but there was a Saxon church on the site for 400 years before that and the footprint is still visible. The cathedral has the longest nave and the greatest over-all length of any Gothic cathedral in Europe – and Jane Austen is buried there. The history is extremely interesting, not least the incredible restoration work carried out to the foundations in the early 1900s by diver William Walker. He worked 6 hrs a day from 1906 to 1912 in total darkness in depths up to 6 metres packing the severely waterlogged foundations with 25,000 bags of concrete, 115,000 concrete blocks and 900,000 bricks! He is credited with saving the cathedral from total collapse. This and other elements of the Cathedral's 1000 year history will be explained by our group tour guide.



The logistics of the tours are that the coach will drop the Jane Austen fans at Chawton and then drive the Cathedral people to Winchester. Having dropped them, the coach will return to Chawton to pick up the first group and then return once more to Winchester to collect the second group. We will then head off for lunch.

## Royal Winchester Golf Club



This is a very attractive location where we will first have a drink in the bar and then move to the dining area for our leisurely three-course lunch. The menu is attached and, in due course, you will need to decide what you would like. Don't worry if on the day you can't remember what you've ordered – you will be reminded! We then continue our journey to Portsmouth.

## Rehearsal and Concert

We hope to arrive at Portsmouth Cathedral at about 4.00pm and after disembarking and sorting ourselves out Simon will start the rehearsal. Non-singers can take the opportunity of some sight-seeing – eg the Historic Naval Dockyard (HMS Victory etc.) or perhaps just around Gun Wharf/Spinnaker Tower which is a very pleasant area.

We will have a 'Green Room' which in fact is the cathedral hall and after the rehearsal we will have tea and home-made cakes followed by a further sight-seeing opportunity until about 7.00pm when we will change and get ready for the concert which will start at 7.30pm. The concert programme will be the same as for our Summer Concert – ie Vivaldi *Gloria*, Vaughan Williams *In Windsor Forest*, and three madrigals.

Our Partner Charity will be The Roberts Centre which is a local children-centric homelessness charity which does brilliant work. During the concert their chief executive will make a short presentation to the audience and there will be a retiring collection which will be divided between them and the Cathedral fund. During the concert interval, drinks and other refreshments for audience and choir will be available from the bar – operated by the Cathedral.



Depending on the time available, we may include a brief pub-visit before we get back on the coach and commence our journey back to North Harrow – hopefully arriving well before it turns into a pumpkin. Our ETA is likely in fact to be about 11.30pm.

## Cost

The cost per head will be £56. This is inclusive of coach, coffee & biscuits at Selbourne, choice of tour, 3-course lunch and afternoon tea & cakes. Do please travel on the coach – it is 91 seats of air-conditioned luxury and travelling together is a nice part of the day – and you can also forget all about car parking and breathalysers. If, for whatever reason, you would prefer not to travel on the coach, the cost will be £36 per head.

The full itinerary and the lunch menu are attached.

## Harrow Choral Society

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### Itinerary (approximate)

Depart North Harrow (St Albans Church, The Ridgeway) HA2 7PF	8.45am
Arrive The Queens at Selborne for coffee GU34 3JJ	10.15am
Depart Selborne for Chawton GU34 1SD	11.00am
Arrive at Chawton (Jane Austen's House) and drop some passengers	11.10am
Coach departs for Winchester Cathedral SO23 9LS with remaining Passengers	11.15am
Arrive at Winchester Cathedral and drop passengers	11.45am
Coach departs (empty) for Chawton GU34 1SD to collect passengers	11.45am
Coach arrives back at Chawton	12.15pm
Coach departs from Chawton returning to Winchester Cathedral	12.15pm
Arrive at Winchester Cathedral to collect remaining passengers	12.45pm
Depart Winchester Cathedral for Royal Winchester Golf Club SO22 5QE	12.45pm
Arrive at Golf Club	1.00pm
Drinks and lunch (lunch starting, say, 1.30pm)	
Depart Golf Club for Portsmouth Cathedral PO1 2HH	3.15pm
Arrive Portsmouth Cathedral	4.00pm
Rehearsal	4.30 – 5.30pm
Tea (and cakes!)	5.30 – 6.00pm
Free time	6.00 – 7.00pm
Concert	7.30 – 9.30pm
Pub (possibly)	9.45 – 10.15pm
Depart Portsmouth for North Harrow	10.15pm
Arrive North Harrow	11.30pm

## **Harrow Choral Society**

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### **Our Lunch menu at the Royal Winchester Golf Club**

#### **Starters**

Prawn & Avocado Cocktail in a Dill Crème Fraiche Dressing

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Roulade of Chicken and Ratatouille on a Mediterranean Tomato & Basil Dressing

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Trio of Melon on Port and Cumberland Sausage with a drizzle of Crème Fraiche

#### **Main Courses**

Steak & Ale Pie

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Breast of Chicken Braised in a Red Wine & Mushroom Sauce

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Escalope of Haddock on Braised Spinach with White Wine Sauce

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Vegetarian Option

#### **Desserts**

Lemon Mousse on a Strawberry Jelly

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Seasonal Fruit Crumble

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Black Forest Trifle

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**Coffee & Mints**