

Spode Music Week

Information for first time Guests

The Venue

Beechwood Sacred Heart School, Pembury Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN2 3QD.

Beechwood House is an Edwardian Mansion built by a Mayor of Tunbridge Wells as a private family home. On his death, it was bought by Nuns of the Sacred Heart Community. The Ballroom was converted into a Chapel and they opened a girls boarding school. Beechwood Sacred Heart School is still operating (although no longer run by the Nuns) and Beechwood House comprises the main part of the buildings of the school. There are attractive grounds and the setting is about one and half miles from the centre of Tunbridge Wells.

The House itself is a rambling and confusing building. It is not uncommon for those staying in it for the first time to get lost! It doesn't take long to find your bearings, but if you are lost, just ask for directions. The House does not provide soap or towels and course members are asked to bring these items with them. There are no ground floor rooms and no rooms with en-suite facilities and this means course members will be sharing bathrooms with others. Please respect this and endeavour to keep the bathrooms clean. For the comfort of other guests, smoking is not permitted anywhere within the building, especially within bedrooms. Smokers can smoke in the grounds. Pets are not permitted at Beechwood, although this rule does not apply to Guide dogs and Hearing Dogs.

There are Tennis courts and Table Tennis available for guests use. Those wishing to play these should bring their own equipment. There is also a croquet lawn. There are a number of pianos in Beechwood, although the Grand is reserved for practice by recitalists until the last few days of the course. The other pianos can be used by course members after 8am and up until 11pm at night.

The course has a limited number of music stands and course participants are requested to bring their own (labelled) stand, if at all possible.

Bedrooms

Allocation of bedrooms is done to maximise usage and accommodate individuals with particular needs as best as possible. Most rooms are single occupancy and quite small. The few dormitory sized rooms are reserved for families, but these are limited and families with older children may find that they cannot be allocated to the same room. In this instance, children will be placed in rooms next door or very close to their parents bedrooms. From the

age of eleven children and parents cannot be guaranteed to be near to each other. If on arrival you have a problem with your room, please arrange for any transfer or change with the Bursar and not with the House staff. Any kind of domestic request should normally be made to the Bursar, rather than to the House staff. Parents with young children are asked to keep them from playing in the corridors before 8am as this may disturb those still sleeping.

Arrival

Course members arriving on the first day should arrive before lunch (which is at 1pm). Those coming for less than the full week are asked to arrange a time of arrival with the Bursar beforehand. There are plenty of spaces for parking cars outside Beechwood House. Normally the front door of Beechwood is kept locked and you will need to be buzzed to be let in. On the first morning of the course, it is likely that the door will be open. Just inside the main entrance, you should find someone who will inform you of your room allocation and show you the way to your room.

Directions

Fortunately the School is fairly easy to find. The best route down from the Motorway system around London, is to take the A21 and follow it all the way to the Tunbridge Wells turning. The exit is signposted for the town centre and "Pembury". Drive up to the roundabout at the top of the slip road and take the last exit signposted A264 Town Centre. That road is Pembury road and Beechwood School is on the left hand side as you drive along the road towards the centre of Tunbridge Wells. The School has a large Red wooden sign with the name of the school on it next to the entrance gates. Please drive in and park in the carpark at the front (or side) of the House. You may need to ring to get entrance to the main building where there will be someone waiting to show you to your room.

If coming on the train, then the station to go to is Tunbridge Wells (which is about an hours journey from London) and take a taxi. It's not very far out of the centre (about 5 minutes in a taxi). There are Taxi ranks at the front (Mount Pleasant) and the rear (Station Approach) of the station. The front is better for access to the road going to Beechwood. For those thinking of walking from the station, you should bear in mind that it is quite a walk from the station and it's all uphill!

Finally

We hope that you will enjoy your stay at Beechwood House. If you have any queries not answered by this information sheet, please contact the Bursar who will be happy to provide any further information.