

Voice Box

Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers
www.labbs.org.uk

Autumn 2024 £4



Making History and New Beginnings...



Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers

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As I write this in July, the weather is still cold and wet, but I really hope that when you read it you will have had a lovely summer.

I recently returned from the Barbershop Harmony Society International Convention in Cleveland Ohio, where The White Rosettes, Barberlicious and our BABS friends Limelight sang up a storm. There will be more of that later in this edition.

I was sorry to miss Prelims, but, by all accounts, the standard was fantastic with high scores and approaching fifty quartets participating. Our Events Team led by Kristina Mair and our Director of Education and Judging, Alison Thompson, worked hard to arrange things so that we could fairly accommodate this number of contestants. Changes can be difficult but how fantastic to have to make changes because of the high number of quartets. This year things were made more difficult because I was unable to bring the equipment or MC at short notice, Kristina was trapped in an airport by cancelled flights until the last moment and our Marketing and Communications director, Mel, had major car trouble! Thanks to all for overcoming these issues



and hats off to everyone brave enough to step up to sing in a quartet!

As I am sure you would expect, work is also advancing for our own convention in October, and I recommend that you check out the additional activities which the team has included this year, in response to your feedback. <https://www.labbs.org.uk/convention> And speaking of planning, we are of course also planning for our 50th Anniversary in 2026. The LABBS 50th Anniversary Feedback Form will be open until 1st November. Alison Liddell is our 50th Anniversary Coordinator, and you can find the link to the feedback form in her article included in

this edition of VoiceBox on page 4. We really want the year to be special and to reflect your ideas so please do let us know what you think via the feedback form! I cannot end this foreword without welcoming our new VoiceBox Editor, Victoria Chin. She has bravely volunteered to take over this important part of our community and has some exciting ideas for the future. Thanks Vic! Please continue to support her with timely submission of your interesting copy and pictures.

Sue Ranson
LABBS Chair

Deadline for next edition: Friday 1st November 2024

Please send all submissions to voicebox@labbs.org.uk

Articles can be up to 350 words in length and should be accompanied by up to two photos.

Photos must be 1MB or larger. Original images taken on a phone or camera should satisfy this requirement. *Please note, images downloaded from social media pages, websites or message apps will usually be less than 1MB.*

More info can be found in the [VoiceBox Contributor's Guide](#).

2025 Deadlines: Friday 31st Jan, Friday 25th April, Friday 25th July, Friday 31st October

It's goodbye from me...

It seems like such a long time ago that Natalie Feddon was touring the UK doing her Roving Chair reports, we were all still finding our way out of the pandemic, and plans were being made for Unconventional Convention. Back then, in August 2021, Natalie visited Cornwall and we got chatting over a G&T. To cut a long story short, three weeks later I was writing my first 'Update from Your Editor' for VoiceBox!

A lot has happened since: pandemic restrictions have been lifted, we've had two brilliant in-person Conventions, and I've written a further nine updates as your editor. Following another conversation with Natalie in spring 2023 (no G&T this time!), I also became LABBS' Marketing and Communications Director.

This is such a rewarding role and enables me to not only play an active part in how our Association is managed and run on your behalf, but to also support other LABBS teams such as Events and E&J. Although I have an amazing team of M&C volunteers who support me and LABBS, it is a large role and in the absence of finding

a twenty-fifth hour in the day, a new VoiceBox editor was needed to replace me.

Enter Victoria Chin from [Cheshire Chord Company](#)! Victoria shadowed me on the Summer edition, and from this edition, she's your new editor. She has some fantastic ideas for VoiceBox and is very much looking forward to hearing all about what you have been getting up to. As well as being your new editor, Victoria is the mastermind behind LABBS' podcast, SingLABBS.

The podcast is a new venture for LABBS. We'll be bringing you all the news and updates from across our Association, and finding out what our choruses, quartets and members have been getting up to. Produced quarterly to coincide with VoiceBox and with special episodes too, we'll also be discussing the barbershop harmony scene in the UK and beyond, and inviting special guests from the wider barbershop community to come and chat with us. If you haven't managed to listen to our first edition yet, you can find it here: <https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/singlabbs>



So, I guess this is goodbye from me as your editor. My sincere thanks to everyone who's supported me, and VoiceBox, over the past three years. From proofreaders to contributors, it has been a delight to work with you all, and a joy to get to know so many of you as a result.

Mel Baber
Marketing and Communications
Director

Hello everyone!

I'm Victoria, your new VoiceBox editor, and podcast co-host. A huge thank you to Mel and the board for trusting me with this very special part of LABBS life. I'm looking forward to bringing you all the latest LABBS news, and to getting to know everyone in the process. I'm a lifelong ensemble singer and in January this year, celebrated ten years of barbershop singing. I sing with Cheshire Chord Company,

Octavia (the octet with nine members!) and my lovely quartet Liquorice All-Chords. I really hope you enjoy this edition of VoiceBox and that you'll enjoy listening along as we start the podcast journey together.

Victoria Chin
VoiceBox Editor



LABBS' 50th Anniversary Celebrations

The LABBS Board are in the early stages of planning celebrations for our 50th Anniversary in 2026 and would like to understand the views of our members.

With that in mind, we'd be grateful if you would complete [LABBS' 50th Anniversary Feedback Form](#) to share your ideas, suggestions, or views about how we might celebrate this magnificent milestone. All responses will be collated and passed to LABBS teams for consideration.



Whilst we recognise that Convention is a major event in the calendar, we are looking to celebrate our anniversary over the whole of 2026 so please feel free to make broad and varied suggestions!

To submit your feedback, please click on the link above or scan the QR code, by 1st November.

Alison Liddell
50th Anniversary Coordinator



Membership Director Board Visits

One Acchord Ladies A Cappella Chorus, Scottish Borders

It was a cold, wet, July day when I visited One Acchord in the Scottish Borders but I was welcomed by a very warm, cheery bunch of ladies. Unfortunately, their MD Nick was not able to be with the chorus on their monthly Saturday rehearsal, but their Assistant MD Gill stepped up to the mark. Gill had been to the last LABBS Harmony College where she had taken the Chorus Directors stream and was excited to put her newly learned skills into practice. They were working towards their show, 'That's Life in Harmony', at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival on 3rd August. With two, one-hour performances, almost all their repertoire would be needed, so I was treated to lots of songs. Unfortunately, the Chair, Sally, was unable to attend the rehearsal but their Vice Chair, Liz, was on hand to greet me and Charles and made us feel very welcome. She introduced me to their newest members, and I was able to explain a little bit about LABBS to them and how excited we were about our upcoming 50th Anniversary. I was delighted to hear the difference in the sound following their joint coaching weekend with Albacappella and Tartan Harmony, the other two Scottish choruses. The LABBS quartet

champions from 2019, Sound Central, were the very able coaches for the weekend retreat and the £500 grant from LABBS had helped One Acchord to be the hosts. The comments from those who attended stated how they had learnt so much, had so much fun, and couldn't wait to do it all again.

One member of the chorus approached me and wanted to share how the chorus had 'saved her life'. Following the very sudden death of her husband, she couldn't find a way forward but with the help and support of her wonderful friends in the chorus, she was able to see a light and find her way back. She really wanted to share that with me and tell me that the chorus was more than a group of ladies who sang, but a group of very special individuals who gave her a reason to live. The format for their monthly Saturday rehearsals is one I have not seen in any chorus before but would encourage every chorus to consider. They started at 12.30 with a bring and share lunch (this month provided by the Baris and Leads and next time will be provided by the Tenors and Basses). Everyone



One Acchord

sat around the full table of delights and chatted to one another. Such a treat at a rehearsal. At 13.15 the warm up started with some physical dance moves, which I was encouraged to join in with. My two left feet added to the fun and by the end of the physical warm up they were ready to start a few vocal warm ups and a very lovely round. About 14.45 there was a short break to top up on more cake before finishing at 16.00. I had the opportunity to chat to a few more members before I headed back to Durham with a tummy full of shortbread and a smile on my face.

Gail Grainger
LABBS Membership Director

The White Rosettes, Leeds

What an absolute honour to be present

at the last Sunday rehearsal before The White Rosettes headed off to Cleveland, Ohio to represent LABBS at the Barbershop Harmony Society Convention. A bonus was that it was also my daughter's birthday, Zoe. She was very excited to go to Cleveland.

Because it was her birthday that day and many of the Rosettes had baked cakes for the cake stall to raise some much-needed funds for the trip, Zoe asked if I would make 60 cupcakes so that each Rosette could have a cake with their lunch without depleting the cake stall. Louise Williams had also put the most amazing raffle together and I was asked to take charge of the donation buckets when the crowds arrived. Three o'clock came and the gym filled to capacity. Lots of raffle tickets were sold, buckets were shaken, and cakes devoured. Then the show commenced. The applause was deafening. The audience had three ex LABBS Chairs, Alys Galloway (Finance Director) and I as current

board members. I spoke to a lady who appeared to be alone. She worked at the Harrogate Convention Centre and had been on door stewarding duty in October 2023 when she heard the chorus for the

rehearsal after Cleveland and see if she could swell the ranks. Watch this space! During the lunch break I was able to speak to several of the chorus who were buzzing with excitement at the forthcoming trip.



Gail and Zoe

Sally gave me an opportunity during the performance to read a statement that Sue Ranson, LABBS Chair, had penned wishing the girls the very best, and how proud the Board were that they were the very first LABBS chorus to compete at the Barbershop Harmony Society Convention. Sue also said what a wonderful, genius idea it was that each LABBS chorus could send a small token that could be worn inside their dresses so that the whole of LABBS would be on stage with them. There was much laughter at some of the 'interesting' items that had been sent.

So, this was not only a wonderful day of top class barbershop and meeting new and old friends. In addition, the chorus raised over £1000. What a bonus.

first time and was blown away. She had followed them on Facebook ever since and had come along to hear them again. I encouraged her to go along to a

Gail Grainger
LABBS Membership Director

Main Street Sound, York

Somewhat bad planning on my part

to book a visit to Helensburgh in Scotland on Thursday 6th, to Leeds White Rosettes on Sunday 9th and then York to see Main Street Sound on 10th, all during the busy June renewal time. However, I am so glad I did. The girls of Main Street Sound were entering the Cleethorpes Music Festival on 15th June and were preparing all four songs that they would be performing in the various categories. Julia, their assistant director, was taking them to the festival, but the evening had their director Peter Bryant on hand to offer advice and support. It was a special treat to hear how much improvement they had made since I last visited. New chair, Karen Frodsham, was doing a great job filling the mighty shoes of Jenny Whitehouse, who had been their Chair for the previous 10 years. I arrived

ahead of schedule, so we were able to have a good chat about how things were going.

a new song, Shenandoah, arranged by Sam Hubbard, which the audience had loved. They performed it for me. It was quite beautiful.

I talked to the chorus about the new questionnaire that was about to be launched to gather our members' thoughts and ideas about our 50th anniversary celebrations. A few already had great ideas so hopefully they will complete the questionnaire and share them.

The great British weather didn't let us down, during the evening there was an almighty hailstorm which luckily had finished before I headed back to Durham with a smile on my face.



Main Street Sound

The chorus had been to a singout the previous weekend and had their new pink walk out jackets on show. They looked amazing and even Peter said he would like a pink jacket too. They aired

Gail Grainger
LABBS Membership Director

Remarkable year for Cheshire Chord Company

We at the Cheshire Chord Company are **thrilled** to celebrate a remarkable year filled with musical achievements and barbershop community engagement. In May, we had the honour of singing on the show stage at the British Association of Barbershop Singers (BABS) convention. It was a fantastic experience, and we extend our congratulations to everyone who competed and crossed the barbershop stage. Your hard work and dedication were truly inspiring.

Back in June, we watched on proudly as our amazing quartet singers competed at this year's Prelims competition. Their performances were outstanding, showcasing the high level of talent and dedication within our chorus. We are proud of each and every one of them and their contributions to our success.

July saw us hosting a memorable concert at St. Michael's and All Angels in Wigan. The event saw a fantastic turnout, with the community showing up in large numbers to support and enjoy our performance. The enthusiasm and energy from the audience were palpable, making the evening a resounding success.

This month we were also joined for a special evening of coaching with the fabulous Emma Shanks. Emma worked with us on one of our newest songs, providing invaluable insights and techniques that have already made a noticeable difference in our performance. Her expertise and enthusiasm were truly inspiring, and we are grateful for the opportunity to learn from such a talented coach.

In preparation for our exciting entry into the Barbershop Harmony Society Convention 2025, Denver, we have embarked on a series of fundraising efforts. We kickstarted our fundraising at the British Association of Barbershop Singers (BABS) convention, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to



Cheshire Chord Company prelims quartets

everyone who supported us by buying a square! Keep an eye out for further fundraising opportunities as we work towards making our trip to Denver a reality. Your support is invaluable, and together, we can achieve our goals, and represent LABBS with pride!

For more information about the Cheshire Chord Company, upcoming events, or how to join, please visit our website at www.cheshirechord.co.uk or follow us on social media.

Together, let's continue to create beautiful harmonies and make a positive impact through the power of music.

Julie Phillips, PRO
Cheshire Chord Company



Emma Shanks with Cheshire Chord Company

Hello from Hot Ticket!!

Whilst it might seem like

we've been a little quiet on the surface recently, we've actually been very busy behind the scenes - and we're now looking a little different! Back in May, we announced that our baritone, Isaac Gibbs, would be leaving the quartet for pastures new, as he had accepted a role as a music teacher at an international school in Thailand. It was very bittersweet - whilst we're so happy and proud of him for taking the plunge and travelling around the world, we'll be sad to no longer be sharing a stage with him.

However, if you know us, you know we don't like to stay idle for long, so we quickly sought out a new baritone to join us on our quartet journey! Following a successful trial rehearsal, we were delighted to welcome our friend, Ben

Catt, into the Hot Ticket fold. Ben is a third generation barbershop and a cappella singer and had his first experience of singing barbershop at the age of five, under the direction of his dad, in the Sydney Harmony chorus. As a teenager he joined the Festival Statesmen chorus in Adelaide, South Australia, which he describes as life-changing! He's no stranger to quartet singing - he has competed on every voice part, achieving numerous medals in Barbershop Harmony Australia contests, notably a silver medal with Brrring in 2022. He relocated to the UK last year and made his British barbershop debut in Those Meddling Kids, the 2024 BABS Youth silver medalists.

We feel very lucky and grateful that Ben has joined us! We've thrown him right in at the deep end, with lots of music to learn for the upcoming LABBS

convention, where we will be competing for a qualifying score, hoping to secure ourselves a place on the Barbershop Harmony Society International stage in Denver, Colorado in 2025. In addition, we are super thrilled to have been invited as guests to the Irish Association of Barbershop Singers (IABS) convention in Killarney this October! Finally, we have accepted a nomination to represent LABBS at the 2025 European Barbershop Convention in Helsingborg, Sweden, which will be an exciting first-time experience for us.

We are looking forward to the LABBS convention in Bournemouth and entertaining you all with our swan song set - we're working hard on some new music, and we can't wait to sing for you!

**Bethany, Oli, Ben, Joe
Hot Ticket**



Bethany, Oli, Ben, Joe

BARBERSHOP BLISS IN CLEVELAND

There were several moments earlier this year

when all four of us were convinced our trip to Cleveland wasn't going to happen. However, family issues resolved, illnesses improved and broken bones (partially) mended – on Saturday 29th June we breathed a collective sigh of relief as we boarded our flight to America. The next couple of days were a combination of overcoming jet lag, eating, rehearsing and exploring the area. We bumped into a few familiar faces as we got our bearings – many of the White Rosettes were already there, soaking up as much atmosphere as possible before the competition started. They were a constant source of support and friendship during our week, we were so lucky to have their company. Competition day was a mix of nerves and excitement with a generous dollop of imposter-syndrome. We watched as many of the early quarter-final quartets (including 'The Ladies', who we embarrassingly fangirled outside the venue after their performance) as time allowed and couldn't believe the calibre of singers we were sharing a stage with, and the overall talent that was so evident. What on earth were we doing here?! Ultimately, we had no huge expectations of the competition itself, but we were keen to improve on our previous score, and more importantly positively represent women's UK barbershop, continuing the legacy that IN-HOUSE started last year. As we walked out on that famous stage, with its incredible acoustics, we wanted to be at our best. We knew there were



friends and supporters watching at home, cheering us on. We definitely felt the love across the airwaves, especially from our chorus Crystal Chords who had gifted us a crystal motif bracelet to wear on stage. We were delighted with our performance and score, and hope we made you proud.

The following couple of days were spent watching rehearsals, seeing as many competing quartets as we could cram in, and chatting barbershop to everyone who we came across. We were delighted to open the third quarter-final session with the UK National Anthem, and we had a great time singing on stage at the World Harmony Showcase. Although, we had to compete with the July 4th Independence Day fireworks!

Two of the many highlights of the week included coming off stage and seeing Debbie Cleveland, formerly of The Buzz and now Dynasty Quartet. We had attended a LABBS Quartet Education weekend early in our quartet journey and still use their warm up! Another highlight was on the evening after our competition performance we were asked to sing at the President's Reception. We met so many lovely people there – representatives from the affiliate barbershop organisations as well as Sweet Adelines, Harmony Incorporated and a crop of Barbershop Harmony Society Judges. We sang a couple of our favourite repertoire songs – Please Mr Brown went down particularly well, as always!

A big thank you Alison Thompson for guiding us through the week, and to Sue Ranson for introducing us to the right people, Sally and the White Rosettes who were a constant source of fun and support, as well as everyone we spoke to who made us feel like we belonged. All in all, we had a phenomenal week – a week that wouldn't have been possible had it not been for the all the financial support we were given, so thank you for buying our cakes, sweets and keyrings; thank you for buying raffle tickets and so generously donating to our GoFundMe pot. We're very excited for our next chapter – Irish Association of Barbershop Singers (IABS), European Barbershop Convention and of course, LABBS in October. Our championship year (and beyond) is just getting better!

**Beck, Bushra, Anna & Anne-Marie
BARBERLICIOUS**

You can hear more about Barberlicious' time in America on the new Sing LABBS Podcast, using the link included in Mel's editor's note on page 3.



#MAKINGHISTORY - an absolute blast.

It was a tremendous

honour for us to be invited to the Barbershop Harmony Society's Convention in July. As the first LABBS chorus to compete on the international contest stage we were #makinghistory and it was absolutely everything we had hoped for. We had a champion cheer-leading section with us - ladies quartet champs Barberlicious, BABS quartet champs Limelight, LABBS Chair Sue Ranson, LABBS Education Director (and proud Mum of our Gemma), Alison Thompson cheered us on alongside a stalwart band of enthusiastic and lovely flag-waving supporters, family members and friends who cheered us at every turn. Thank you so much to everyone who was there with us in body as well as in spirit. With our 'in spirit' tokens tucked safely under our dresses we walked on stage to the strains of 'On Ilkla Moor Baht 'at' and we felt at home within seconds. The rest of the early morning contest audience was loud and appreciative too. The staging and sound set-up was perfect and we felt the love coming from every quarter. It was a truly amazing experience that flew past in a few magical, marvellous moments. As well as the contest stage there were other opportunities to sing. On July 3rd, with the Captain's permission, out on Lake Erie, a large contingent from the chorus treated their fellow day-trippers on the SS GoodTime III to 'Drunken Sailor'. It was good practice, as we were opening The Barbershop Harmony Show with that song the next evening. Our second song of that night was 'Sound of Silence'. It was only as we reached the deafeningly-quiet moment of Sally's solo at the end of the song that she, and we, fully realised just how loud the firework display outside had grown! By the time the Convention concluded, with a fabulous version of 'Keep the Whole World Singing', we were well into our stride. With way too many people to fit in a bar, it is Barbershop Harmony Society tradition for groups to organise side afterglows of their own, at which



others are invited to perform for a 'floating' audience. We were graciously welcomed to sing in the LGBTQ+ 'Rainbow Room', and in the rooms separately set up by Westminster Chorus, Ambassadors of Harmony, Heralds of Harmony and Voices of Gotham - all fantastic opportunities.

There were non-singing highlights too of course. Some of the chorus went to a baseball game. - Go Guardians! Some visited the local Botanical Gardens/ Art Gallery, and almost all of us made the Cleveland Rocks Association of International Champions (AIC) show in the local theatre district, which was just brilliant. And of course, there were cafes and bars and local shops to explore as well as the Rock n Roll Hall of Fame. As we puttered about, throughout the week we were frequently stopped by total strangers who just wanted to say 'well done' or 'good luck'. We were constantly surprised that they had any idea who we were and were especially touched when comments went deeper than the usual courteous 'good job!'. An example of this being a couple of strangers helping us out with a selfie as we tucked into a humongous breakfast in a local diner. We suspected they were barbershoppers but didn't know for sure, until they said: "Go on! Do that move! The 'we're watching you!' move from 1,000 Eyes. We loved that!"

Behind the scenes, as well as our own LABBS Chair Sue Ranson, we were visited by Barbershop Harmony Society CEO Steve Denino, who came along to one of our open rehearsals bringing his quartet, The Core, with him and reducing us all to blubbering wrecks with the tale of 'Mr Tanner'. Four representatives from The Ambassadors of Harmony (last year's gold medallists) also dropped in to leave us all with a token from their chorus and to wish us well. We also joined in with the 'locals' by tagging - our quartettes were happy to help the crew who were solidly working their way through the Basic Barbershop Tags book to tick off a few more - by helping out on the doors, in very British accents, and by keeping the local economy going in the nearby bars, cafes and shops.

There were quite a few 'gold medal' moments too - some personal ones from me include meeting up with a young man in his early twenties at a 'First Timers' session who



shared with the group that he'd heard barbershop at home in New York but that there was no group at his College. Having heard about Convention he'd decided he had to come and find out more. He was desperate to have a go at tag-singing and had brought along his Mum for moral support. I met David Wright in a lift. David Wright. And I managed not to curtsy. And, same lift, different day, a lady called June, who sings with Barbershop Harmony Society women's chorus Visions of Harmony (who placed in the top 10). She is blind and has to use a cane to get around. I expressed my awe that she was able to sing as part of a chorus and asked if she'd experienced any difficulties in that regard. 'It's not all been easy going' she said, 'and me and the Director have had to work hard to figure some things out, but anything is possible!' It certainly is.

We have thousands of photographs - some stored on our phones and shared all over social media, some imprinted on our hearts. We are very excited for the future and, as individuals, have a renewed enthusiasm to be more ready to learn more, to be better self-(Mc) Leaning ovens (thank you for coining that phrase, Harmony Inspires!) and to push ourselves - not just to be better singers but to be better ambassadors for barbershop too, spreading the joy we get from singing with everyone in LABBS, and beyond.

Amersham A Cappella and Cheshire Chord Company, we wish you the very best of luck as your year of preparation for BHS 2025 in Denver continues. We hope you have as valuable a time as The White Rosettes have just had. The fundraising, the extra work, the planning and logistics - it'll be hard graft at times, for sure - but if our experience is anything to go by, you'll grow, as singers and as pals, and you'll have an absolute blast!

**Jean Lewis, PRO
White Rosettes**



BHS Convention 2024

The Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS) International Convention

2024 took place in the first week of July in Cleveland Ohio. Cleveland is on the shore of Lake Erie and is known as the home of rock and roll, because in the fifties the term 'Rock and Roll' is said to have been coined by a local DJ, Alan Freed. Although in the twentieth century it was known by some as 'The Mistake on the Lake', it is now a modern and lively city with impressive public buildings.

LABBS is now a full affiliate of the BHS, and this means that since 2023 we have been able to send ensembles to compete in the international contests. In 2023 we sent our first quartets and this year we sent a quartet and our first chorus. As LABBS Chair, I was lucky enough to be invited to attend as a VIP and I was therefore able to support our fantastic ensembles.

Barberlicious competed in the quartet

contest and sang on the World Harmony Showcase. They represented our quartet community in an exemplary fashion and were spontaneously head hunted to sing at literally no notice at the President's reception. At one point during that reception, which I also attended, when Barberlicious and their supporters arrived, LABBS representatives were by far the biggest group in the room, making up about half the party. We certainly made an impression!

The White Rosettes came a fabulous 19th in the chorus contest, and also sang on the World Harmony Showcase show. They pioneered representing LABBS as a chorus and had the absolutely genius idea of taking small items representing all of our clubs on stage. Their consideration of the whole Association and the care they took to bring everyone along with them was inspired and really touching.

I must also mention Limelight quartet, who were great representatives for BABS. All of the LABBS audience members attending supported the



Sue Ranson and Steve Denino

LABBS and BABS representatives with cheers, patriotic bunting and the waving of flags.

As LABBS Chair I took the opportunity to talk with Steve Denino the BHS Interim CEO, (pictured) accompanied by two other LABBS directors, Alys Galloway and Alison Thompson. The relationship with BHS remains strong and we have a shared interest in promoting barbershop singing around the world.

Sue Ranson
LABBS Chair

Club News

Celebrations and Preparations

Amersham A Cappella were so

delighted to help Spinnaker Chorus celebrate their 20th Birthday in early July. We received a huge welcome and sang our hearts out, enjoying singing polecats all together too! Cakes, choruses, quartets and LABBS legends Natalie Feddon and Jacqui Edwards all added up to a perfect day! Closures on the M25 didn't stop our intrepid singers from getting there – but fair to say, National Rail were treated to free concerts all the way to Havant!

Back on home ground, preparations are in full flow as Amersham prepares for our 2025 Denver extravaganza. We excitedly tracked The White Rosettes journey to Cleveland and were thrilled that an ex-Amersham A Cappella's daughter (now singing with The White Rosettes) sent us a photo with the three leafed clover we gave each member to wear on stage. Not that they needed luck – as they did a stunning job and made the UK proud. Despite the jet lag they generously met with us to share their experience

and fundraising tips and triumphs. The meeting confirmed that our ideas so far are on track. To give you a flavour – we have a recipe calendar with an Amersham twist, in planning. We've already had two car boot sales, sold some costumes and bespoke badges. We have a Singagram team preparing to wow unsuspecting Birthday peeps [and any celebration in fact!] and in the Autumn we are having a fabulous fashion show in stunning surroundings. Our Flashmob gang are also hard at work and ideas continue to pour in – catch them on our Facebook Page!



Some of Amersham A Cappella's singagram team

But frankly – how do we find time to sing? Of course, we're also busy preparing for LABBS 2024 and can't wait to have our weekend retreat in September with our beloved coaches, and friends, David and Sandi Wright. What an amazing hobby we all have!

Wishing everyone a restful and restorative Summer and look forward to seeing you in Bournemouth in October.

Soozi Hyde, PRO
Amersham A Cappella

Chorus collaborations!

Sharing our wonderful

world of Barbershop once in a while certainly does lead to great things! Last year, at Bristol Music Festival we struck gold! Not only winning our category but by hearing a small choir of less than 15 children, aged 8-18 called The Portishead Youth Choirs! Though a little nervous (aren't we all in a competition) Portishead Youth Chorus had only been singing together for just over a year. The children sang with such courage and clarity we were in awe and just had to let them know how much we loved their performance. Before we knew it, a social media friendship was blossoming!

Cue our amazing events manager, Janis, who got in touch and formulated a plan for a joint concert. Fast forward to just over a year later and there we were, sharing a stage and putting on a wonderful summer concert with this awesome choir of children and teens! We took turns to entertain the audience, as well as inviting the ever-fabulous Sonic quartet to sing. Portishead Youth Chorus reciprocated with their smaller choir of five 8-11-year-olds who proceeded to captivate us with a number of songs. Our favourite had to be "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!" Definitely quartet-ers in the making!! The grand finale saw all of us on stage, singing Anthem.

Now the Portishead Youth Chorus made us chuckle in our pre show rehearsal. Having only learned and heard the lead line, they found the other 3 parts more than distracting. In fact, a little hand went up and cried - "I can't hear myself sing with them singing too!"

We quickly reassured him and explained how well he was singing as his voice blended into the sound quite beautifully! He was delighted.

But this musical friendship brings much more! We're overjoyed to have welcomed Nicola to Bristol Fashion, mum to a Portishead Youth Choirs singer. She spied us at the festival back in 2023 and feeling inspired she joined our Love 2 Sing event, auditioned and joined our baritone section! Our joint concert was the stage on which Nicola and her son sang together for the first time! In her words - "It was a really special evening for me, sharing a stage with Nathan and sharing the 'buzz' and many benefits of singing in a group."

Have we inspired the next generation of singers - we hope so!! Have they inspired us? You betcha!

**Naomi Mallinson and Debbie Trotman,
PRO Team
Bristol Fashion**



Nicola and son, Nathan

Hello All!

Chorus Iceni has been busy over the last few months.

We had our own concert in a local church, in Aldham. No bats flying about this time!
We had coaching from David Sangster. We're looking forward to working with David again in September as we step up the refinement of our convention package.

We have welcomed two new Leads, Linsey and Sam plus one new Bass, Sarah!

And last weekend we were sharing a lovely venue in Sudbury, Suffolk with Stellar Acapella. A fantastic harmony evening raising money for two charities!

This Sunday we will be performing in the wonderful bandstand in Colchester Castle park.

Marvellous Mandy Miller, Assistant Director, Lead Section Leader, PRO Chorus Iceni



Linsey (Lead) at the top , Sarah (Bass) bottom left and Sam (Lead) bottom right



Summer Singing

Welwyn Harmony enjoyed a very successful

summer concert on Sunday 23rd June at St John the Evangelist church in Welwyn Garden City. Our first concert with new Musical Director Oli Goodall was full of the fun and joy of singing, particularly as we were joined by children from local Homerswood School who performed alongside us with a range of songs. This included a great rendition of Abba's 'Waterloo' to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the group's Eurovision

win. There was also an emotional final performance from the LABBS Mixed Quartet champions Hot Ticket, in their current set up before baritone Isaac Gibbs, left for adventures new! We then all joined together to 'make our own kind of music' with a favourite Polecat. Congratulations also to our new members who performed for the first time. Coupled with some cake and drinks it was an afternoon to remember.

We're now looking forward to our weekend of singing in September, with some coaching with the ever energetic Helen Lappert, followed on Sunday 15th

September by our Love to Sing day. This is a chance for potential new members to come and sing with us as we learn Liz Garnett's fantastic arrangement of 'Walking on Sunshine' and perform it to friends and family at the end of the day. If you know of anyone in Hertfordshire looking to join a choir, do spread the word and they can find out more by emailing info@welwynharmony.co.uk I'm sure you'll all agree, singing in harmony makes us feel like we're walking on sunshine!

**Emma Harper, PRO
Welwyn Harmony**



Six Town Sound Debut at Alderley Edge Music Festival...

From just eight original members, the infectious enthusiasm of our team at Six Town Sound has helped us triple in size in just 12 months. As the chorus continues to grow, we are welcoming a whole range of members from experienced barbershoppers through to novice singers, who didn't even know what barbershop was before coming along to one of our fortnightly rehearsals. Despite our varied backgrounds, our members have come together with a shared passion for performance and a determination to strive to be the best that we can be.

As part of our preparation for our first time at convention this year, we performed at the Alderley Edge music festival, competing in the barbershop class. It was the first time that we had ever performed in public, let alone entered a competition.

The atmosphere was amazing as there were so many of the barbershop family from BABS, LABBS and Sweet Adelines there to welcome us on stage and help us ease the nerves.

The standard of performance across all the choruses and quartets was fantastic and the judge even commented on the support that every group gave to each other.

We were thrilled with the adjudication which commented on the "marvellous, whole hearted singing", how we were "very polished and confident" and even said how we were "very stylish"! It was very unexpected that she awarded us 1st place with an "outstanding" score.

"We are absolutely thrilled with our win at the Alderley Edge Music Festival," says Lynn Day, Chairperson of Six Town Sound. "Being such a young chorus, this achievement means even more to us. It's a testament to the dedication and hard work of our members, and it validates the hard work we've put in, in such a short time. We are even more excited and determined as we continue to prepare for our very first convention - see you all there."

**Liz Tomkinson, Secretary
Six Town Sound**



GEM CONNECTION CELEBRATE 26th ANNIVERSARY

Gem Connection Ladies Chorus celebrated our 26th Anniversary

with the final night of our "Love to Sing" course, where we gave a mini concert performing the two songs we'd learnt together with the ladies who had been attending the course.

During the evening Sue Ranson, our LABBS Chair, attended and presented certificates and LABBS Pin Badges to Chris Carrier and Sarah Streater for 25 years and to Helen Gaskell and Judy Woolley for 30 years LABBS Membership.

Helen also received our Unsung Hero Award, which is presented on our birthday in recognition for dedication and all the work carried out for the Chorus.

Catharine Warner received her sparkly 10-year pin badge for her long service as a GEM.

To finish the evening off, well, of course we had CAKE, sang Happy Birthday to GEM, and our LABBS Chair made a speech with a short video promoting her visit to GEM for the LABBS Facebook page.

We are now busy learning new songs and preparing for our Summer Performances together with our four new Love To Sing Gemette recruits.

**Jenny Smedley, PRO
Gem Connection**



Chris Carrier 25 years



Sarah Streater 25 years



Judy Woolley 30 years



Helen Gaskell 30 years



Lauren, Gill, Trea and Jayne

News from Harmony InSpires

The new members we have welcomed this

quarter, pictured with Hari Birtles, are leads Ros Merriman, Sophie Power and bass Dana Greetham (left to right). Flin Webb, another new bass, is also pictured sporting some exciting new merchandise! It is great to have so many new members contributing to



Flin Webb, another new bass

the development of this flourishing chorus!

On the 28th of April, Harmony InSpires were invited to sing at the Christening of Olivia Adams, in All Saints Church, Marcham. Olivia is the daughter of Katie and Adam Evans, at whose wedding the chorus performed in April '23. The celebration was much enjoyed. On the 11th of May, Harmony InSpires also performed at the Marcham BIG weekend, a Saturday Fete which started with a Gin and Ale Festival and hosted diverse performances from martial arts to magicians to Morris Men. On this occasion Vicky Thatcher (bari) directed singers in successful renditions of popular songs from the repertoire.

The highlight of the quarter, however, has been the Spring Concert at St Michael's Church Abingdon with Caritas Children's Choir on the 20th of May. Caritas Children's choir, for ages seven upwards, is a charitable venture of the Wantage and Grove Christian Aid Group raising money for Christian Aid projects. The rest of the proceeds were shared with St Michael's, while Harmony InSpires benefited from the proceeds of refreshments and a raffle.

So much time and effort has been



Leads Ros Merriman, Sophie Power and bass Dana Greetham (left to right)

invested by all this quarter, in preparation for the forthcoming convention weekend. At the start of June, the chorus enjoyed coaching with Sally McLean, followed by a social dinner at The Merry Miller in Cothill, Abingdon. Even the grey weather has not prevented hard core socialising in July at an outdoor summer party.

**Rachel Buglass, PRO
Harmony InSpires**



Life's a song...

This article is a tribute to life, strength, bravery, inspiration, and a triumph of hope over adversity.

Some of you may recall that we had two unborn babies on stage with us at Harrogate. You have all rejoiced with us at the birth of a much longed for daughter for our MD Emma McManus and her husband Paul. Maisie is now a very mischievous and adored six month old.

A few weeks after Convention, Rebecca, one of our leads, gave birth three weeks prematurely to her son, Finlay, who has had major health challenges to overcome. He spent the first 6 months of his life in Leeds Infirmary on the Liver Unit with his amazing mum and dad at his side. This remarkable little boy had a

Liver graft/transplant at the age of four months, thanks to a selfless donation from his dad Paul's nephew. Despite other challenges he continues to make slow but steady progress. We cannot find the words to express the joy, sorrow, highs and lows that this family has gone through and that we have followed with admiration and awe. The way they have coped with everything really helps to keep our own trivial concerns into perspective.

We are also very proud of our lovely lead Linda Kaye who has just been made a Professor of Psychology at Edge Hill University. Another example of tenacity, strength and resilience to inspire us.

As a Chorus, we enjoyed a wonderful evening performing at the Lytham Choral Festival in June. The adjudicator

described our performance as "one of those moments when the adjudicator just has to put down their pen and listen." Wonderful feedback for us all.

As we move forward, we are preparing for the Irish Association of Barbershop Singers (IABS) convention this year, and entering the Lancashire Choir of the Year competition again. Last time we came second, so we are going to do our utmost to win this time.

Our inspirational role models of tenacity, strength and resilience will be very much in evidence in our hearts and minds.

Life's a song, we sing it.

**Ann Atkin,
Red Rosettes**



Finlay



Linda

What a summer for Silver Lining

Well, we have had an exciting summer!

We have a new rehearsal space in a lovely bright room overlooking a cricket pitch, with its own bar. The risers are put up for us and the nice big car park is, so far, proving much easier than our last rehearsal venue. Our thanks go to Jo Byrne, our Booking Secretary, for her brilliant work in finding this for us. Our MD and Assistant MD spent a fantastic week in the USA at the annual Barbershop Harmony Society convention and came back with new and exciting ways of doing things. As all choruses know, there is no magic in what we do and strive for, but sometimes a change in the way we do things makes all the difference. I can't wait until next week to see what else they have up their sleeves for our rehearsals. Whilst they were away

our rehearsals were led by Jenny Bottomley and Mereta Brown, two of our members. The way they worked together and the variety of different things they brought to the rehearsals helped to consolidate what we all know, but sometimes forget. There was still a great deal of laughter and fun, even without our MD's varied and humorous, descriptive vocabulary. Our top event of the summer was to compete at the Leamington Festival at the end of June. Not everyone was able to sing but we had a great group that performed two of our favourite songs and came away with the winners' shield. To say we were pleased was an understatement and we are looking forward to defending our place next year, all being well.

**Heather Morton, PRO
Silver Lining Chorus**



MD Sara Jackson being presented with the winners' shield



Silver Lining with their winners' shield

Out of Adversity

Velvet Harmony held our Summer

Concert on 1st June at St Mark's Church in Bromley. Three weeks before the concert, we lost a significant number of members. It was a very worrying time. We had already asked The Kentones and Powerhouse Quartet to take part and a young man, Ronnie Law, who is a wonderful singer of both contemporary and opera music.

John Williams MD of The Kentones came to our rescue. He reassured us that sometimes these things happen in Barbershop! We devised a programme where Velvet Harmony would open and close both sets and The Kentones and our other guests would include extra material. The concert was back on!

Velvet Harmony opened the proceedings by singing 'Happy' and closed the first set with audience participation of 'The Gin and Tonic song'. A raffle was held, and all funds raised were in aid of our chosen charity, The Maypole Project.

Powerhouse Quartet started the second half followed by Ronnie Law and The Kentones. What a surprise the audience

had when The Kentones marched on stage in army uniform to perform the set they had showcased at BABS convention only the week before. It was a spoof on Dad's Army with words rearranged to reflect the trials of convention.

Sue Ranson, LABBS Chair, awarded The Kentones a certificate for their entertaining set. They were judged to have finished second in the entertainment category at BABS the week before. John Williams was thrilled that all their hard work had paid off.

Velvet Harmony and The Kentones sang 'Boardwalk' together before Velvet Harmony closed the concert with 'Shozalozza' encouraging everyone to clap along. We were so pleased the evening had gone ahead and was successful, and consequently, The Kentones have asked us if we would like to form a mixed chorus.

Our evening raised £782.95 for our charity, The Maypole Project, who were delighted to receive our cheque.

**Natalie Feddon, Chair
Velvet Harmony**



Powerhouse Quartet



Velvet Harmony 1

Spinnaker Chorus – An anniversary sing-a-thon

This year is the 20th anniversary of Spinnaker Chorus - a club formed in 2004 by members of Purbrook Harmony, the first Sweet Adeline Chorus in the UK (established back in 1970). We decided to celebrate our 20th anniversary year in various ways including a fund-raising sing-a-thon in June.

Despite a rainy start to the day, we met early at Portsmouth Harbour station to start our six-hour singing marathon. We warmed up and sang songs to travellers on the train and ferry passengers from the Isle of Wight. We then moved around the iconic sights of our wonderful home city of Portsmouth in our distinctive Spinnaker hoodies, led by our MD John Palmer, stopping at venues that our Bookings Officer Nicolette had contacted in advance for permission to sing at and raise funds.

As we reached the historic dockyard, (home of HMS Victory and the Mary Rose), the clouds cleared and we sang in the sunshine for the rest of the day on the steps of Portsmouth

Guildhall, beside the famous Spinnaker tower (which features in our name and logo), and in and around several shopping areas including the popular Gunwharf Quays centre by the Solent, before finishing at Portsmouth & Southsea station. We sang a set at each location, circling through our repertoire several times, and performed songs on request (for a tenner!) all the while collecting donations through trusty buckets and a mobile QR code.

We certainly made our presence felt across Portsmouth and raised our profile with lots of locals videoing us on their phones.

The event was great fun to do - if a little exhausting! – but well worth the effort. Thanks to the generosity of passers-by, song requesters, and anonymous donors, we raised £750 for chorus and charity funds.

**Jill Cook, Chair
Spinnaker Chorus**



Photo by PRO Liz Waddon

Spinnaker 20th anniversary birthday party

When considering how to celebrate our 20th anniversary this year we decided to focus on those things we are good at – singing, making and eating cake and having fun!

We also wanted to share our celebrations with our barbershop friends. So, in July we organised a birthday party and invited singers across the southeast to join us. The concept was put together by our MD John Palmer, to create a party vibe with organised singing during the afternoon programme and impromptu singing during the day and in the evening afterglow. We were delighted that over two hundred guests accepted our invitation with members of nineteen different singing groups including ten LABBS clubs and five BABS clubs as well as two mixed choruses. There were several competitions to enter including a bake-off judged by LABBS VIPs Jacqui Edwards and Natalie Feddon, and John Beesley (the voice of barbershop) recorded the event for a podcast.

We sang to and with each other over the course of the day with Helen Lappert from Amersham A Cappella directing us in a number of LABBS polecats, and Steve Morris, MD of Solent City Chorus, teaching us all a tag and directing a mass sing of Can You Feel The Love.

We served our guests afternoon tea with savoury items, cakes and scones, all of which had been home made by an army of Spinnaker Chorus bakers. We also celebrated the twelve founding members of Spinnaker Chorus who were there, including six members who still sing with Spinnaker. Lots of memories were shared and the founders group blew out the candles on a fabulous handmade anniversary cake.

In the evening, we transformed our performance theatre into a cabaret with a bar and created an afterglow event with groups queuing up to sing in the relaxed atmosphere under the glitter ball lights.

Then we all squeezed back onto the risers and closed the party with a mass sing of Let's Get Together Again. And like



Spinnaker founding members from left to right are: Mary, Jo, Julia, Les, Jenny, Di, Karen, Lyn, Sandy, Becky, Lin and Laura

all good parties there was some cake left over to take home too.

**Jill Cook, Chair
Spinnaker Chorus**

Photo of founding members taken by PRO Liz Waddon.
Photo of bake-off judges taken by Liz Roebuck.



Spinnaker bake off judges Jacqui Edwards and Natalie Feddon (past Honorary LABBS Chairs) with Liz Taylor who organised the competition in the middle.

The Busy Belles!

The Belles have been busy recently.

We took part in Wear it Green day to help raise awareness for The Mental Health Foundation. Singing with friends has so many benefits, one being the sense of community and belonging it brings that boosts our happiness levels! We had a raffle and raised money to donate to the cause as well as having a great green evening!

Our singout at a beautiful retirement village was such a lovely place, with fantastic activities and entertainment. We were all interested in moving in! We had a wonderful, welcoming audience who invited us back for some singing at Christmas time.

We had an evening of being filmed for our new promo video and we are very proud of it. Have a look at it on our Facebook page! Some of our members agreed to be interviewed and rose to the challenge

perfectly. Everyone did marvellously, performing and singing on camera.

Our fabulous Cuppa Crew were prepared for a busy weekend at quartet Prelims, well done ladies! We are so grateful to everyone that visited and bought our cakes and cups of tea, we raised a good amount towards our Belles fundraising goal and were very happy to provide the service.

Our newest member, Tanja, made her debut at the Cancer Research evening of summer music event at Coombe Abbey. We're so proud of you Tanja, well done! If ever you are in Coventry, Coombe Abbey is well worth a visit. The Belles enjoyed a walk in the grounds after our singout there. It was a beautiful evening and we thoroughly enjoyed singing for such a worthy cause in such an amazing venue.

**Holly Dawes, Chair
The Belles of Three Spires**



Lucy, Tanja and Chesca



The Belles and Alex, who put their new promo video together

A 'Senior' celebration for A Pitch in Time Quartet at Prelims'24

This was our third year competing at Prelims and our first as 'seniors,' with Jo Pitch having turned fifty-five in May, enabling us to qualify for this category. We performed 9th on the Saturday and sang *As Long As I'm Singin'* and *Ain't Misbehavin'*, two songs we have enjoyed learning and have a lot of fun singing. We felt much more confident on stage this year and really appreciated the warmth and enthusiasm of the audience. It was great to have an early slot as we then had the opportunity to watch and support the wonderful quartets who followed us.

We stayed in the Holiday Inn as did many of the quartets and the atmosphere was buzzing both Friday and Saturday nights. We thoroughly enjoyed catching up with friends and the impromptu singing at dinner. Sadly, we weren't able to stay for the Sunday performances due to a prior commitment, so after travelling home, we tuned in to the webcast for the results. We were thrilled to have improved our score from last year and absolutely delighted to be announced as the LABBS prelims '24 'Senior Award' winners. Our lovely friends and Spinnaker pals,

Fortuned Cookies, kindly received the award in our absence and brought it safely home to Portsmouth for us.

We would like to thank our coach *Mike Taylor* for all your hard work with us this year. It can't have been easy for you dealing with our numerous 'senior moments', but you've been an absolute superstar and we've learned so much from your excellent coaching sessions. We look forward to working with you further in the future.

Also thank you to *John Palmer* and everyone at *Spinnaker Chorus* for the love and support so far on our A Pitch In Time journey, we really appreciate it.

Thank you, LABBS, you've made four greying, ageing, Pitches very happy 'Senior' ladies!

Love,

Tracy, Mary, Elspeth & Jo
A Pitch in Time Quartet



Tracy, Mary, Elspeth & Jo

Treble Revels at the First UK Treble Harmony Brigade

Wow, wow, wow: three little words to sum up one massively mind-blowing, fabulous weekend: the UK Treble Harmony Brigade (UKTHB), held at Nottingham back in April.

A huge round of applause to hard-working superstar Catherine Philipson (and her superb support team) for having the vision and tenacity to pull off the very first UK Extreme Quartetting event based on songs arranged for women's voices, rather than men's.

Having caught the Extreme Quartetting bug at LABBS Harmony College last year, I thought I knew what to expect, but UKTHB was on another level of awesomeness.

Yes, we had more to learn - eight 'silver' and four 'gold' songs - but we only needed the silver songs to take part and the learning programme made it manageable. Plus, sing-throughs and a Facebook group meant we could chat and rehearse together months before the big weekend - bonus!

The highlight of the weekend had to be singing (and laughing) with so many wonderful new friends. We all had 'dance cards' complete with everyone's photos. Once we'd quartetted with someone, we swapped name stickers to fill in our cards... the aim being to sing with everyone. The more people I sang with, the more confident I grew. It was just soooo much fun!

There was time to hang out with Brigade buddies when we weren't singing too... 'Breakfast with your Part' on Saturday morning was a genius way to connect with people we hadn't had a chance to speak to simply because of the way quartetting works!



Of course it wouldn't be a Harmony Brigade without a contest, but ours was all in good fun. The quartets and the songs were drawn at random, so everyone had a fair chance. After two knock-out rounds, the judges (quartet royalty Anne-Marie Borneuf from Barberlicious, Ros Kipps from Nightfall and Karen Searson from Crown Derby) picked the medalists and we voted our top four singers into one 'Star Struck Quartet'.

We were all winners though when it came to the Saturday Night Show. Everyone got the chance to strut their stuff, whether as part of a Chorus Brigade or a winning Quartet. We even got to be entertained by a few super-special extra acts. Then it was back to the bar to finish filling up our dance cards ... and singing for fun in corners until the wee hours.

Sunday morning ended on a high with Harmony Hotshot Awards for everyone who completed their dance cards and Harmony Hyperstar Awards for those who learned a song in two parts. Plus, Jill Barnes was voted our favourite Brigader for taking part despite having her hip replaced six days earlier.

Then after a final few songs we said goodbye, and headed home with a big Brigade-sized hole in our lives. To quote one Brigader, "It sounds bonkers, but it was the most thrilling thing to do, and I can't wait to do it again."

Well, neither can I: See you all in Nottingham on the 25th-27th April 2025 for the second super-sensational UKTHB experience!

Hils Apicella
2024 UKTHB Participant

Making Music is also your association!

As a member of LABBS, you are also a member of Making Music, the UK association for leisure-time music groups. Our members include other choirs but also instrumental groups and volunteer promoters.

LABBS has signed you up to Making Music because there are resources which we can either provide more easily because we have 4000 member groups, or because linking up with others makes everyone's voice stronger.

An example of something we can do well because of the number of members is insurance – it's the principle of mass discount! I hope you are finding our tailor-made and affordable insurance scheme means one less worry on the practical front.

And we provide lots of resources on all aspects of running a group which you can access on our website 24/7 whenever it suits you: <https://www.makingmusic.org.uk/resources>

We also run Zoom events about once a week throughout the year on many different topics – learn something new, be inspired, connect to others! There are many things you have in common with other types of groups and members find it helpful to speak to others in the same boat and share tips, ask questions, and find solutions.

Finally, and this is where us all joining together makes us stronger, Making Music is the voice of the sector. That means we...

- Celebrate and highlight what you do, and how it benefits your participants, your audiences, your communities.
- Galvanise and coordinate responses to proposed regulations or legislation. A recent example is the first

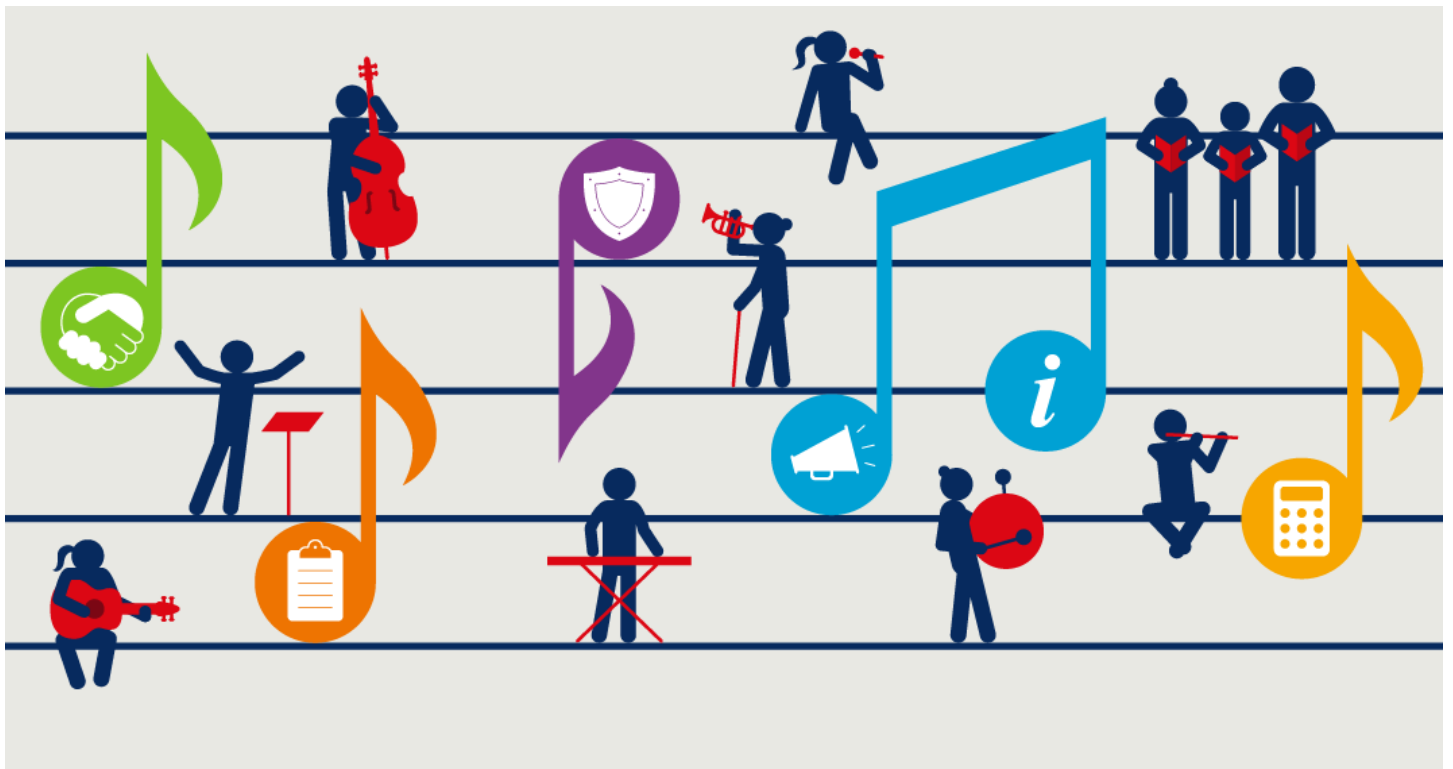


draft of Martyn's Law, which would have seriously impacted the local availability of spaces for rehearsals.

- Campaign to improve the conditions you operate in. Currently we are asking the government to include 'voice' as an instrument in Orchestra Tax Relief, so that choirs can claim around 23% of their production costs every year, as instrumental groups already can.

This is just a quick overview of the three aspects of what we provide to members: support, connection, and representation. Find out more here: <https://www.makingmusic.org.uk/> Get in touch: info@makingmusic.org.uk

Barbara Eifler
Making Music Chief Executive





LABBS CONVENTION 2024

BOURNEMOUTH, 25TH – 27TH OCTOBER

Harmony College @ Convention!

You spoke, we listened! Feedback following Convention 2022 and Convention 2023 told us two things: you love Convention, but you'd like some 'extras'. So, for 2024 we're trialling something a bit different: HC@Convention - a mini version of LABBS' ever-popular Harmony College!

As well as contests, show performances, mass sings and afterglows that we know you really enjoy, we're adding some bite-sized sessions for you to try something different, brush up on your skills, learn something new, or just have some fun!

Here's what we have in store:

FRIDAY

Chorus Directors' and Assistant Directors' meet-up with Liz Garnett

An opportunity for MDs and AMDs to get together for idea-exchange, experience-sharing and all-round mutual support.

Extreme Quartetting with Liam Buswell

Do you want to sing some well-known songs with three people you've perhaps not met and have never sung with? Extreme Quartetting is the perfect opportunity to do just that!

How to incorporate vocal craft into your warmups with Hannah Barber

QC Hannah will be delivering a practical guide to teaching warmups which promote good vocal techniques within your chorus or quartet.

SATURDAY

Extreme Quartetting with Liam Buswell

Another chance to try Extreme Quartetting if you missed the Friday session, or if you enjoyed the Friday session so much you want to do it again!

Tips for efficient rehearsals to drive improvement with Hot Ticket

LABBS' 2023 Mixed Quartet Gold Medallists, Hot Ticket, will be sharing their tips and techniques for getting the best out of your quartet or chorus rehearsals.

Give Quartetting a Go with Barberlicious

Have you ever been tempted to have a go at quartetting? LABBS' 2023 Women's Quartet Gold Medallists, Beck, Bushra, Anna and Anne-Marie were all new to quartetting when they formed Barberlicious over 10 years ago, so understand how hard it can be to know how to get started!

In this informal session participants can have a go at singing one or two well-known LABBS polecats in quartet, in a friendly and supportive environment.



Tagging with Sharrow Vale Blues

Come along to learn and sing some tags with award-winning mixed quartet, Sharrow Vale Blues.

Performance Workshop with Performance Judge, Kirsty Williams

A practical exploration of performance techniques to help you become a better performer.

SUNDAY

Chorus coaching under glass with Performance Judge, Alison Zdzylowski

Come along to watch and gain a greater understanding of the Performance Category.

Quartet coaching under glass with Amersham A Cappella's MD, Helen Lappert

Helen will be sharing her considerable experience and skills with a quartet, for you to come along and learn from too.

Polecat Frenzy with Musicality Judge, Angela Sanchez-Rosemurgey

Time for a sing! Angela will lead you in some polecats.

Learn to sing a sea shanty with Chris Netherton from Cornish shanty group, Stuns'ls

The RNLI are celebrating their 200-year anniversary this year, and so are our charity for the weekend. What better way to help celebrate than to learn a sea shanty!

All sessions are included in your Event Pass, and should last around an hour. Friday and Saturday sessions will take place throughout the afternoon, with Sunday sessions taking place in the morning. More info to follow, so keep an eye on our social media pages for updates.

It's going to be such a brilliant weekend! Do head on over to the [LABBS website](#) to register for Convention; online registration and prices end on 6th September.

Are you looking for new Dresses?

Silver Lining are selling their beloved Blue dresses to help fund our 25th anniversary celebrations. Modelled here by our gorgeous performance lead Shawwna.

We have 47 dresses ranging from size 8 to 30 with at least one of each size. They all come up small but we can help with sizing for you.

£500, just give Liz a call and have a chat.

Email info@silver-lining.org.uk for details

