

# Voice Box

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



Summer 2024 £4

## Convention 2024 update, concerts, and singing in the Spanish sunshine!



## Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers

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## Chair's Foreword

**Well, spring is meant to be here but as I write this it's jolly cold!** Hopefully by the time you read this the sun will be out and the winter woollies will be off, and I wish you all a happy summer.

Since I last wrote we have had our Annual General Meeting and Council Meeting. We welcomed some new members to the Board: Liz Mountain-Town, who takes over as Secretary; Kate Middleton, who takes on the Diversity and Inclusion portfolio; and Alison Liddell, who is taking up an important role in coordinating the planning for our 50th Anniversary in 2026. I am sure Alison will soon be asking you for your ideas and suggestions for our celebrations. We thank them all for taking on these roles, and also welcome the formal appointment to the Board of two people we co-opted during the last year: Gail Grainger and Chloe Cale. We are 100% a voluntary organisation and we greatly appreciate all of the people who generously give their time and talents.

In early April a number of LABBS choruses travelled to Calpe for the BIBA En Armonia Convention, and I was privileged to attend as LABBS Chair. Crystal Chords won an international bronze medal and we also greatly enjoyed performances by a number of other LABBS ensembles. I was proud of the LABBS representation and congratulate everyone who competed.

In May BABS members celebrated their 50th Anniversary at their Convention in Harrogate, with LABBS 2023 gold medalists Cheshire Chord Company,



Barberlicious, and Hot Ticket performing in the Saturday Evening Show. We offer BABS our congratulations on reaching this milestone, and look forward to BABS members joining us for our own anniversary celebrations in 2026.

Looking forward to the rest of 2024, plans are well advanced for Prelims at the end of June and Convention in October, and I hope to meet many of you there. Remember that if you want to attend Prelims to support our quartets it is completely free to be in the audience.

As usual, members of your Board will be visiting a number of clubs throughout the year and do remember that we are always happy to hear from you or to receive invitations to your events.

**Sue Ranson**  
**LABBS Chair**

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**Deadline for next edition:  
Friday 26th July 2024**

Please send all submissions to [voicebox@labbs.org.uk](mailto: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](#).

**2024 Deadlines:** Friday 26th July, Friday 1st Nov.

## Update from your Editor

### Regular readers will

**know** that I often write about LABBS volunteers, and the huge amount of work which goes on behind the scenes to ensure our Association brings value to our members' barbershop lives, and can run smoothly.



LABBS volunteers support a wide range of activities and functions: from advice, support and resources, to grants and funding; Convention, Prelims and educational events, to opportunities for peer support and networking. We also fulfil a whole host of administrative functions: minutes, risk assessments, budgeting, memberships, and a whole lot more besides. And, we're kept busy building and maintaining relationships with our fabulous members, and the barbershop community in both the UK and across the world.

None of this can happen without those of you who give your time, skills and energy to our Association - thank you!

Many hands make light work, as they say, and with that in mind, have you ever considered [volunteering with LABBS](#)? There are many opportunities to suit all kinds of people, skill sets, and availability. Volunteer roles are advertised on the [LABBS](#)

[Vacancies page of our website](#), so do head over and have a look (we're currently recruiting for Marketing and Communications roles). If you want to give something back to our Association but can't see a role which fits, please do reach out to our Volunteer Coordinator, Caroline Poole, at [volunteers@labbs.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@labbs.org.uk), or keep an eye on the [LABBS Members Discussion Forum Facebook page](#) for opportunities.

Volunteering with LABBS really is a brilliant thing to do. Not only do you get to work with an awesome team of like-minded people, you also get to play an active role in delivering LABBS' vision: To be the UK's leading community for education, entertainment and promotion of barbershop singing, with international recognition and influence. Who wouldn't want to be a part of that!

**Mel Baber, Editor  
VoiceBox**

## Champs Corner

### Busy Barberlicious

#### Well! We have had a busy time fundraising

and supporting some of our Barbershop communities. In March, we were privileged to support the faculty at LABBS and BABS Education and Judging Singing Day in Coventry. As well as having an amazing day of singing and learning, we also raised over £700 towards our trip to BHS in Cleveland, selling cake, pins, keyrings and raffle tickets. A huge thank you to friends from Crystal Chords and Silver Lining for their donations to the raffle, baking cakes and some delicious chutneys and preserves. We are blown away by all the amazing help and support we have been given - it really means the world.



Barberlicious and Vocal Spectrum

In April, we travelled to the [Iberian Barbershop Convention](#) in Calpe, Spain, to represent LABBS as the current Women's Quartet Champions and to compete in the International chorus competition with our chorus, Crystal Chords. We had a jam-packed schedule with both quartet and chorus events plus a coaching session with the amazing Nicky Salt. Barberlicious were honoured to perform at the Opening Ceremony and at the President's Reception on Thursday night. On Friday we opened the Friday Night Quartet Champion Show after a very competitive and exciting quartet contest featuring many fabulous LABBS quartets, including our brilliant fellow Crystal Chords quartet Hat Trick! Saturday brought the chorus competition and Crystal Chords were thrilled to receive third place in the international contest.

Another special highlight of our weekend in Spain was being coached under glass by the one and only Vocal Spectrum. The session was live-streamed and is still available [on YouTube](#) for you to revisit and pick up any golden nuggets for your own knowledge and education. Other highlights of the weekend included singing in the bar for the one and only David Wright and catching up with friends including INHOUSE and Lady Barbalade. to name just a few. We would like to thank BIBA for hosting such a fantastic convention and providing us with such amazing opportunities for our continued improvement on the



Barberlicious at BIBA

road to Cleveland. We would also like to congratulate everyone who crossed the stage at BIBA. It was wonderful to catch up with so many friends from across Europe and the world.

As we head into Spring, we are super excited to be supporting MUBS at their [Equinox Concert on Sat 4th May 2024](#), before heading off to Harrogate to sing at [BABS 50th Convention](#) on Sat 25th May 2024 in their Quartet Champions Show.

Our fundraising efforts continue in earnest before we fly off to represent LABBS at BHS in July. We are raffling off a unique, custom made Phlypipes pitchpipe, with the draw on Sunday, 9th June 2024 at 13:30, so [get your ticket before it closes!](#) Or if you would like to donate to our [GoFundMe](#), we are always eternally grateful for everyone's help.

**Beck, Bushra, Anna and Ann-Marie  
Barberlicious**

# Hot Notes: An a capella show with These Notes and Hot Ticket

## On a cold Saturday

**evening** in early February, mixed quartets Hot Ticket and These Notes took to the stage at the cosy Etcetera theatre in Camden.

### These Notes – Mariane, Yas, Caecilia, Michael

We're These Notes! We're quite a new quartet so don't worry at all if you've never heard of us. We started our quartet journey competing at IABS last year and had such a good time, we decided we wanted to do our own concert. We asked our friends at Hot Ticket (I hear they won a gold medal or something) if they'd be happy to be our supporting act and to our surprise, they said yes!

It's rather uncommon for a quartet to do their own show but it doesn't have to be that way. If you're in a quartet and you don't have anything to rehearse except two songs for a competition eight months away, why not put on a show? It's great for developing rep, trying new things and improving your sound. Prior to the show, we had three songs in our repertoire,

and now we have eight. The sold out concert was performed to an almost exclusively non-barbershop audience which made it all the more exciting. Our personal highlights were Yas forgetting her words in *Drunken Sailor* and Hot Ticket's gorgeous rendition of *Dream River*. The entire concert can be found on our respective YouTube pages: [Hot Ticket](#); [These Notes](#).

### Hot Ticket - Bethany, Oli, Isaac, Joe

When Michael from These Notes reached out asking if we'd be interested in putting on a show with them, it was an immediate YES! After the LABBS Mixed Quartet Contest, we knew we wanted to spend some time polishing up our show rep and getting in front of audiences. So this was the perfect opportunity, with one of the most exciting up-and-coming British quartets - we can't wait to see the splash that These Notes will make in contest this year.

One of the great things about putting on a show is having the opportunity to highlight those songs that don't have a



Hot Ticket and These Notes

place on the barbershop contest stage. Oli spent a lot of the evening singing harmonies instead of melodies, as we featured Joe on *Your Man*, Isaac on *Dream River*, and Bethany on *I Want You To Want Me* and *Brown Eyed Girl*. Perhaps our favourite part of the evening was singing Val Hicks' eight-part arrangement of *Misty* with These Notes; the lush jazz chords and beautiful lyrics made for an atmospheric show-closer.

If you're looking for an exciting act for your chorus show - consider reaching out to [These Notes](#) or [Hot Ticket](#) via our social media pages. We'd love to come and sing for you!

**Bethany Southworth**  
**Hot Ticket**

# A magical, unforgettable and inspiring journey to Calpe

## In April, Cheshire Chord Company

embarked on an exhilarating journey to the sun-kissed shores of Calpe, Spain, where we had the privilege of participating in the esteemed BIBA En Armonia Convention 2024. This was a momentous occasion for us, filled with anticipation and excitement as we prepared to showcase our passion for barbershop music on an international stage.

From the moment we arrived, the energy and enthusiasm at the convention hotel was infectious. We were thrilled to be surrounded by fellow enthusiasts from all corners of the globe. Our time at the convention was nothing short of magical, with each moment leaving an indelible mark on our hearts. We were honoured to grace the stage on four separate occasions, each one offering a unique opportunity to shine and share our music!

The journey began with the opening show on Thursday night, a moment we had eagerly awaited since our arrival in Calpe. As we stepped onto the stage, our hearts pounded with excitement and anticipation, knowing that this performance would set the tone for the days ahead.

As the convention unfolded, we embraced every opportunity to connect with fellow singers and immerse ourselves in the vibrant a cappella community. Sharing the stage with fellow LABBS members from a number of ensembles was a particular highlight.

Whether it was the electrifying mic cooling session or the exhilarating Saturday night show, we poured our hearts and souls into every performance, cherishing the opportunity to share our passion with audiences near and far.

After the exhilarating Saturday night show, our excitement continued as we had the incredible opportunity to share drinks and exchange stories with some of the most talented individuals in the barbershop world. Among them were the legendary David and Sandi Wright, whose passion for music and dedication to the craft have inspired countless performers, including ourselves.

But the magic didn't stop there! We were also privileged to rub shoulders with the exceptionally talented 2004 Barbershop Harmony Society Champions, Vocal Spectrum: true barbershop virtuosos!

As we bade farewell to Calpe and the unforgettable memories we created,



Cheshire Chord Company in Calpe

we were filled with gratitude for the experiences we shared and the connections we made. The BIBA Convention 2024 will forever hold a special place in our hearts, reminding us of the transformative power of music to uplift, inspire, and unite us all.

As we returned home, we carried with us a renewed sense of purpose and determination to continue pursuing our barbershop dreams. The journey may have ended, but our hearts are already brimming with anticipation for the next chapter of our international adventure. With memories of Calpe still fresh in our minds, we look ahead to Denver 2025 with excitement and enthusiasm! Make sure you follow us on [social media](#) to keep up to date with all of our adventures and experiences.

**Julie Phillips, PRO**  
**Cheshire Chord Company**



# LABBS CONVENTION 2024

## BOURNEMOUTH, 25<sup>TH</sup> – 27<sup>TH</sup> 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 Zdzyłowski**

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.

# Reminders, refreshers, and revelations!

## On 16th March we - Emma, Su and Julie from Fascinating Rhythm -

attended the LABBS and BABS Singing Education Day in Coventry. What a fabulous day it was. We couldn't wait to get back to share our learning with the rest of FR. We'd also like to share with you too.

Let's talk about those nifty **SOVT exercises**. Ever heard of them? They're all about partially closing your mouth to create some back pressure. The fancy term for it is *Semi Occluded Vocal Tract*. Basically, it helps your vocal folds vibrate with less effort, so your voice doesn't tire out as quickly.

Now, onto **vocal pedagogy**. Craig Kehoe gave us the lowdown on mouth shapes, and breath management. Picture this: tongue behind your lower teeth, start your phrases with a forward position, and keep that jaw relaxed. Oh, and remember, 'Toned but not tense' is the name of the game.

And let's not forget about **alignment**. Start from the ground up - literally. Think about aligning your body from your feet all the way to your ears and watch out for tension creeping in! It's all about finding that sweet spot for your best sound.

Next, we had a deep dive into **stacking** with Craig, and how different arrangements affect chorus sound. From random placements to arranging by resonance, it's like a game of musical chairs but with voices. Finding your spot in the stack can make all the difference in how you feel and sound.

Barry Clinton took us on a musical journey through **tuning**: Equal Temperament versus Just Intonation. All very technical and scientific so thank goodness Barry broke it down for us, showing how dropping pitch can actually be natural in certain intervals.

Then there's **vocal expression**. Faculty had us diving into the emotional side of singing, bringing lyrics to life, experimenting with different emotions, and really connecting with our audience.

Jen rounded things off with **vocal flow**. We learned all about breath control, legato singing, and maintaining pitch. Plus, we got to practise hissing like a pro. Who knew it could be so much fun?

Finally, we got to peep behind the curtain and see **how judges score performances** with Alison Thompson. It's all about consistency, fairness, and of course, watching and listening to the best of the best to know what excellence sounds like.



Emma, Su, and Julie

So, there you have it: a whirlwind tour of vocal technique, performance enhancement, and judging criteria. Who knew singing could be so multifaceted? But that's what makes it so fascinating!

Thank you to the LABBS and BABS judges, and Barberlicious, for a wonderful day.

**Emma Beale, Su Roberts, and Julie Macnamara**  
Fascinating Rhythm

## Quartet Corner

# Hat-Trick high score

**Hat-Trick came away from BIBA** with our highest score to date, so to say we are chuffed is an understatement. With an improvement of over 1%, we came seventh overall in a



Happy Hat-Trick

wonderfully competitive international competition.

The BIBA stage was perfect for singing - so comfortable and welcoming - and getting a standing ovation from our completely unbiased Crystal Chords family helps too. On top of that, our lead, Laura, celebrated her big four-oh on chorus day, when we got the bronze international chorus trophy, so we had a lot to celebrate all weekend.

BIBA put on an amazing convention and we can not wait to be back soon.

**Laura Orton**  
Hat-Trick



Happy birthday, Laura!

# Crackerjack! LABBS 1999 Quartet Champions: twenty-five years young!

**With Annie Sperry over from North Carolina, USA,** to join us for 'Be a White Rosette For the Day', Crackerjack! took the opportunity for our first face-to-face reunion for eleven years. Having come fourth with Nancy Dyson as Baritone in 1995, Louise Williams replaced Nancy in 1996 when she relocated to the North-West and that year, Crackerjack! won Quartet Bronze, with Silver the following year. We won the Quartet Gold in 1999 and were proudly accepted into the Quartet Champion Chorus in 2000.

We went on to win Millennium Bronze in 2000, which was a mixed contest, and we starred in the Christmas Eve edition of Heartbeat in 2000 (Cold Turkey, Series 10, Episode 10). We also performed at BHS in the World Harmony Jamboree.

As a quartet, we had many memorable experiences and a lot of support from friends in LABBS and BABS, as well as from European and International associations.

We hung up our sparkly outfits in 2001 and not long after, Annie left for Canada and then the USA. We've kept in contact and it was great to meet up in person to celebrate our twenty-five year anniversary.

**Louise Williams  
Crackerjack!**



Millennium Bronze winners, Crackerjack!



L-R: Annie Foley (Tenor), Steph Foley (Annie's wife, who attended 'Be a White Rosette For the Day'), Pauline Winn (Bass), Jo Braham (Lead), and Louise Williams (Baritone).

## In House's Spanish adventure

**Hola amigos!** It is with immense joy that we share the tale of our recent escapade to Spain for the Biba en Armonia Convention. After what felt like an eternity of waiting due to the pandemic, we finally embarked on this unforgettable journey, brimming with anticipation and excitement.

The Thursday night show marked the commencement of our Spanish adventure, as we took to the stage to open the convention. During the mic warming session on Friday morning, we had the pleasure of showcasing our newest favourite song, *In These Shoes*.

Originally penned by the talented Kirsty McColl, this vibrant composition took on new life in an expert arrangement from the ingenious Nick Bryant, tailored specifically for us.

On Saturday night, we had the honour of warming up the stage for the incomparable Vocal Spectrum quartet - Barbershop Harmony Society's 2004 champions, and barbershop superstars!

We were also joined by LABBS' very own 2023 champs, Barberlicious, with whom we may have shared a drink or two!

After our busy couple of days, it was only fair to unwind and enjoy some fun in Benidorm! With its vibrant nightlife, there was no shortage of options for excitement.



In House and Barberlicious

As we bade farewell to Spain and returned home, our hearts were filled with gratitude for the unforgettable experiences we shared. Our journey was not just about music; it was a celebration of friendship, adventure, and the boundless possibilities that await when we open our hearts to the world.

Adiós, Spain. Until we meet again.

**In House Quartet**



In House Quartet

# More Eisteddfod success for JFR in 2024!

## Junior Fascinating Rhythm is

**celebrating** another successful year at the recent Thornbury Eisteddfod, part of the [Thornbury Arts Festival 2024](#). This year the [Juniors and Seniors](#) sang together in two-part harmony in the Under 14 class and gained a Distinction with 88 marks, winning their class as well as winning best performing choir overall. Thirteen of the girls also competed with their solos, duets, and a trio.

The girls aged between 7 and 16 competed first with Pure Imagination from Willy Wonka & The Chocolate Factory.

The adjudicator commented: "An imaginative and atmospheric opening and the choral sound was warm and rounded and nicely blended. You sustained the line well with some effective legato singing and this was shaped with some thoughtful use of tonal colour and some simple but effective choreography." For their second song, they sang Edelweiss from The Sound of Music.

"Again a lovely blend here with the harmony confident and controlled. You built well into the song sharing a wide range of dynamic colour and the line was expressively shaped and maintained with a warm legato and good clarity in the diction."

Wendy Howse, Junior FR's Musical Director commented: "I'm so glad that the adjudicator picked up on all the things we've been working on. I'm so proud and feel so blessed that we get to do this every Friday. It was so lovely to see so many parents there supporting us. I'm over the moon. A heartfelt thanks to the girls for working so hard and to all the ladies who make JFR possible."

## Solo and Duet Performances

Thirteen of our Junior FR girls also performed exceptionally well in solo and duet categories at the music festival, and they all did brilliantly with their confident singing. They featured in a number of the categories:

## Songs from the Shows

How Far I'll Go from Moana (Beth), December (Caitlin), Slipping Through My Fingers from Mamma Mia (Amelie), As Long As He Needs Me from Oliver (Evie).

## Duets and Trios

Doh a Deer (Beth, Natalie, Elsie), Count on Me (Grace & Caitlin), Who Am I? (Anna & Izzy). To Make You Feel My Love (Rosie & Jasmine) and True Colours (Lily & Amelie) came joint first in this category.

## Traditional

Caitlin achieved the highest mark in the Traditional category with Crystal Spring.

## Pop Songs.

Somewhere Only We Know (Natalie), When I Was Your Man (Lily), Born Without A Heart (Kiara), You've Got The Love (Grace). Evie came first with her performance of Lay Me Down by Sam Smith.

Another really successful year! A huge well done to all involved.

**Chloe Roberts, PRO  
Fascinating Rhythm**





# Fundraising for choruses

We are 30 years old this month, and we have improved our competition score by 5% this year so we deserve a treat!

Like every other barbershop chorus we are keen to attract funds to support our development and to help with the purchase of licences and music. After all, there are only so many times you can sing *Paper Moon*, and let's face it, there are only so many times that you want to sing *Paper Moon*! But, Paper Money helps enormously. We have recently been selected for a Tesco Tokens collection and we are thrilled about this as selection itself guarantees us £500. Thanks to Tesco who recognised our appeal and the health benefits of singing in a group.



We in Yorkshire are a canny lot though, and we have also hijacked an idea used by another organisation to run a 100 club. Now, I can already hear Treasurers groan but we have managed to circumvent the tedium of collecting money every week by having one monthly draw and selling our 100 tickets in one go, charging £10 each for 10 monthly draws. We keep a record of the Belle who sold the ticket and also the owner of the ticket; often family members and friends.

We have been happy to spend £40 securing a licence with our local Town Council as we can use this for the rest of the calendar year for raffles, etc. This is working well for us and by withholding £225 for the first nine draws and £250 for the Christmas draw, we have £485 left: another pot of cash for new items to further our development.

We're very happy to chat if you need more information about either fundraiser.

**Gillian Swan, PRO**  
**Abbey Belles Chorus**



# A busy spring for Avon Harmony

**It has been a busy spring for Avon Harmony** and our new Chair, Jenny. Jenny hit the ground running straight after our AGM, researching and visiting several local venues to plan a concert with Red Velvet Quartet and local community choir Go Vocal, directed by Linda Corcoran. A lovely evening was enjoyed by all, with one of the highlights being members of the audience joining Avon Harmony on stage to sing *Anthem*. As there were singers from all of the Bristol LABBS and BABS choruses, as well as some ex members who also sing with Go Vocal, Mary, our MD, found herself directing a much larger group than our usual small chorus.

In March, we held a 'Love to Sing' day, and have already gained two new singers,

with others hoping to join us shortly. Future plans include a series of open rehearsals in May and June, aimed at recruiting the lower voice parts.

We had an evening of coaching from BABS singing judge Martin Proctor, and Helen Lappert spent a valuable

weekend with us in April, coaching us on three songs. Two of which we expect to take on stage at LABBS' Convention in Bournemouth.

And then, to top it all off, we had a visit from Great Western Chorus, who were flash mobbing all four women's choruses in Bristol in one evening, to sing us their BABS Convention package.

A very busy and productive spring, and we are now ready to start planning for our 50th Anniversary as a chorus in 2025, and looking forward, as a founder member chorus, to LABBS 50th in 2026!

**Jackie Boffin, PRO**  
**Avon Harmony**



# Celebrating Harmony: A recap of the 'Happy Together' concert

## Cascade Chorus brought

**joy** and harmony to the stage with their 'Happy Together' concert in March. This event was not only a testament to the group's talent but also a celebration of unity and community spirit.

From the moment the curtains rose, it was evident that the evening was going to be extraordinary. The concert was a resounding success, with tickets selling out quickly and the venue buzzing with excitement. The chorus, adorned in their vibrant attire, captured the audience's hearts with their impeccable harmonies and infectious energy.

One of the highlights of the evening was the diverse selection of songs that catered to every taste and mood. From upbeat melodies to soul-stirring ballads, there was something for everyone to enjoy. Many of the audience members found themselves moved by certain songs, highlighting the emotional depth of the performances.

However, the 'Happy Together' concert was more than just a showcase of musical talent. It was also an opportunity for Cascade Chorus to give back to the community. The concert served as a fundraiser for George's Rockstars, a



worthy charity dedicated to supporting children in hospital. Through their music, the chorus members were able to make a meaningful contribution to a cause close to their hearts.

Looking ahead, Cascade Chorus is eager to continue spreading joy and harmony in 2024 and beyond. With each performance, they strive to uplift spirits and create unforgettable memories for their audience. As they reflect on the success of the 'Happy Together' concert, they are filled with gratitude for the support of

their fans and the opportunity to share their passion for music with the world.

In conclusion, the 'Happy Together' concert was a triumphant celebration of music, unity, and philanthropy. Cascade Chorus proved once again that when voices join together in harmony, they have the power to inspire and uplift us all. Here's to many more memorable performances in the future!

**Viv Robertson, PRO**  
**Cascade Chorus**



# Bristol Fashion Love-to-Sing 2024

## On a wet and windy February evening

BF was poised, ready to welcome our new cohort of Love-to-Sing singers. Looking excited, although some a little nervous, they took their first tentative steps into our rehearsal space.

BF - being our usual friendly selves - welcomed them with open arms, name labels, and of course, lots of encouragement! For some, this was their first foray into a cappella singing while others were seasoned professionals. All however, were there to share the joy of singing.

The chosen song for LTS24 was born out of a BF cinema trip to see Wonka, during which our MD, Craig, was nudged multiple times and heard the same remark: 'Can we sing this?'. Craig, being the multi-faceted director that he is, spent his Christmas holidays arranging Pure Imagination for our upcoming course.

The Music and Performance Team decided that the chorus shouldn't learn their parts beforehand which went down really well with the attendees, with some commenting that it was really reassuring and less intimidating as everyone was starting at the same point.

Each of the five weeks had a theme with the first being an introduction to polyrhythmic singing. Week two was alignment (get those knees soft, and don't stick your head out like a turkey!). The third week was resonance: cups and bubbling at the ready. Week four concentrated on performance: understanding the importance of singing with believability to a unified story.

Each week our attendees were put through their paces for an hour and a half and afterwards, were invited to stay and take in the last hour of a typical BF rehearsal, where we polished songs for an upcoming festival. Week by week more attendees stayed to listen (and BF does love an audience!). The final week concluded in a Love-to-Sing showcase. Nerves were high as we filled the risers, but BF were on hand to offer support and encouragement. Despite the initial anxiety,



everyone put on a stellar performance which you can watch [here!](#)

The audience were enthralled, and we received such positive feedback from our LTS attendees, and their friends and families, with over half of the attendees expressing an interest in auditioning. How lucky we are!

We cannot wait to welcome them into our BF family.

**Ruth Fowler, PRO Team  
Bristol Fashion**



# It is Well with Coast to Coast!

## Few hymns are as beautiful

or poignant as Horatio Spafford's *It is Well with My Soul*, written in 1873 after his four daughters had been drowned following a ship collision in the Atlantic. Larry Wright's wonderful arrangement of Philip Bliss's original music was one of two songs learned at Coast to Coast's Weekend Retreat at the Leicester Hilton in February, organised once again by Chris Wilkin. The other piece was the Bee Gees 1977 number one hit *How Deep is your Love*: rhythmic, upbeat and optimistic, and a perfect pairing with Spafford's work.

Thirty-five participants from around the UK enjoyed this year's retreat, including LABBS Chair Sue Ranson, LABBS Liaison Officer Rita Hulands, Cath Morton C2C's first MD, and Pauline Corrieri, former LABBS Chair and chorus director. C2C's fabulous MD, Angela Sanchez, and inspirational coach Simon Lubkowski, directed.

We had a great time! We honed our skills with new friends and great music, enjoyed tags, and sang in scratch groups, all with an open bar, karaoke, and a music quiz (e.g. how do you spell Tchaikovsky?). One participant remarked that she'd not laughed so much in months! While busily practising for competitions, shows or festivals, it's easy to lose sight of the camaraderie and joie de vivre of simply singing beautiful barbershop arrangements together. We did this in abundance over the weekend, and there's nothing quite like it!

Coast to Coast is now a hybrid chorus, meeting twice a month via Zoom and five times a year in person: perfect for those who find travelling challenging. Its live meeting on Sunday 21st July will be a Love to Sing Day in Leicester, open to all LABBS members. The day will cover vocal technique and daily voice exercises and tags, with a new song, Polecats, and opportunities for quartet singing.



Pauline Corrieri, Cath Morton, Angela Sanchez and Sue Ranson at Retreat

Do come along; you'd be most welcome! If you're interested in joining our chorus (just £5 per month), or coming along to our Love to Sing Day, please contact [membership@singcoast2coast.co.uk](mailto:membership@singcoast2coast.co.uk).

**Christine Kyriacou, PRO  
Coast to Coast**



Retreat participants

## A great start to 2024 for Red Rock A Cappella

### Following our successful Learn to Sing course

in the New Year, we were delighted to welcome six enthusiastic new members, three of whom went on to sing with us at the Devon Performing Arts Festival on 9th March.

It was such a fun day, and we came away with two Commendations and a Distinction, having won all three entered classes: the Barbershop and Ladies

Choir classes with the full chorus, and the Small Choir class with Scarlet, our ten-woman group. A quote from the Three Degrees sums up the day perfectly: 'It may be raining outside, but in my heart it's Spring'.

The chorus diary is already filling up for the year and we can't wait to see what the rest of 2024 brings!

**Jayne Trayler  
Red Rock A Cappella**



Red Rock A Cappella are delighted with their three awards!

# Fascinating Rhythm raise over £1000 for St Peter's Hospice, Bristol

## On February 15, 2024, the ladies of Fascinating Rhythm

warmly welcomed Nick Wilson, Community Fundraiser for [St Peter's Hospice](#). Throughout 2023, the dedicated members of Fascinating Rhythm and RhythmMix (a smaller group of Fascinating Rhythm chorus members) worked diligently to raise funds for St Peter's Hospice through various activities, including singing at Yate Shopping Centre, Cribbs Causeway, and the [Walk to Remember](#) at Ashton Court. They also contributed to a [Music with Mummy](#) children's event at Easter, and provided refreshments and sang at [Wotton Teas](#) in the town hall in Wotton Under Edge.

Their hard work paid off, resulting in an impressive £1245.45 raised. During this special night, Fascinating Rhythm's co-chair Anne-

marie Collier presented a cheque to Nick Wilson. Nick highlighted the crucial role St Peter's Hospice plays in providing palliative end-of-life care for patients and families dealing with cancer, lung, heart, and neurological diseases.

Covering a large area around Bristol and serving a population of 1.2 million people, St Peter's Hospice supports 3000 patients annually, with 90% receiving care at

home. The funds raised by Fascinating Rhythm equate to providing 60 therapy sessions for bereaved families and children, sustaining the 24-hour advice line for an additional 3 days, or covering the average cost of caring for a patient at home.

Expressing her pleasure in supporting the local hospice, Anne-Marie stated, "The ladies of Fascinating Rhythm truly worked hard to raise the money." Nick emphasised the significance of local groups like Fascinating Rhythm, noting: "Having local support matters so much; it helps us ensure that care through the hospice is freely available for 3000 people a year."

Fascinating Rhythm's charity for 2024 is [Off the Record](#), a mental health social movement for young people aged 11-25.

**Chloe Roberts, PRO  
Fascinating Rhythm**



## More members, more trophies... More Harmony!

### Here at More Harmony, we're exceptionally proud

of the warm welcome we give to new singers. We know it's not always easy to walk into a room full of strangers, and singing can feel like a very intimate thing to do which makes the experience even more daunting! So far this year, we've been on a recruitment drive and we're thrilled with the results we've had: at least one new member in every section and we're not done yet!

Everyone who walks through our doors is met with friendly smiles, knowledgeable answers to the many questions they may have and, of course, our beautifully designed welcome packs, full of all the info a newbie could possibly need! We still want to grow our numbers as the year continues, but we've made a fantastic start and the difference in sound is amazing.

This result isn't the only success we've had this year! At the end of February, we

took part in Wadebridge Festival of Speech & Music and were delighted to receive a distinction - and a shiny trophy - in the class of 'Small Women's Choir'. We'd hoped to equal or better our score from the last time we entered and we did just that! Unfortunately, due to members being unavailable the following night, we couldn't enter the 'Barbershop' category, but the judges allowed us to perform our barbershop set straight after our 'Small Women's Choir' songs and receive unmarked feedback. And what feedback! It comes to something when the head judge tells you how sad he is not to be marking you, because the marks would

be high! The feedback we were given was so glowing, we left the hall grinning from ear to ear.

Wadebridge is our 'home' (literally, for many of our members!) and so it's always special to participate in this particular event. We'll be singing in a special showcase concert this summer and then next year the festival celebrates its centenary, which we can't wait to be a part of!

At the time of writing, we've just begun a new term, with a new song: Shine by Take That. It's already sounding rich and full of energy and we just know audiences are going to love it!

With fantastic new singers in our midst and lots to look forward to, we can't wait to see what else 2024 has in store!

**Emma Tofi, Co-Chair  
More Harmony**



Chorus posers!

# Onward and upward

**After nearly 30 years of rehearsing** at Grove Vale School in Great Barr, Birmingham, Second City Sound have moved to a new rehearsal space in Beacon Church, Great Barr. This was partly due to financial pressures but also because of our increasing numbers and need for more space.

Our founder, Olive Ryder, and her friends had used other rehearsal spaces but found a home at Grove Vale, and the staff there even built us a cupboard to house the risers, so there were some mixed emotions on the evening we [packed our belongings](#) into a large van and [moved to the Church](#). Click on the links to see how our move went!

Second City Sound has grown in confidence following our enforced absence during COVID, gradually getting back to singing, first in the playground and then in the Hall without risers, and eventually back on the risers. We had some small singouts and finally found our way back to Convention in Harrogate in 2023. We would like to thank our MD, Rob Barber, for his enthusiasm and encouragement during this time, as

well as Sally McLean who coached us on zoom and in person.

We were also given a terrific boost by vocal coach Steve Scott, Director of Harmony and Education Services at the Barbershop Harmony Society. He allowed us more freedom to stand in a more relaxed way, breathing when we needed to and singing in our own voices. He taught us the difference between the 'hoot' and 'cry' sounds (although sadly, this author cannot detect them!) and when to use them with effect in our songs. We now aspire to be the performers he asks us to be. Following his visit we held a short singing course and have been happy to welcome six new members to our chorus.

Rob and the committee have plans for a bright future, which include a show in March 2025 to celebrate 35 years of our existence (watch this space: we have invited Lemon Squeezy to join us from Sweden!).

**Sandra Moss, Secretary  
Second City Sound**



All smiles at our new venue: our founder, Olive (front right), with Sandy Bailey (front left), and Kathryn Tovey and Gemma Hemming (back left and right)

# A new MD for Welwyn Harmony!

**Welwyn Harmony are pleased to announce** Oli Goodall as our new Musical Director!

Oli has sung for many years with Capital Chorus and Meantime Chorus as well as various quartets, most notably Hot Ticket, LABBS 2023 Mixed Quartet Champions.

Academically trained in Linguistics, Oli learned about the voice through a scientific lens, attaining an MRes in Speech, Language and Cognition in 2019. He has used this grounding to develop himself as a hobbyist music educator, teaching classes at BABS Harmony College, serving on chorus music teams, and coaching quartets. In 2023 he made the leap into music education full time with the launch of OG Vocal Studio. Since then Oli has been teaching singing, coaching as many

ensembles as possible, and studying to become an accredited Vocal Health First Aider.

Welwyn Harmony and Oli are looking forward to working together to grow the chorus and its singers. Gitta Irmer continues as our Assistant Musical Director after leading the Chorus brilliantly through this interim period.

You can hear Welwyn Harmony in action under Oli's direction at our summer concert on Sunday 23 June at St John the Evangelist church in Welwyn Garden City. This will be an afternoon of wonderful singing, of course, but also with the additional bonus of tea and cake! So make a note in your diaries now and we look forward to seeing you there.

**Emma Harper, Trustee  
Welwyn Harmony**



Welwyn Harmony with their new MD, Oli Goodall

# A magical performance with Russell Watson

## It will be no surprise to

**learn** that this article will be about our amazing night singing with Russell Watson at Blackburn Cathedral on the 16th of March. In the words of Frankie Valli: 'Oh what a night!' It was also the first singout for one of our leads, Kirsty Michelle. What a way to start your Barbershop career!

Our MD, Emma McManus, arranged an emergency Zoom meeting with us all on the 25th of February, to tell us the amazing news that Russell had chosen us to accompany him on his Magnificent Buildings national tour. We had wondered if any other choruses had applied for this show, and were gratified to learn that sixteen had applied, and of the eight who were shortlisted, Russell chose us. That gave us a tremendous boost.

Emma told us that if we agreed to take up the invitation we would have three weeks to learn seven new songs, four of which were in Italian and one in Latin, in a completely different style to our own. Were we up to such a challenge? You bet your sweet pitch pipe we were!

Our amazing Stacy Bridge somehow downloaded the extremely complex arrangements for us, and Diane Blackburn burned the midnight oil and many trees to print all the arrangements out. Charlotte Luke kept us up to speed with all the information from Russell's team. Extra rehearsals were arranged - including on Saturdays - and many nights singing in Italian ensued.

The big day arrived and we met the sound team and crew, who worked so

hard to ensure everything was perfect. In the afternoon we worked with Russell's MD, Mike Moran - a very well known musician in his own right - and he seemed satisfied.

Russell arrived later and just listening to his sound check and to 'The Voice', was thrilling. We joined him singing, and when he turned around and gave us a big grin and a thumbs up, we were so proud. We were also privileged to hear Nancy May, a young soprano who accompanied Russell on his tour. She has the voice of an angel and is clearly destined for great things. We were all so impressed by how supportive, kind, funny, and encouraging everyone was.

Despite having a young baby at home, Emma, our amazing MD, guided, supported and encouraged us through the whole process, and looked so calm on the night that we knew we were in safe hands.

Needless to say, many of our loyal supporters were in the audience for the performance, and the whole evening was just wonderful. Russell's rapport with his audience was brilliant; he had a wonderful relationship with them all. We were given a solo spot and the audience reception was fantastic. And, when the concert was over, we sang as the audience were leaving - they nearly all stayed behind to hear it. It was lovely to see lots of comments on how good we were on his Facebook page which we all stalked relentlessly.

I don't like to brag, but I am going to! Russell was on Rylan Clark's show on Radio 2 the week after, and made a point of saying how wonderful our chorus was.



Performing with Russell Watson at Blackburn Cathedral

A magical night that will live in our memories forever.

Back in the real world we were privileged to sing at the Grand Theatre in Blackpool for the tenth birthday of Left Coast, which delivers highly engaging and socially useful arts and cultural projects in Blackpool.

All in all, quite a start to the year. Who knows what the future may bring!

Life's a song. We sing it.

**Ann Atkin**  
**The Red Rosettes**



The first night of our Learn to Sing course



# Spring has sprung for Silver Lining

## Make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver the other gold.

Reflecting one of our favourite warm ups, we have a new friend in Sheila, who has joined our fantastic Bari section. At the same time we have old friends Liz, Elizabeth and Carole who celebrate five, ten, and fifteen years with Silver Lining.

Silver Lining has started the new year with a bit of a different vibe. We have a new committee team, combining new members who bring different ideas and energy, with the experienced members who add consistency and ensure smooth running. I know all choruses have

similar, but isn't it just amazing that people are so enthusiastic about giving back time and effort to our wonderful pastime. Thank you to all you fabulous people that take on these roles: we love you.

Our new booking secretary has been busy ensuring we are getting the most from our rehearsal space and investigating local singouts as well as competitions. Our fundraising coordinator is filling our diaries with boot sales, pudding parties and quizzes. We assume many of the above include a Prosecco or two and a slice of cake. After all, that is the Silver Lining way! And, our new chairlady has gathered a few willing volunteers to look at ideas for 2025 when

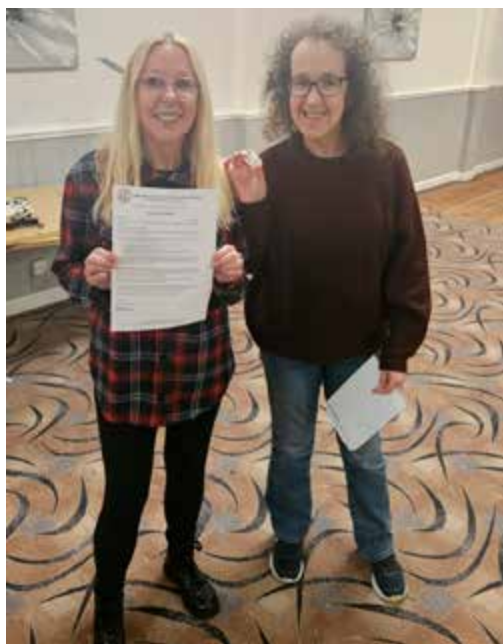
we will be celebrating Silver Lining 25th anniversary.

We have just voted the Alzheimer's Society as our chorus charity for the next two years, and this weekend a small group of us went to Herald Lodge to sing for the residents there. It had extra meaning for all of us as a former member of Silver Lining is a resident there, having stopped singing with us just last year. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed it and it was so lovely to see Jan singing along to the songs she remembered, with a big smile on her face.

**Heather Morton, PRO  
Silver Lining**



Chairlady Jacqui and Membership Secretary Julie with Liz (5 years), Elizabeth (10 years), and Carole (15 years)



Membership Secretary Julie with new member, Sheila



Silver Lining at Herald Lodge

# Opportunity knocks for Amersham A Cappella

**The start of 2024 has been a case of 'fasten your seatbelts'** for Amersham A Cappella. It's been a brilliant, exciting and frankly, sleep depriving time. At our AGM in January, we welcomed a new committee and then we were off! We began the year in full preparation for our *A Kind of Magic* show with Cottontown Chorus. We had a fun-filled joint rehearsal up in Birmingham where we put our individual choruses together for the only joint rehearsal before the 'big day.' We did a cheeky preview of the show, which had almost seven and a half thousand views on Facebook.

As the excitement built and ticket sales went through the roof, we had a chance encounter with a producer from ITV News whilst singing in a bar after chorus! Bowled over by our sound and hearing about our gold medal in Ireland, she pronounced 'We need you on the news!'. Amazingly, three-quarters of the chorus managed to wangle time off work and other commitments to spend a morning filming with the ITV crew and we had an absolute blast. The piece played as the *Feel Good Friday* feature on the ITV London six-o'clock news the day before our show.

Still on a high we threw ourselves into the shows, which received rave reviews and both performances played to a packed house. The afterglow was



Helen being interviewed for ITV

magical and sealed the bond between North and South!

As if the first quarter of the year couldn't get any more exciting, we then received the invite to compete in the Barbershop Harmony Society's international competition in Denver next Summer. After much consultation and discussion with the whole chorus, we were delighted at the beginning of April, to give a resounding 'Yes, yes, yes!' to the invitation. We have a super-sonic

fundraising team already up and running and brimming with ideas and, well, watch this space!

But as a little teaser... we are going to be selling off some of our costumes as we don't have enough of them for the whole chorus. See our ad on page 27, and contact Sue Lewis for more information at [sueclewis@hotmail.com](mailto:sueclewis@hotmail.com).

**Suzanne Hyde, PRO  
Amersham A Cappella**



A Kind of Magic with Cottontown Chorus

# Birthday celebrations for the GEMs

**The GEMs have settled down nicely** in our new rehearsal venue.

We began in March when we had an amazing day out competing at the Manchester Amateur Choral Competition. It was lovely to be amongst, and listening to, a host of different types of choral groups. During the day we held a mini performance at the Dinosaur Museum entertaining visitors as they browsed through the lovely building.

In April we had a great time together with our new 'Gemettes' as we began our Love To Sing course which ran for five weeks ending in May on our 26th Birthday.

Our LABBS Chair, Sue Ranson, joined us for our celebrations as we hosted a mini concert, performing the two songs and tags we had learnt during our course with our 'Gemettes'. Sue was also able to present LABBS Long Service Awards to our long serving GEMs.

The GEMs have decided not to compete at Convention this year but are taking time out to learn a host of new songs to hopefully boost up our repertoire.

We hope you all have an amazing summer and to catch up with you all soon.

**Jenny Smedley, PRO  
GEM Connection**



Performing at the Dinosaur Museum



The first night of our Learn to Sing course

# Starting the New Year as we mean to go on: busy, busy, busy!

**In January, Junction 14 started 2024** with a New Year celebration meal at a local pub, The Old Beams. A time to socialise, eat, drink and sing. A lovely way to start the new year off.

In February we had another wonderful coaching day with the amazing Simon Lubkowski, who never fails to get the best out of us, and we had such a fun time too.

March was a particularly special month! We were delighted to have a very special visitor to our rehearsal, Mel Baber - the Marketing and Communications Director for LABBS, and the amazing Voice Box Editor! It was so nice to chat to her and for her to join in with some of the polecat songs. It was especially nice to have her watch us prepare for our performance a couple of days later at the MK Festival of the Arts. One of our songs even brought a tear to her eye!

After five years of taking home the first place trophy at the MK Festival of the Arts, it was the turn of another chorus to have that honour this year. Congratulations to Black Cat Harmony

who took first place. We came a very respectable second place. Debbie, our MD for the day, did a super job. Tina, our wonderful tenor, had to make several quick costume changes as she was also performing with her two quartets, Wicked Pitches and The Tone Rangers. Excellent performances by both quartets.

April saw us move to a new rehearsal venue. After many years at a local school drama studio, it was time to make a change and we now rehearse at a local retirement village in a lovely, bright room with its own stage. It is a lovely uplifting place to rehearse.

Also in April we did another workshop at the local Simpson Village Hall to an audience of residents of Simpson and other MK areas, plus some family and friends. We finished off with a concert



Our old rehearsal venue with a visit from Mel Baber. Spot the odd one out in yellow!

of many songs from our repertoire. The audience really enjoyed themselves and joined in with the singing. We had lots of lovely comments and praise at the end which was lovely.

So that was our spring and we now look forward to a busy, and hopefully not so wet summer!

**Val Hutchinson, PRO  
Junction 14**



Our new rehearsal venue. A much brighter and airy space.

# BIBA Bronze for the Crystals!

**Crystal Chords are back on UK soil** after a thrilling and memorable weekend away at the inaugural BIBA (formally SABS) convention.

Crystals are no strangers to the Iberian stage as this is our 5th trip to Spain, having attended SABS in 2011, 2014, 2017 and 2019. So, we already knew we were in for a treat and the hosts did not

disappoint - BIBA put on a fantastic event. We took an excited chorus of 34 women and came out with a score of 79.3% which bagged us the international bronze trophy! We also got the top score in the performance category, so it was just like LABBS' Convention 2023 but with more sun! We were pipped by two Sweet Adelines choruses: Harmony Heights got the silver and the UK's Viva Acapella (who were stunning) took the gold.

For many of the chorus, this convention marks another pin badge on the increasingly heavy lanyards, but for Sophie G this was her first convention out with Crystal Chords. Hopefully this will have hooked her to stick around for many conventions to come!

**Laura Orton, PRO  
Crystal Chords**



The Crystals having fun in the sun



Just like LABBS' Convention 2023, but with sun!

## Being a White Rosette

**Our 'Be a White Rosette for a Day' event** took place in March. Over 30 singers - barbershoppers from all over the country and some local singers from other genres - came to Leeds for a full-on day of music and laughter. Teach-tracks for *Sing!* (Pentatonix) had been sent out ahead of time, and Sally put everyone through their paces, even adding choreography after lunch. We were so busy enjoying ourselves that we didn't manage to get any photos! You can watch us performing - with choreo - on our [Facebook page](#) though.

We had some good feedback from the day and a local singer who came along with a Rosette even enjoyed it so much that she voice tested and will audition

shortly! Thank you to everyone reading this who made the trip to be with us, and for buying so many half-time cakes and raffle tickets; all proceeds are going into our Cleveland fund-raising pot, naturally!

Speaking of Cleveland, we're getting giddy now. Steve Scott blew us away with some new ideas and techniques in August last year and we've been working hard on them since. He popped back in February to help us consolidate what we had learned, and then Sean Devine popped in to build on it even further a few weeks later. We'll see Steve again in May and we have a return visit from David Sangster also planned in May, then it's a quick TV appearance on our local evening news magazine programme 'Calendar' before we head to

the airport in July.

There is one thing we will miss very much when we're stateside and that's the traditional rendition of *On Ilkla Moor Baht 'at*, usually sung to us with gusto before the house lights go down at LABBS Convention. Instead, we'll be relying on the LABBS chorus 'tokens' beneath our dresses or tucked in our bras to give us a special lift; tangible reminders of who we're representing and how proud we are to do it. We will let you know what we (and the tokens) are up to at various stages of the trip, and it would be lovely to include every club in the Association (including Club at Large) if we can. The support and love we've been shown this far is priceless.

**Jean Lewis, PRO  
The White Rosettes**



Male Chorus Champions, Meantime Chorus



Mixed Chorus Champions, Crucible Vocal Project



Quartet Champions, Fifth Element

## Congratulations!

**BABS hosted** their marvellous Sing 2024 Convention at the end of May. It was such a wonderful event, with barbershoppers from across the UK (and beyond!) coming together to help BABS celebrate their 50th Anniversary year. Congratulations to everyone who crossed the stage, and sincere thanks to the army of BABS volunteers who worked tirelessly to make the weekend so memorable.



Senior Quartet Champions, Mixed Blessings



Youth Quartet Champions, Ami Quartet

# UKTHB gets going!

## The weekend of 26th - 28th April saw

**barbershoppers** from around the UK travel to Nottingham for the inaugural [UK Treble Harmony Brigade](#). Brigaders had been working hard to learn twelve songs ready for the weekend, with the aim of singing in as many quartets with as many people as possible, and

earning the title of Harmony Hotshot or Harmony Hyperstar.

Saturday afternoon brought the contest: singing a randomly-selected song with a randomly-selected quartet, judged by Anne-Marie Borneuf, Ros Kipp, and Karen Searson. Then, time for a quick dinner and change, ready for the Saturday night show.

Sunday morning saw the awards and prizes ceremony, and a chance for brigaders to sing together one last time before heading home.

What a super weekend!

The next UKTHB will be held in Nottingham on 25th - 27th April 2025 - [save the date!](#)



Dance Cards



Exhausted - cheeky - shocked - 3 White Rosettes



Experienced quartetters who 'judged' the show



First place quartet, 3.5



Harmony Hotshots: Sang with everyone else in the other three parts



Second place quartet, The Larks



Mass sing 'This Is Me' directed by Boo de Bruin



OMG Singing with Anne-Marie from Barberlicious



Harmony Hyperstars: Lorna, Nicky, Marianne, Anna and Sarah sang with everyone else in the other three parts, plus sang with everyone in their own part as well – they'd learned a song in another part!



The Judges



Third Place quartet, Best for Last

# The Belles proudly present The Brain Tumour Charity with £2100 in memory of Helen Ring

**We are so proud** to have raised such a good amount for The Brain Tumour Charity! Here are some cherished memories of Helen from our members:

"Helen was a big fan of Pentatonix so we did a quintet together with April, me, my mum, Juliette and Helen, performing at one of the Belles shows and we called it Pentabelles, in around 2017-ish. Helen chose the song we sang of theirs which I love too. There is [a recording of us on YouTube](#), rehearsing the song we sang together over photo memories of Helen, as a tribute. She was a very special inspiring person and a lovely friend. You can hear Helen's voice at the end saying 'the last chord is just lush' ~ Wendy



Helen (centre) singing with The Belles Convention 2016

"I feel honoured to have known Helen. Helen was so dedicated and always there for everyone whatever they needed. During her time as my Section Leader Helen was so supportive and encouraging. A truly inspirational, wonderful lady with an infectious smile I will always remember." ~ Sandra

"When Helen was going through her treatment for breast cancer, I promised

her lunch at the Orange Tree as soon as her health allowed. We had a lovely lunch, full of laughter and chat. When she was diagnosed with a brain tumour she cheekily asked if the same offer was on. I so wish she had been able to make that second lunch.

Helen took her pitch everywhere with her. We went to see Sons of Pitches in Birmingham. On stage they were pretending to have problems with the right notes and asked the audience if anyone had a pitch pipe on them. They were a little taken aback when Helen duly obliged." ~ Anne

"We formed a quartet with Helen and spent many a rehearsal together laughing and having fun. We entered Prelims and Helen was so excited as it was a dream of hers. One of the songs we sang included a bass line 'this is it' and Helen had the spotlight then. What the audience didn't know was that Helen had been in hospital and had managed to

persuade them to give her a pass out for the afternoon so that she could perform with us.

Helen's passion was so infectious: she was a great person to be around and we miss her terribly.

I will treasure these memories fondly forever: Helen was an inspiration to us all and I will never forget her." ~ April

"At the men's convention one year at Harrogate, the generators were flooded putting the convention centre out of action on the Friday night. Luckily the theatre next door was hurriedly commissioned to host the event, meaning the organisers had to work overnight to be ready for Saturday! I roomed with Helen who got up in the early hours, dressed in the dark so as not to disturb me, walked to the theatre in the dark, no breakfast, in order to lend a hand. For the rest of the weekend I hardly saw Helen as she was employed as a runner and general help. She did so again the following year, then migrated to LABBS.

The rest is history. If there was a gold medal for networking, Helen would have been the outright winner! She was loved and known to so many not only here but in America and in Europe, too. She was world class! Much missed." ~ Sylvia



Helen (R) with Quintessential



# March and April brought sad news for The White Rosettes, with the deaths of three past members: Janet Tordoff, Lynne Gorman and Sue Collier.

## Janet Tordoff

It is with great sadness that we learnt recently of the unexpected passing of Honorary Life Member of The White Rosettes, Janet Tordoff.

Although Janet had had health problems for a few years, her death was still a great shock.

Janet joined The White Rosettes in 1981 and retired from the risers and lead section, but never from being a White Rosette, in 2022. A tremendous forty-one years.

Janet loved The White Rosettes with her heart and soul. In her own words "I did not join a singing group: I entered a new family." Kind, big-hearted, witty,

and always with a twinkle in her eyes, she would welcome every new member and regale them with the history of The Rosettes.

She contributed so much to us: serving on the Committee several times (more than once as Secretary), fundraiser extraordinaire including for the great urn (!), providing sustenance on coach journeys (who can forget her cheese scones), and following her retirement from the risers, she was still right there behind us, supporting us all the way.

She will be greatly missed, but never forgotten, by her White Rosette family. To her family, whom she loved dearly, we wish the sincerest of condolences.



Janet Tordoff at her chorus retirement party

## Lynne Gorman

Lynne was a member of The White Rosettes from the late eighties to 2000 and won gold medals in 1990, 1993, 1996 and 2000. She sang with the Baritone Section and was Chair of the Chorus for a couple of years before she left. Lynne also competed with Victoria Junction quartet with Alison Spencer, Margaret Swain and Florence Hesten, who died in 2020.

Victoria Junction was renowned for pantomimes at chorus parties, which left us crying with laughter. In this world where there are people who give and people who take, Lynne was without a doubt a giver. She was always encouraging people to reach for the stars. Her untimely passing is a great loss to many. She shone so very brightly, and the world is so much darker now that she is no longer in it.



Victoria Junction: (L-R) Lynne Gorman, Alison Spencer, Margaret Swain and Florence Hesten

## Sue Collier

Sue sang with The White Rosettes from 2014 to 2019 and was a valued member of the Bass Section. Always kind, generous and open-hearted. Even through her own struggles she

never failed to ask how others were doing. We have lost a superstar. The world was a better place with Sue in it.

**Louise Williams**  
The White Rosettes



Sue Collier-Hall

# Barbara Adams

Barbara was a member of the Red Rosettes for a number of years, and also sang Barbershop in Canada when she emigrated. All in all, Barbara was involved in barbershop for over 50 years.

**Ann Atkin**  
**The Red Rosettes**



## Long Service Awards

# Congratulations Pearl and Val!

**It gave us all great pleasure** to present Pearl Conway and Val Murray with their LABBS 30 years badges and certificates. Pearl and Val have been such stalwarts of the chorus during that time, and between them have covered many different committee roles, for both the chorus and LABBS.

**Jackie Boffin, PRO**  
**Avon Harmony**



Pearl (L), MD Mary, and Val (R)

# Thirty-five years of friendship and harmony

## Who better to award my thirty-five-year

**pin** and certificate than Alison Zdzykowski, one of our Club At Large representatives.

When I entered the 'Barbershop world' way back in 1989, one of the first people I met was Alison. We

have sung in choruses and quartets together over the years, and have remained firm friends ever since.

Thank you Alison and LABBS for thirty-five years (with more to come!), of friendship and harmony.

**Meryl Chatfield**  
**Club At Large**



Meryl and Alison

# Could you be our next director?

## **Capital Chorus** is a small and friendly auditioned men's barbershop chorus

based in Ealing, West London. In our 40-year history, we have won several prizes including the best small chorus and the most entertaining chorus award at the British Association of Barbershop Singers' annual convention. We sing at music festivals and events around

the South East including the London Marathon, the Brighton Marathon and the Ideal Home Show, and we have appeared on BBC Radio 2, BBC Radio London and national television.

After 5 years, our current director, Nick Beever, is moving on. We are now looking for a new Musical Director to start in September 2024, who shares our ambition to grow and improve the chorus, while having a good time and being part of a welcoming and inclusive

group of singers. Rehearsals are in Ealing on Monday evenings.

For more information and informal enquiries, please contact Paul Gordon, Chairman, on 07747 641802 or [paulgordon@live.co.uk](mailto:paulgordon@live.co.uk)

Applicants should send a CV and brief covering letter to Paul Gordon on the above email address.



## **Amersham are going to Denver...**

... and we have a massive fundraising effort underway as we don't want anyone to miss out!

We have had some spectacular costumes over the years and our wardrobes are bulging, so we thought we would try and sell them.

Can you remember what we wore? A few photos to refresh your memories, but there are others on the [LABBS website](#).

We have 40-60 various different dresses in a variety of styles – no reasonable offer refused! Please contact [sueclewis@hotmail.com](mailto:sueclewis@hotmail.com) for more details.



# I'm Louise and I'm a Humanist Celebrant

Non Religious Weddings, Civil Partnerships,  
Vow Renewals, Namings, Funerals &  
Memorial Services



One of the privileges of being a Humanist (non-religious) Celebrant is meeting people at some of the key moments in their lives.

**What is a celebrant? What I do.**

A celebrant works collaboratively with couples and families to plan and deliver **meaningful and personalised celebrations** to mark Weddings, civil partnerships, vow renewals, Naming, celebrations of life (funeral) or memorial services. As **everyone is an individual**, so too is a celebrant-led ceremony.

**For Weddings and Civil Partnerships**

On the most important day in your life as a couple, it's possible to complete the legal formalities at the Registry Office, leaving you free to **hold your wedding ceremony anywhere and in any style you like** - traditional or festival-vibe, grand or relaxed, indoor or out, from country estates to romantic, secluded woodlands - the choice is yours.

**Naming Ceremonies**

Naming Ceremonies are a popular way of **welcoming new members to your family** - at any age, I tailor each ceremony to include each family's wishes, values, and tastes.

**Funerals and Memorial Services**

And for those occasions **when a life is to be celebrated or memorialised**, a celebrant can work with the bereaved family to fashion a fitting ceremony that truly recognises how the deceased lived their life and wishes to be remembered. I also do pre-planned funeral ceremonies.

**In short, a celebrant-led ceremony lets you choose the 'what, when, who, why, where, and how!**

*Are you looking to celebrate a milestone event? Ask Louise, an accredited Humanists UK Celebrant, to write and deliver a unique, tailored ceremony for you.*



For an informal, no-obligation chat,  
call me Louise on 07736 679415  
[www.louisewilliamscelebrant.com](http://www.louisewilliamscelebrant.com)



Website created by Mary Williams [www.mytypeofpeople.com](http://www.mytypeofpeople.com)