

Voice Box

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



Spring 2022 £4

WE'RE BACK! Bournemouth, here we come!



In This Edition

Convention 2022 plans, LABBS strategy, Mixed Quartetting,
Club Updates and more!

Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers

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Natalie Feddon
chair@labbs.org.uk

Vice-Chair:

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vicechair@labbs.org.uk

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secretary@labbs.org.uk

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Alys Galloway
financedirector@labbs.org.uk

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Rita Hulands
marketing@labbs.org.uk

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membership@labbs.org.uk

Education Director:

Alison Zdzyłowski
eandjchair@labbs.org.uk

Events Director:

Vacant
events@labbs.org.uk

Director of Diversity & Inclusion:

Natasha Nickson
diversity@labbs.org.uk

Youth Director:

Lamorna Hooker
youthdirector@labbs.org.uk

Immediate Past Chair:

Nancy Philbin
pastchair@labbs.org.uk

VoiceBox Editor:

Melanie Baber
voicebox@labbs.org.uk

Although the year is well underway, a belated Happy New Year to you all!

The new year is a great time to review achievements and make plans for the future. Reading through your articles for this edition, it's clear that many of you have been doing just that - Spring VoiceBox is packed with your best bits of 2021, and your goals for 2022.

LABBS too, have been working hard making plans for the year, and you can read about both LABBS strategy and goals for Barbershop in Harmony in

Chair's Forward

Hello, and welcome to the Spring edition of VoiceBox

I am hopeful that this year we will all be back singing together again. After almost two years of Covid restrictions, it is pleasing to see that most choruses and quartets are back rehearsing in person again.

The LABBS Board has been working hard to provide resources for the new website. In the members area you will now find guides on how to put on a Love to Sing course, with case studies from clubs, along with a guide to inclusive recruitment, and an article on the benefits of singing for wellbeing. Please make use of these resources and if you have any ideas on what else you would like to see featured, please drop me a line at chair@labbs.org.uk.

I can already see that many clubs have been putting on Love to Sing courses, and are being successful in attracting new members. My own club, Velvet Harmony, has recently attracted five new members. I believe that Covid has helped a lot of people re-evaluate their lives and when you see the camaraderie and friendship within our choruses, you can see why people would want to be a part of that.

I was very pleased to announce on the Chair's Forum, the plans for this year's Convention in Bournemouth. It will be the most inclusive Convention ever, where we invite every club to come and join in the fun, whether you will be singing to win, singing for evaluation, or just singing for fun. I sincerely hope that we will be able to attract all our choruses



to attend - it will be a fantastic celebration of our wonderful hobby.

I am continuing my mission to visit as many LABBS clubs as I can. I am due to visit The Red Rosettes, Cheshire Chord Company, Thameside Harmony, The Belles of Three Spires, and Bristol Fashion within the next few weeks. I would love to visit you all so please get in touch.

But in the meantime, keep singing!

Natalie Feddon
LABBS Chair

Welcome to the first edition of VoiceBox for 2022

this edition. Let's not forget though, that planning is underway for the highlight of our calendar - Convention!

I don't know about you, but I'm very excited about this, and I really would encourage you all to consider getting yourselves to Bournemouth later this year; Convention 2022 is going to be amazing! There are different ways for you to be a part of this fabulous weekend; you can sing to win, sing to improve, sing for joy, or maybe just come along to enjoy the performances and catch up with friends. Do check out Alison Zdzyłowski's article on page 5 for more information.

That's all from me for this edition.

Please do keep your articles and photos coming - 2022 really is shaping up to be a great year, and I can't wait to hear all about what you're getting up to.

Mel Baber
VoiceBox Editor



LABBS Strategy Update

Strategy and reviewing strategy may seem to be dry and distant topics, but the current LABBS five-year strategy has resulted in a number of real and practical developments and will no doubt result in many more. In common with planning the world over, there are short-term, medium-term and long-term objectives written into the plan, and this article will update you on the progress with the short and medium-term plans. Here is a reminder of the five key threads of our vision for the future.

Strategic Opportunities

In order to achieve our vision we need to ensure that

Communication and engagement with LABBS members is modern and effective

LABBS' membership delivers value to competing and non-competing member clubs

LABBS is seen as a leading innovative barbershop organisation

Volunteer resource is sufficient to sustain LABBS' programme of activities

LABBS' membership numbers are sustainable and representative of society



The short-term objectives were due to be covered by the end of 2021. We have had almost two years of pandemic but nearly all the tasks we set ourselves to work towards our objectives have been carried out. Here is a quick overview of things the Board has completed in 2021:

- ✓ Youth member appointed to the Board
- ✓ Diversity and Inclusion Director appointed to the Board
- ✓ Age profile established, diversity survey developed with BABS and SAI Region 31
- ✓ Email package purchased to enable direct emails to individual members
- ✓ First phase of new website has been launched
- ✓ Welcome pack for new joiners introduced
- ✓ LABBS educational videos now on the new website

I'm sure you have all seen the new website, which is part of our drive to improve communications between LABBS and members. The website is becoming a very useful repository of information so please explore it and use the resources. The last item for the short-term objectives was to hold an event for our wonderful existing volunteers and any potential volunteers. For obvious reasons the pandemic has put paid to that in 2021 but it is currently in planning for 2022, all being well. I'm afraid this is all a bit of a list but so much has been done by the LABBS team that it is difficult to fit it all in any other way.

Our medium-term goals are to be completed by the end of 2022 and here is our progress so far:

- ✓ Voluntary Diversity survey end of January 2022
- ✓ Recruitment resources pack has been developed and shared
- ✓ LABBSi development – under review
- ✓ Chorus buddy arrangements – please see below
- ✓ Members resource centre on website - developing and expanding as more resources are completed and added
- ✓ Establish regional festivals – Unconventional Convention has shown what can be done and we are planning to look at offering these in the future
- ✓ Create mixed singing developments. LABBS will be hosting the BinH mixed quartet competition at Convention 2022 and further developments are under discussion with BinH
- ✓ Extend and open-up our LABBS offer – more resources will be available as live events are recorded and added to the website.

We have also carried out an exercise to establish whether clubs are interested in making 'buddy' arrangements. This did result in some clubs being interested but the physical distances between them have generally proved to be a barrier. However, we understand some sharing arrangements have grown up organically and we will be looking at these to see how we might encourage groups who would like to get together with others.

As you see, the Board and the very generous teams of volunteers have been very busy throughout the pandemic and have achieved a great deal already. The strategy has been drawn up as a five-year overview and we will continue to update you as the time passes and we develop and progress with our plans.

Sue Ranson
Vice Chair

Five Golden Sings for Amersham

Despite the headlines about Covid cases a-rising and lockdowns a-looming, here at Amersham A Cappella, we managed to 'keep calm and merry on' in the run up to our 12 (or so) Days of Christmas Sing-Outs.

Not that everything went smoothly during the pre-festive season. On the hunt for a new home, we were switching rehearsal venues almost every week, which tested our resolve and our sat navs.

I'm sure that in years to come we'll laugh about freezing in the brrr-illiant school with no heating. Or the time we lost our MD, Helen, and half the Chorus trying to locate a brand new hall!

Still, we got there in the end (literally!) and our Five Golden Sings for Christmas were:

1. The Christmas Fair at Audley Deane Retirement Village:

No Partridges in Pear Trees, but there was a sparkling Christmas Tree for us to rock around, making it the perfect occasion to don the Festive headgear.

2. The Amersham Christmas Festival:
There were lots of ladies dancing in the street when we let the Christmas spirit

in Chesham. There were no geese a-laying golden eggs (wrong panto!) but it was a magical evening.



4. The Amersham-azing Christmas Concert:

Forget eleven pipers piping, we shared the stage with a whole championship Brass Band for this Christmas Cracker of a concert featuring the Amersham Band and our own awesome Amersham A Cappella harmonies.

5. The Wormsley Estate:

There just might have been some lords a-leaping around here at the poshest venue of our season - the stunning Wormsley Estate, home to the Garsington Opera - where our singing stars entertained guests over pre-dinner drinks.

Having wrapped up our winter-wonderful Christmas on a really positive note, we're now looking forward to a

ring at Amersham Action Group's fun market. Singing, shopping and chatting to lots of lovely people - what's not to love?

fabulous 40th Birthday Year. And having lots more to sing about next January.

3. Snow White Gala Performance:
This was all about meeting and greeting show-goers outside the Elgiva Theatre

Hils Apicella
PRO, Amersham A Cappella

Congratulations, Bunny!

In recognition of her long singing career

and to show our great respect, Bunny Bainbridge, a founder member of LABBS with membership number 001, was recently awarded the position of Honorary Life President of Tyneside A Cappella Choir.

Our Chair, Karen Macefield, Musical Director, Peter Jones, and I visited her to present the award, a glass sculpture with an inscribed plaque. It was lovely to see her, and she and Peter reminisced about barbershop days as they have known each other for the best part of fifty years.

Susan Jones
Secretary, Tyneside A Cappella



Normal service will resume shortly!

What a long two years it has been since, as Education Director, I found myself cancelling Regional Festivals, Prelims and Education Events, planning on-line offerings, and familiarising myself with Zoom! When you look back, I am sure you can agree with me that we have all come a long way and overcome some difficult challenges. There have been many high spots as we all learned to do things differently and used technology in ways we never thought possible, but always in the back of our minds was that question – when will we get back to normal?

Well I am pleased to say that THIS YEAR normal service WILL be resumed! E and J are delighted to be able to plan for our usual Prelims for quartets and Convention contests for quartets, choruses AND mixed quartets. It is wonderful to be booking venues, organising catering and hotel rooms, and preparing contest details again, with the knowledge that we will soon be able to reconnect with old friends, make new ones and enjoy our hobby together again.

That is not to say that we are unaware of the challenges many of our choruses and quartets are still facing. We know that many of you will have only just begun in-person singing again, and some have faced problems with unsuitable rehearsal venues which prevented challenges for Covid risk management. Many of you will still have been shielding or isolating, and the latest variant has certainly put us all back on alert again.

So, fully cognisant of these circumstances and the difficult decisions to be made about contests and Convention, which is still many months away, we are doing our very best to make the decision-making process easier for you; easier for you to decide 'YES – we are going to Convention, and we are going to SING!'

Firstly, we have decided to extend our usual contest deadlines to allow you all more time to think about how your preparations are going and what the situation will be for your group as we get nearer to October. For quartets, the Prelims contest entry form deadline will be extended to mid-March, still allowing us time to prepare the contest and draw the singing order at the AGM as usual, but giving you a precious few more weeks to convince yourself that it's the right thing to do. For the main contests at Convention, the deadline is extended to the end of May, again giving you that extra time to prepare and feel confident that you are making the right decision to come to Bournemouth.

Secondly, we will be making some tweaks to the actual contests to allow more groups than ever to feel confident when stepping onto the stage, whether at Prelims or Convention, giving you the power to choose how we judge your performance:



Sing to win - Sing to improve - Sing for Joy (Who is this Joy anyway?)

The idea is that if you want to compete for the top prizes in quartet or chorus, there will be a full set of contests, judged to our usual standards, with subsequent evaluations and awarding of trophies and medals as normal. However, if you don't feel ready for this and just want some pointers on what to improve and how to bring your chorus back to its best after this interruption, then you can sing for evaluation only. The judges will score your performance but this score won't be publicly available – only you will know, and this will accompany a full evaluation of your strengths and opportunities to improve.

Finally, many of you won't have competed for a while, or maybe even at all, but this pandemic has brought out a new strength of purpose in your group, which is ready to fight back and show the world what you're made of – so go on! – get up on that stage and sing for the joy of it! Sing for yourselves, for your friends and family, for those who can't be there, and for all those who can! Sing for the most supportive barbershop audience ever, for encouragement, and to show the world that barbershoppers won't be stopped from singing by anything! Your judges will kick back and enjoy your performance with the rest of the audience, and you will help to make this the most inclusive Convention we have ever held.

So watch [social media](#) and the [website](#) for the final closing dates for contest entries, and talk about how your group is going to make it to Bournemouth, and help LABBS make this the Biggest and Best Convention ever.

Alison Zdzyłowski
Education Director, and
Education & Judging
Chairman



LABBS Youth Chorus returns to rehearsals

On Saturday 12th

February, the full LABBS Youth Chorus met for the first time in almost two years! We might have been in the same venue as before, but we had so many new faces, including a new MD, Bethany Southworth.

We rehearsed two brand new songs, had sectionals to iron our parts out, and then sang in section duets and as a chorus, to see how all the parts work together. After just one rehearsal, we managed to get both songs sounding pretty good, and gave a little performance to some parents and friends.



As well as working very hard, we had lots of fun too, learning a new round and doing some exercises to get us energised and ready to sing! I Get Loose is a Youth

Chorus favourite!

We love singing together, and we'd love to have some more people come along to our rehearsals! If you are under 30, or know someone who is, get in touch with Lamorna at youth@labbs.org.uk.



Our next Full Chorus rehearsal is Saturday 2nd April (Grove Vale School, Birmingham), and our next Competition Chorus rehearsal (18+) is Saturday 5th March (venue to be confirmed).

Lamorna Hooker
Youth Director

Finance

Grants and Awards in 2022

2021 was a strange year.

It moved at a snail's pace but then it was over before we knew it! We are now looking forward to 2022 and what will be on offer for our members.

Chorus and Quartet grants are available for LABBS choruses and LABBS registered quartets. The grant amount is £100 and can be used towards education and coaching. Full details can be found on the [Voices in Harmony](#) page in the LABBS website members area. And remember, you can claim at any point in the year – don't feel you have to wait until the deadline!

There will be grants available for the Education events taking place this year – information on these will be made available on the VinH page, so please keep a look out for announcements.

Later in the year, nominations will be open for the Katy Phillips Young

Barbershopper of the Year award. This has been awarded to some amazing young people in our organisation, so do start thinking now about who you might want to nominate. The award will be presented at Convention in October.



The Jen Mills award is also available. This is for a quartet, and allows them to commission a new arrangement which is then debuted at the following Convention. Venus Effect and Ruby

Tuesday have entertained us with their new arrangements and at Convention in October, SoundHouse will be debuting their new arrangement and the new winner will be announced. Applications will open later in the year – keep an eye on the VinH page for that one too.

Both the Katy Phillips award and the Jen Mills award are decided by a voting panel made up of members of the LABBS Board and members of the respective family. I have the joy of administering the awards and getting to read all the wonderful applications.

All information about grants and awards are on the VinH page which can be found here: www.labbs.org.uk/vinh-members

Any questions can be directed to me at financedirector@labbs.org.uk

Alys Galloway,
Finance Director

Barbershop in Harmony

Barbershop in Harmony

comprises two members from each of the three UK barbershop organisations, LABBS, BABS and Sweet Adelines R31, and is chaired by Nancy Philbin as BinH Co-ordinator. We work together to share ideas, collaborate, and make things happen for the benefit of UK barbershop.

The whole team met together to develop a strategy and purpose for the group moving forwards, to promote British barbershop singing, in a meeting facilitated by Jill Cook, LABBS Membership Director. It was so great to be able to meet, in person, with the leaders of British barbershop and to work together with a common goal.

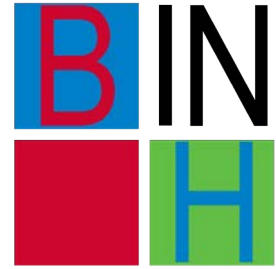
We decided on four strategic goals:

- To promote barbershop across the UK as a modern, high-quality, musical art form open to all.

- To develop mixed barbershop singing alongside single gender singing by establishing a framework and providing opportunities for mixed singing to thrive.
- To diversify the membership of UK barbershop to reflect the broader community and appeal to more diverse audiences.
- To grow the number of barbershop singers across the UK.

We have already started to collaborate on these themes and look forward to making a difference to the world of barbershop.

Natalie Feddon
LABBS Chair



Left to right: Laurence Hasson BABS, Nicky Salt, Valerie Taylor, Emma Riley SA R31, Sue Ranson, Nancy Philbin BinH Co-ordinator, Natalie Feddon LABBS, Alan Hughes BABS.

LABBS in the mix!

November was a busy month for mixed barbershop, and we were delighted to see so many LABBS members getting involved.

Congratulations to The Sharrow Vale Blues, Met44 and Perfect Match, our Barbershop in Harmony 2021 medallists, and to BABS mixed quartet Senior Medallists, Crown Derby, and Youth Medallists, Hot Ticket.

Our roving reporter, Rachel Bolton, caught up with all the medallists to find out more...

The Sharrow Vale Blues – Gold Medallists

The Sharrow Vale Blues are based in Sheffield. Lead, Hannah Briggs, is Steel City Voices MD, and Tenor, Becca Nicholson is a member of the Music Team. Both also sing with LABBS quartet, The Bakewell Tarts. You may also recognise Hannah's voice from her teach tracks. Baritone, Sam Hubbard, sings with The Shimmering Bonsai Boys and with BABS chorus, Hallmark of Harmony. Sam is also a BABS judge, and an arranger for a cappella groups of all types. Last but not least, Bass, Tim Briggs, who sings with 2013 BABS champion quartet, The Emerald Guard, and BABS quartet, The Shimmering Bonsai Boys.

Why did you decide to enter the BinH contest while we were in the middle of a pandemic, and how was it, prepping for the contest under changing Covid restrictions?

We're lucky to all live close together and we were able to get together easily even when we had to sing outside in the snow! It's been challenging rehearsing under the restrictions, but it helped to be able to rehearse together for short amounts of time quite frequently. That's really helped build up vocal fitness and get us back into the swing of it. We decided to enter the competition for a few reasons, but a big part of it was because we were excited to be part of the first live barbershop event after all the lockdowns, and we were excited to hear everybody else!

What was your experience of the competition like?

It was actually quite stressful as we'd all been ill in the run up to the contest, but Hannah was the unlucky one who was ill on the day! However, once we were on stage, it was out of this world!

The audience was so excited! For Becca, it was her first time competing in a quartet but she wasn't nervous at the side of the stage, because we could hear the crowd going wild! It was amazing to be able to compete in our home city as well.



The Sharrow Vale Blues

What attracted you all to start singing mixed barbershop?

Tim and Hannah have a long history of singing mixed barbershop, winning the BinH gold medal three times and world silver in 2016 with their quartet, Hannah and the Hurricanes. For The Sharrow Vale Blues, forming a mixed quartet came out of singing with friends in informal settings – when you're singing tags at an afterglow, you don't make sure you have all four of the same gender!

Do you have any advice for people who are wanting to start a mixed quartet?

Our biggest piece of advice is to just do it! If you want to sing mixed but you're stuck for who to form a quartet with, try and link in with some of the barbershop groups near you, or try Harmony College and Harmony Brigade, which are both great ways of meeting keen people. We're lucky in Sheffield that there are three choruses that already have links between them. On a practical level, try out new parts or try swapping parts like Becca and Hannah do. There aren't too many arrangements specifically for mixed yet, and every quartet is different, so try

free software like Audacity to move mixed, male or female tracks to a pitch that is comfortable for your specific blend of voices. Most of all, just enjoy it and try to be the best barbershop quartet you can be – without having a set idea of what a mixed quartet should sound like!

What would you like to see in the future of mixed barbershop in the UK?

What BABS have done with the Youth and Senior contests this year is brilliant, and we'd love to see more integration of mixed barbershop into the mainstream!



Afterglow, with The Sharrow Vale Blues



The Sharrow Vale Blues, BinH Gold Medallists

Stage photo credit: Kiera Smith

What are The Sharrow Vale Blues' plans for the future?

We were offered the opportunity to compete at the world championships in Germany, but unfortunately the convention has been cancelled this year. We're hopeful we can attend in 2023 though! We're really excited to learn a wider variety of repertoire and perform in some shows. You will be able to see The Sharrow Vale Blues at Hallmark of Harmony's show in March, and then at the BABS Saturday show. We will all be at LABBS in October so if you see us say 'Hi!' and come and sing a tag with us!

Met44 – Silver Medallists

Met44 are based in London

Tenor, Alex Sanctuary, and Bass, Laurence Hasson, sing with BABS Meantime chorus. Baritone, Sophie Wilson, sings with London City Singers and LABBS 2018 quartet champions, Avalon. Lead, Sophie Hasson, sings with quartet champions, Fortuity, who placed 10th at the Sweet Adelines International contest in 2020.

Met44 started singing together just before the first lockdown in 2020. Laurence and Sophie H are married, and Alex and Sophie W are engaged, so it just made sense for two couples that love to sing, to sing together to form a quartet! Laurence and both the Sophies started singing barbershop as part of The University of Bristol Barbershop Singers, which always involved mixed singing, so it's something that they've always enjoyed.



Met44, socially distanced rehearsing



Met44, BinH Silver Medallists

Over the past couple of years, Met44 have had lots of Zoom rehearsals and some socially distanced rehearsals in parks (lucky park visitors!), before being able to finally have 'normal' rehearsals again. They also made a lockdown music video of their version of the Backstreet Boys' 'I Want It That Way'. Fun fact about Met44: their

quartet pets are super important to them! Sophie H and Laurence have a dog called Ella, and Alex and Sophie W have a cat called Kat. In Sophie W's words "they're both precious baby darlings!"

Perfect Match – Bronze Medallists

Perfect Match are based in Yorkshire. Tenor, Mary McGraw, sings with LABBS choruses, Steel City Voices and Cheshire Chord Company, and Bass, Simon McGraw, sings with BABS chorus, Spirit of Harmony. Lead, Sarah Cole, and Baritone, Karen Adamson, focus on quartet singing, both mixed and ladies – in Mary’s words they “have a wealth of knowledge and experience in barbershop spanning many years and their trophy wall is well laden!” Simon and Mary also sing with two mixed choruses, Endeavour and EQ Rendezvous, who will represent the UK at the European Convention in Sweden in May. Perfect Match is a mixed quartet of four friends who decided during Covid, while walking their dogs, to start singing together. Two singing couples - perfectly matched! The two couples are barbershop love stories - Simon and Mary got married on a barbershop Caribbean cruise in Feb 2020 and Sarah and Karen met through barbershop and will be married in 2023.



Perfect Match, BinH Bronze Medallists

Crown Derby – BABS Senior Champions

Crown Derby are based in the East Midlands. Tenor, Dick Knight, sings with BABS’ Grand Central chorus, has previously directed two LABBS and SAI choruses and currently directs EQ Rendezvous mixed chorus. Lead, Karen Searson, sings with LABBS chorus GEM Connection, Endeavour mixed chorus and is the LABBS archivist. Baritone, Delyth Knight, also sings with GEM Connection, has previously directed LABBS and BABS choruses, and is a LABBS music judge. Bass, Paul Searson, is the relative barbershop ‘newbie’ of the group and sings with Grand Central chorus, Hallmark of Harmony chorus and Endeavour mixed chorus. Between them, Crown Derby quartet has a seriously impressive CV, with LABBS,



Crown Derby at Radio Derby

BABS and mixed medals galore for the constituent members, as well as mixed medals and multiple wins at local music festivals.

What made you decide to enter BABS’ Senior contest when you saw it had been opened up to all genders?

We entered the BinH contest and thought, as we were eligible and it was the same day, why not have a go at the BABS Seniors’ contest too?

What was your experience of the competition?

QuartetCon was the first competition after people had been starved of live barbershop because of the pandemic, so it was fabulous. The atmosphere was lovely and supportive, and hearing real applause and celebrating barbershop together was very special.

What attracted you all to mixed barbershop? What are your thoughts about the move towards Everyone in Harmony?

Harmony Brigade and Extreme Quartetting was a big part in us all starting to sing mixed barbershop. We enjoy it as it gives people more opportunities to sing where it suits their voice, and to try different parts. For example, Karen sings female bass and mixed chorus baritone, but Crown Derby gives her the opportunity to sing lead. A really nice aspect is to be two barbershop couples singing together. A lot of the European societies are integrated/mixed and the Everyone in Harmony movement provides more opportunity for more singers to get involved.

Karen and Delyth – how does it feel being some of the first women with a BABS medal?

We feel like trailblazers! It’s amazing. For Delyth, it’s especially meaningful as she’s been involved in BABS for almost as long as she’s been involved in LABBS, and it’s really special to have a BABS medal as a singer.

What are your plans for the future?

We’ve commissioned a new custom arrangement that will suit our unique blend of voices, and we can’t wait to start work on it. We’re thrilled to be



Crown Derby, enjoying the sunshine in Spain

performing at the BABS Saturday show too. In February, we’ll all be involved in the first in-person UK Harmony Brigade since the pandemic. We’re also hoping to go and compete at IABS this year. Meanwhile, we love getting involved in local music festivals and we would encourage all quartets to do the same! They are often undersubscribed and a really fun experience. Most excitingly, we’re also waiting for BHS to confirm whether we’ll be eligible to sing at the International Seniors competition at Midwinter Convention next year.



Crown Derby, BABS Senior Champions

Hot Ticket – BABS Youth Champions

Hot Ticket are based in

London. Tenor, Bethany Southworth, sings with London City Singers and is one of the directors of the LABBS Youth Chorus. Lead, Oli Woodhouse, Baritone, Isaac Gibbs, and Bass, Joe Nelson all sing with BABS Meantime chorus.



Hot Ticket

What made you decide to enter BABS' Youth contest when you saw it had been opened up to all genders?

Oli was really keen to enter the Youth competition while he was still able to, but had a lot of difficulty finding a male tenor for the quartet. Once the competition was opened up to all genders, it gave the quartet a much wider pool to find a tenor from! Bethany was a natural choice as they were already friends.

What was your experience of the competition?

We had so much fun on stage! We picked songs that gave us lots of freedom in terms of interpretation and performance choices, so it was easy to enjoy singing them in our own way. For Isaac, it was his first competition and he enjoyed the experience, especially since the rest of the quartet are more experienced barbershoppers and could guide him through it. The rest of the quartet found they were the most comfortable they had ever been on stage.

What attracted you all to mixed barbershop? What are your thoughts about the move towards Everyone in Harmony?

For us, the biggest benefit of mixed barbershop is that it gives us a chance to sing with our friends rather than having to choose people of a specific gender. The movement in the US and the UK towards Everyone in Harmony is great, it includes more people and for a lot of young members, mixed barbershop is a big part of their barbershop experience as they start in the university barbershop societies, compared to how it's traditionally done, with people joining a single-gender chorus and then sticking with male or female barbershop.

Bethany – how does it feel being one of the first women with a BABS medal?

It's amazing! I'm lucky to be able to be a part of LABBS, Sweet Adelines and BABS. Especially because I direct the Youth Chorus, I hope this inspires more young women to get involved with all the opportunities they possibly can, both in mixed and ladies' barbershop.

What are your plans for the future?

We have five new songs in the works! We're really excited about getting more coaching and developing our sound, but we want to learn some repertoire songs and enjoy singing together for a bit before we decide to enter any more competitions. We've been invited to the BABS Saturday show and we'd absolutely love to have the opportunity to do more shows!



Hot Ticket, BABS Youth Champions

Friendship, Fun and Harmony with EQ Rendezvous

EQ Rendezvous is a mixed chorus

of about 60 people drawn from all three UK barbershop organisations, and the length and breadth of the UK – Aberdeen to St Austell; we also have two members in Germany.

With our members spread far and wide, our live rehearsals tend to be planned around contest preparation, while the rest of the year we meet monthly on Jamulus and Zoom so that we can sing together without the expense of travelling. This was particularly practical during the height of the Covid pandemic.



EQ Rendezvous, back together again at long last

At last, on 29th January, we had our first chance for ages to sing with each other 'live' and as you can see, we lived up to our motto of Friendship, Fun and Harmony!

This year we're thrilled to have been invited by BABS to represent the UK in the mixed chorus contest at the forthcoming European Barbershop Convention in Helsingborg, Sweden, in May.

In case you didn't know, 'EQ' stands for 'Extreme Quartets', a stream at BABS Harmony College where keen quartet singers learn six songs and then sing them all weekend with as many others as they can. The chorus was born out of the whole stream singing together and that is still our ethos.

We're always happy to welcome new members who are self-motivated home learners and can hold their part in a quartet. To find out more, please do get in touch - delythk@aol.com.

We offer lots of opportunities to make new friends and encourage singing in quartet as well as chorus. Give us a try!

Delyth Knight Chairman,
EQ Rendezvous

JOAN MATTINSON

23rd September 1939 – 6th October 2021

I met Joan when she joined The Aultones in Carshalton, South London, in 1986. She became Lead Section Leader in a very short time and after a few years took over as MD, a role she filled for four years before moving on to join Velvet Harmony in Bromley. She quickly became Bass Section Leader and Deputy MD there, roles she carried out for many years until she retired from singing because of ill-health. She was particularly interested in the craft of barbershop and had a real knack for explaining and demonstrating it so that everyone understood.

She also had an incredible sense of humour - as some of you will remember from her stints as MC at the Ad Hoc Shows on Sunday mornings! I remember how much work she put into being an MC so that the acts were linked

by a theme and the shows ran like clockwork. She had a great fondness for puns and would have the audience groaning - but laughing too of course - and who could forget her teaching a packed auditorium to sing her own special tag - 'M - A - T - T - I - N - S O N' to the tune of The Blue Danube!

Joan was an active and supportive Regional Rep (now Liaison Officer of course) for Bexhill Harmony, Capital Connection and Spirit of the South for a number of years. Although she had not sung for some time because of her failing health, she still attended anything to do with the barbershop world she loved whenever she could, and spent a great deal of time online watching choruses from all over the world.



She was enormous fun and game for almost anything; she was a wonderful, supportive and generous lady and is greatly missed by her family and all her many friends.

Jacqui Edwards
Past-Chair, LABBS

Club Updates

LABBS say farewell to Mersey Harmony

There were tears and laughter at this final meeting with the executive team of Mersey Harmony.

Mersey Harmony, having been one of the first members of LABBS back in 1976, have finally closed after 45 years. Sue Ranson, LABBS Vice Chair and Natalie Feddon, LABBS Chair, met up with the remaining executive members in Liverpool to bid them farewell and to say thank you on behalf of LABBS for donating their remaining funds (in excess of £12,000), to LABBS, to be used for future polecat songs with the proviso that the first song be a Beatles song.

The rich history of Mersey Harmony will never be forgotten. The show costume for their gold medal winning performance

in 1985 is featured in the Liverpool Museum alongside a photo of the whole chorus. You can also see a photo of the costume [here](#).

The members were very sad at leaving LABBS and tried their utmost to carry on, but Covid made it all too difficult. This final meeting was a little tearful but gave one last chance to sing Java Jive for Natalie's vlog, which you can watch [here](#).



Natalie Feddon
LABBS Chair

Left to right: Colette MacFarlane, Monica Wallace, Lyn Sherratt, Sue Ranson, Heather Lovelady, Mersey Harmony Chair Angela Stevenson, and Natalie Feddon

Abbey Belles Chorus Wordsearch

2022 - A new year, a new beginning...

Here's something a little different to enjoy with your cuppa, so grab a pencil and find the words in bold that sum up the Abbey Belles in 2022.

In this edition of **LABBS VOICEBOX** we're delighted to announce the **ABBEYBELLES** from **SELBY** will have been **SINGING BARBERSHOP** together for **TWENTY-EIGHT** years in 2022! Many of our members received **LONG SERVICE** awards at our recent **AGM** including our **BASS** Megan, **LEAD** Betty and **TENOR** Janet (all 20 years!), whilst our **BARITONE** Jo gained her 15 year badge.

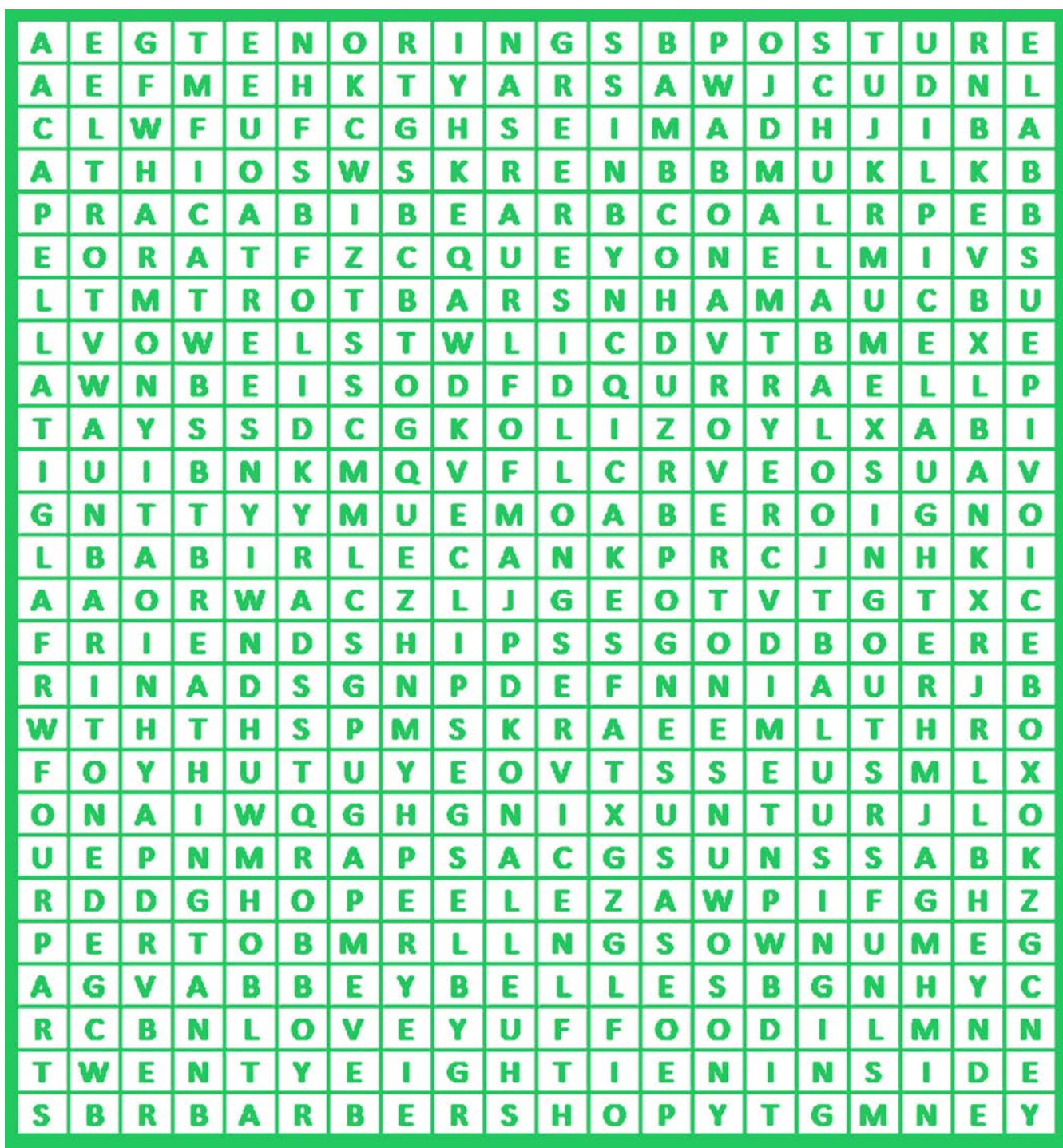
This year we are looking forward to more **SINGING** in **HARMONY**, **SINGOUTS** and **OVERTONES**, while our **MUSICAL DIRECTOR** puts us through our paces on our **POSTURE**, **BREATHING** and **VOWELS**. Our small groups, **HULLABALOO**, **ECLIPSE** and **JABBERWOCKY** are pleased to welcome in a new year and hope to see you soon!

We love singing **A CAPPELLA** in **FOUR PARTS** and especially love the **LAUGHTER** and **FRIENDSHIPS** we have gained along the way.

Love **ABI BEAR** xx



Abi Bear



Thank you, June!

On 13 December 2021 it was Arun A Cappella's Christmas Party. We were successful in surprising, as planned, our founder and current Assistant Musical Director, June Bryant, which needless to say, delighted every one of us!

Perhaps I should rewind 40 years ...

In 1981, June was approached by an assistant at the local theatre and a discussion was had about barbershop four-part harmony singing. After visiting The Crawley Ladies Barbershop Chorus, June was hooked! The Crawley Ladies were invited to Bognor and performed in the local theatre to a packed audience. From that moment on, The Arun Sounds was born, with over 35 ladies arriving for the first rehearsal. We passed the test with LABBS and we have never looked back.



Jacqui Edwards with June

Over the years we have competed at many conventions, sung in the Dolomites, Italy, in 1982, have entertained locally, often raising money for charity, and have enjoyed quartetting too. June was a participant in all the above. Close Quarters quartet, in which June sang tenor, competed at many conventions and once received the fourth place accolade in the quartet competition, something of which they are all very proud. June sadly had to step down as Musical Director after some 16 years and Madeleine Branson became our Musical Director. Madeleine held the reins for 20 years, followed by Joyce Stroud who is our current Musical Director.

This brings us right up to date with Arun A Cappella (we have had a name change).

As Joyce has been unable to attend due to illness over the past year, June has once again taken on the role of Musical Director. Did I forget to mention that June is 90 years old! Our Christmas party surprise came in the guise of LABBS Chair, Natalie Feddon, who agreed to attend with our longstanding Liaison Officer, Jacqui Edwards, to recognise June's commitment to the chorus. Unfortunately, on the day, Natalie couldn't attend so Jacqui did the honours and presented June with a gift and kind words. So, thanks to June for past years and at this present time for holding the fort, which has enabled our lovely chorus to keep singing.

A-MA-SING!

Wendy Mead
Founder Member, Arun A Cappella

45 years of Bristol Fashion Chorus

It was September 1977, not long after the celebrations for the Queen's Silver Jubilee, Star Wars had aired at the cinema, and Elvis Presley had died in Graceland, when a new women's barbershop chorus was formed. From the ranks of the then Avonbelles, Bristol Fashion Ladies Chorus set sail and never looked back.

45 years later (the last 15 being under the wonderful guidance of Craig Kehoe), we are proud to say we are still going strong, and have decided to celebrate the build-up to our birthday celebrations with our newest campaign, #Challenge45.

We will be sharing typical BF moments, celebrating fond memories, hosting special events, singing in unusual places, and throwing in the odd moment of true barbershop pizzazz as we build up to our concert on the 1st of October with the wonderful Fortuity quartet. But, can we manage 45 of them?

Well, January already saw us tick off two events on our #Challenge45 shopping list:

1. Coaching with Rob Mance. So good we did it twice! See the article from PRO, Janis Smith, for a little more insight on that wonderful weekend.
2. Awards Night. Festive food, good company, and the celebration of the effort that helped make 2021 as memorable as any other year. Congratulations to: Natasha Nickson for the Most Improved Barbershopper and Performance award; Debbie Trotman (me!), for the Barbershopper of the Year award; Our wonderful PRO Janis, and I, for the Chair award, for our efforts on social media; Debbie Penfold, who won the Kindness, Love and Inspiration award, gifted to us by the wonderful and much missed Yvonne Harrison. In fact this award is so special - it was designed by Yvonne herself, and lovingly constructed by chorus members - that we feel the new award is definitely our third entry for #Challenge45.

Do you have any challenges for us? Go to our [Facebook page](#) and let us know your thoughts!

Debbie Trotman
Performance Director and PRO Team,
Bristol Fashion



Rob Mance will return...

One of the things Bristol Fashion have looked forward to is the return of coaching. Our dream was finally realised in January as Rob Mance flew into Bristol once more, for a very busy 10 days in the area coaching our friends in Fascinating Rhythm, Avon Harmony, Great Western Chorus, Specs Appeal Quartet, Rhythm Mix and our own Sonic Quartet.

It was wonderful to see him again as he arrived on Saturday morning to a very cold, very ventilated hall!

Rob told us that we were the last chorus he coached in March 2020 before the world 'closed down', and the first weekend chorus coaching he had done this year. He was very happy to be back!

We had a fabulous weekend, re-stacked, rejuvenated, and totally astounded at the sound we are capable of after some serious 'Mancing'.

What MD Craig Kehoe said:

'It was another inspirational and mind-opening experience working alongside our friend Rob. He was there at the start of the pandemic, he was with us through it, and he was there at the end. He brings so much more than music to our time together. A big thank you to Jo Thorn and Fascinating Rhythm for bringing Rob over and for letting us 'borrow' him for a weekend.'

What the chorus said:

'Well done everyone for an exhilarating weekend. We have something special at Bristol Fashion, so much so that our long

distance members have travelled 1,796 miles to be with us for the weekend. Thank you all for making the journey'.

I can't put into words how incredible this whole weekend was! I don't think I realised there was something missing from my life... the answer was you lot! Thank you for organising it, for the wonderful sound, and the giggles. It was jaw-dropping to hear how our sound evolved over this weekend. I felt so proud, and I've only been part of you for six months or so; I can't imagine how it must have felt for you all.

Next Stop: We'll be 'Mancing' again at our retreat in May – Can't wait!

Janis Smith
PRO, Bristol Fashion Chorus



Bristol Fashion, with Rob Mance



Sonic Quartet



Craig and Rob - Bit of a Bro'Mance'

Lots to look forward to for The Belles of Three Spires

Barbershopper of the Year

At our recent AGM, our Barbershopper of The Year was voted in as Holly Dawes. Holly joined the Belles shortly before the pandemic and has become a great asset to us. As well as starting a watercolour tuition Zoom group during lockdown, Holly serves with enthusiasm on the Committee, initially as Wardrobe, then as Vice Chair, and also creates our social media posts.



Lucy's award

Forward Plans

We are looking forward to 2022 in various exciting ways. We had our final rehearsal at our current venue in January and moved to a new rehearsal space in February. This coming year we anticipate being part of exciting choral events, including Community Spirit which is a project run by B:Music in partnership with their Associate Artists, Black Voices. The project offers local community

choirs the opportunity to share repertoire and perform as a collective in a large-scale concert hall.

Our MD wins a work award

Our MD Lucy Guess is a Deputy Information Manager in the NHS and received the NHS Q Awards 2021 for a large project with district nurses. This was very encouraging recognition of her work during a difficult time with the pandemic.

Eileen Askew

PRO, The Belles of Three Spires



Holly Dawes with her Barbershopper of the Year award, and Chair, Sue Seddon

2022 - phew it's finally here!

First let's congratulate our Baritone Section Leader, Wendy, on her Barbershopper of the Year award for 2021. Very well deserved!

Wendy kept us all entertained while we had to continue with Zoom sessions in early 2021, with other stuff to do! She was also one half of the 'Unconventional Convention Teddy Video' team along with Marvellous Mandy.



Congratulations, Wendy!

Now we're in 2022, it's time to move on and get back to doing what we love best - making harmonies with friends.

We now have NEW walkout t-shirts with our logo on, and Newbees have sing-out costumes!

2021 bought Chorus Iceni 10 NewBees. We can't wait to take them to the LABBS Convention for the very first time. We've recruited excellent singers so we're already ahead! They've had a little taster of singing on



Chorus Iceni, back on the risers

the risers - we actually set up our risers for the first time since March 2020. So good to get back up there and mix up the sections!

Looking forward to seeing old friends in the flesh this year! Many hugs need catching up on!

Marvellous Mandy

Chorus Iceni, Assistant Director, PRO and Lead Section Leader

At Cleeve Harmony, we certainly know how to finish and start with a bang...

On 14th March 2020 we had great fun being coached for the second time by three-quarters of the talented Avalon Quartet. Over 20 chorus members enjoyed the lively session, with a few joining us on live-stream via the chorus Facebook Page. As Covid restrictions on singing began to come into force, it was even featured on Harmony UK Podcast, which you can listen to [here](#).

Within a few days our members realised that the Avalon coaching session would be the last time we would sing together in this way for a long time.

Fast forward (if only we could) almost two years to 29th January 2022, and Cleeve Harmony have just enjoyed a coaching session from the inspirational Linda Corcoran (Checkmate and Havoc Champion Quartets, and MD of Great Western Chorus). We were lucky that the date was immediately after many of the restrictions on singing were lifted. We went ahead, still being sensible

regarding the risks (Covid tests compulsory, well-ventilated room, sensible spacing, Zoom line open).

on Zoom). We've kept singing and feel very fortunate to still have a chorus, but with the restrictions and gaps, have lost some confidence and spark on the way.



Soon, concerns began to wash away. Along with Linda and our MD Donna Whitehouse, we worked hard, learned lots, connected, laughed loads, and SANG! The five-plus hours flew by, and we even ended up overrunning as no one was looking at the time. The coaching session was not only motivational and confidence building, but a timely reminder of the joy of chorus singing - the way it had felt last time, way back in March 2020 with Avalon.

Thank you to Linda and Avalon - and indeed all the fab coaches we've had the pleasure of meeting over the years - for your fab support and motivation. Cleeve Harmony turns 10 next year and the future is looking bright.

Kate Clifford
Outgoing Chair & incoming Treasurer,
Cleeve Harmony

An excited but slightly nervous group of singers met at 9.30am on a sunny Saturday morning in Bishops Cleeve. Like many choruses around the UK our numbers have gone down, and at the session each section was only represented by two or three ladies who felt a little exposed (with another couple

Two Crystals hanging up their pitch pipes

Two of our longest standing Crystals, Pauline Langlands (a founding member of Crystal Chords) and Bess Worsley (a member for 25 years), took the difficult decision to stand down from our risers at the end of 2021. Both had played considerable roles within the chorus over the last few decades and their contributions and friendship will be

sorely missed. Bess asked for no fuss to be made.... We happily ignored this request. They, of course, will join the ranks of our social members - they can't get rid of us that easily!

Laura Orton
PRO, Crystal Chords



Crystal Chords founding members, Gill Buchanan and Pauline Langlands



Bess Worsley being presented with gifts by Crystal Chords founding member and membership secretary, Sue Livesey

Sharing the warm-up load

At Crystal Chords we do try to vary the delivery of warm-up, sharing it out between members of our M&P team. It provides a learning experience for those taking it, some variety for the chorus, and above all, gives Monica a bit of a break! Do other choruses also share this job among their members? January 2022 saw a first-time warm-up

for our youngest Crystal, Alex Fyfe. Here she is commanding the chorus with a rendition of 'Papas got a head like a ping-pong ball' (to the tune of the William Tell Overture). A future LABBS MD in the making, that's for sure.

Laura Orton
PRO, Crystal Chords



Crystal Chords, warming up with 'Papas got a head like a ping-pong ball'



MD in the making, Alex Fyfe

The Gems get knitting

Gem Connection have been busy knitting squares during the pandemic to make blankets for local charities.

The first completed blanket was raffled off at Christmas and the Gems raised £128 for The Salvation Army Christmas Appeal. Our lucky winner was Delyth Knight who received her blanket on our return to rehearsals after Christmas.

We now have three more blankets complete which we will be donating to a local charity.

The Gems are settling in nicely to our new venue and can't wait to be singing together back on the risers properly.

Jenny Smedley
PRO Gem Connection Ladies Harmony Chorus



Delyth receiving her blanket

2022 – an exciting year for GraceNotes!

While 2021 may have

started off on the wrong foot with Covid and lockdowns, it certainly ended on a high!

did things a little differently, focusing not only on our sound, but on just being together again, too. We've been separated so often over the last couple of years that we felt a good ol' bonding session was in order.



GraceNotes Retreat Quiz Teams

November was a great month for GraceNotes. Not only did we win three cups and a shield at Plymouth Music Festival, we also headed off for a glorious weekend retreat at the luxurious and very beautiful Blackadon Farm on the edge of Dartmoor. Retreat is usually our annual opportunity to come together, work hard, and really hone our Convention package, but this time we

There was so much fun and merriment all weekend as we played games, cavorted to Abba Karaoke Just Dance, made a Christmas video, and stayed up until the small hours just enjoying each other's company. There was gin too – a lot of gin!

Of course, the weekend would not have been complete without singing, so we took

the opportunity to polish up our Christmas repertoire ready for the six Christmas sing-outs we had booked in December. We finished the weekend doing just that - singing at Blackadon Farm's Christmas market.

Now we're into 2022 and we're busy getting ready for the highlight of our year – Convention! We have missed it so very much and are really looking forward to performing and meeting up

with friends, old and new. In preparation, we've got a couple of coaching days booked that we're really excited about, and we're currently looking at gorgeous new dresses to perform in. We've been fortunate to grow during 2021, gaining 14 new members, so we need to update our wardrobe and our beautiful raspberry dresses are being retired - see our 'for sale' ad on page 24!

We've got so much to look forward to this year, from social events, sing-outs and Convention, to new dresses, getting to know new members, and learning some amazing new repertoire pieces.

2022 is going to be a very good year!

Sandra Matanle
Chair, GraceNotes Acapella



GraceNotes' first Christmas sing-out of the season, at Blackadon Farm Christmas Market

All the firsts for Main Street Sound

Back in November, Main Street Sound had an evening of firsts: first sing-out since the first lockdown, first sing-out with our Director, Peter Bryant, first outing for four new songs, learned over Zoom, first outing for our new hoodies, first sing-out for our



newest member, Susan.

This is what Susan had to say about joining us, and our evening of firsts:

"I'd only joined Main Street Sound in September, when the chorus was finally allowed to get back together. Rehearsals

can be chilly due to the number of windows we have open, but there certainly isn't a chilly atmosphere! The chorus members have been so welcoming since day one, and I don't think I've ever received a round of applause as a welcome when I've joined a group before! It was heart-warming".

"Until I joined, I'd not heard the term 'sing-out' either. I've been performing on stage since I was five, but I'd never said I was doing a 'sing-out'. Thinking about it, it is a very sensible phrase to use as I did indeed sing out".

"After an extraordinary 18+ months of not being allowed to sing in public, it was amazing to be back where my heart belongs, singing for others. Although this was not my first performance, it was something different".

"As a tenor, I have thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of getting to sing a harmony part. Learning to sing without looking at music has been a real test though. Two weeks

before the sing-out I didn't think I would be able to perform without my music as suddenly without it, my prop had gone. More home study, then at the rehearsal the night before the sing-out, I was further encouraged by Peter and chorus members".

"So, my first sing-out may not have been without nerves, but wow, did I enjoy it! The audience were appreciative (and much larger than we'd anticipated, which was fab), the harmonies around me were amazing, and the camaraderie and love in the group was massive".

Lisa Laverick
PRO, Main Street Sound



Our Top Ten Moments of 2021!

A New Year for Cheshire Chord

Company always starts with our annual AGM, and 2022 was no different!

This year, our Julia Bird award was presented to Jo Robley, our amazing treasurer, for her ongoing commitment to the chorus! Similarly, the Musical Directors award was presented to Sue Ranson, our remarkable Chairwoman, for the last two very strange years!



Like last year, sitting down and reviewing the year in what was thought to be a quiet one, was anything but! Each year our PRO creates a video of Cheshire Chord's Top 10 Moments according to Facebook reach. So, for all of you readers, here are our Top Ten Moments of 2021! (Read this with the original Top of the Pops soundtrack in your head!)

10. The White Rosettes joint Zoom rehearsal. Reach: 1,388

9. Skyline Sisters joint Zoom rehearsal. Reach: 1,466

8. Coaching with Rob Mance. Reach: 1,468

7. Red Rosettes joint Zoom rehearsal. Reach: 1,493

6. Christmas sing-out (first sing-out since March 2020!). Reach: 1,811

5. Back to face-to-face rehearsals. Reach 2,304

4. CCC on the radio! Reach: 3,482

3. Remembering our Beautiful Anne. Reach: 3,482

2. Our Lockdown Legacy project number 2 – That's Life. Reach: 3,815

1. Cheshire Chord on the BBC! Reach: 4,283

If you'd like to see all of our posts from last year and any future ones, make sure you follow us on social media at @CheshireChord.

Julie Phillips
PRO, Cheshire Chords



Singing our way into 2022!

There's nothing much better than a sing-out after all this time, is there? You can feel that buzz of excitement as your chorus are all lined up and positioned. You hear the mumblings of "What are we singing now?" or "How does that one start?", which are usually followed by those helpful words, "It's a Ba" or "It's a Do". Then, the pitch is blown and you're suddenly surrounded by that sound again: the sound of your chorus singing together, of locking chords, and just sharing what you enjoy with real people who want to listen.

We were lucky enough to have two



sing-outs this winter, and those feelings of excitement and joy were definitely front and centre. In December, we were invited to sing at the wedding reception of one of our lovely Basses, Zoë Gibson, and her husband Russ. It was great to be able to perform together, and Russ's band even graced us with a set. So, some of the Rozzers were even able to dance the night away to Classic Rock afterwards. Who doesn't love a wedding!

Our first sing out of 2022 then took place at Fountains Abbey, which is becoming somewhat of a Rozzer tradition. It was time to get out the carols, and not even the cold, wet, slippery ground could dampen our spirits. We sang in the beautiful cloisters, which have a lovely sound, and we even had some 'stage' lighting. We and our audience were enjoying ourselves so much we ran over time.



Overall, there's definitely a note of hope and excitement buzzing across the chorus this year. In February, we reintroduced risers (still with distancing) and are gradually starting to work our way closer together again. We've been learning new songs and planning retreats, booking coaching and getting back in the swing again.

Holly Parker
The White Rosettes

A bright future lies ahead for Signature!

Over the last few months we've had a busy time! Not only have we relocated to a new rehearsal venue, we are also pleased to announce that we have appointed a new MD.

Back in August 2021, we began our journey to find an alternative rehearsal venue. We have been based in Iver Heath, Buckinghamshire since our conception back in 2002 and decided it was time for change. After trying different locations across Greater

evening slot and we have not looked back. Windsor has quickly become our new 'home' and we are enjoying becoming part of the thriving community. Facebook groups have been joined, leaflets distributed, and we celebrated our 'arrival' in Windsor with a sing-out at Royal Windsor Station. Here we were able to treat shoppers and commuters to some Christmas carols, and



were delighted to raise £277 for Alexander Devine Children's Hospice, a local children's charity.

But we didn't stop there; back in November 2021 we also began discussions to appoint our new Musical Director, Alexander de Bruin. We were so thrilled when, in mid-December, we were able to announce this news and WOW, what a response we received. We saw friends old and new, members across LABBS and BABS, as well as supporters from

the non-barbershop world dropping us a note to congratulate us. It really felt great to be part of such an exciting

announcement, and to see the news celebrated in such a positive and encouraging way was the icing on the cake!

In partnership with Alex, we are truly excited to see what we can achieve in 2022. With music, laughter and friendship, we can't wait to start this new chapter in the journey of Signature A Cappella Singers.

Rachel Pickard
Vice Chair and PRO
Signature A Cappella Singers

London and Berkshire, we settled on Windsor. From November we were able to secure our regular Thursday

2022, let's be 'avin' you!

Here at Steel City Voices

we've started 2022 with a bang! First with our annual open evening - an event where we invite anyone and everyone to join us for a rehearsal. We performed songs, invited our guests to join in for warm-ups, sang our tag of the month, and also the audition piece together. We had a fabulous evening and as a result we now have seven new members taking our total to 50! This is something we could never have imagined when we first started as a group of eight friends three and half years ago. We now also have a new rehearsal venue to

accommodate our growing numbers which we began using in February. We're really looking forward to having more space for us, and potentially risers!

In the run up to Christmas, we did 12 days of 'SCVmas' with a look back of

our highlights from 2021. We felt like we'd achieved quite a lot considering we had only had four official rehearsals. Now Steel City Voices has so much to look forward to in 2022: international voice coaching, our retreat weekend, and LABBS Convention! SCV's first



Steel City Voices Open Rehearsal

Convention was in 2019 where we mic warmed, so obviously this year will be our first year competing and will be many of our members' first barbershop Convention. It feels like a very exciting time for SCV and we can't wait to see what else 2022 has in store for us!

Rachel
Social Media, Steel City Voices

From Wight Satin to Vectis A Cappella

Oh, it is so nice to be able to get back together for proper rehearsals after nearly two years of restrictions.

As with most choruses, Wight Satin still tried to communicate with each other the best we could through those difficult times – thank goodness for Zoom (whatever would we have done without it!).

Via Zoom, we held quizzes and still managed to hold Committee meetings (not that there was much to talk about), and some of us attended the LABBS Education Days and the Unconventional Convention.

Between the lockdowns last year we were able to meet in MD Jacqui's garden for a socially distanced rehearsal, but we

were so pleased to see each other that we didn't manage to sing a note - it was just coffee and chat which was great and gave us a real boost.

We were concerned that some of our members didn't have access to a computer and were not able to meet at Jacqui's in the summer, so we put together a Health & Wellbeing check and posted it out to all members. We asked questions like 'How are you?' and 'Do you need any help?', but also asked questions about the chorus and rehearsals, such as 'What do you like about singing in the chorus?', and 'What can be done to improve it?'

Because we had not sung together for two years, we decided to take the opportunity to start all over again afresh, gradually learning a new repertoire and changing our chorus' name (this was one of the questions that we asked in

the survey). We asked members to send in their suggestions and we voted for Vectis A Cappella.

Vectis is a name that is linked only to the Isle of Wight: Vectis (now called the Isle of Wight), an Island off the southern coast of Britain. It was conquered by Vespasian in the reign of Claudius.

We are only a small chorus at the moment but with hard work and determination we hope to swell our numbers through a Learn to Sing course, although that might not be for a couple of months yet - we need to get used to singing together again first.

So, onwards and upwards!

Christine Sloper
Chairman, Vectis A Cappella

Thank you, Pat!

It is coming up to AGM time and our Chairman, Pat Darby, has made the tough decision to stand down from her role. Pat has been in poor health of late and wants to take a back seat now, and just enjoy the singing part of the Chorus.

We want to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to Pat on behalf of the Chorus, for all of the hard work and commitment that she has given to Wight Satin and LABBS over the past 30 years.

Wight Satin was formed in 1987 and became members of LABBS in 1989, and we still have two of the original members singing with us, Pat being one of them.

Pat has always held the position of Chairman of the Chorus, apart from a period of 10 years when she played an active part of the LABBS Contest & Administration Team under Marilyn Penketh's guidance. As well as helping out with the contest administration, part of Pat's role was looking after the Contest videos and the much-coveted medals, at her home on the Island. Pat was often seen on stage handing the quartet medals to the LABBS Chairman to present to the winning quartets, which she loved doing.

Pat lives and breathes barbershop and if she were a stick of Blackpool rock and you cut her in half, she would have LABBS running right through the middle of her!

We just want to say a big, heartfelt thank you, Pat, from Wight Satin xxx

Christine Sloper
Chairman, Wight Satin – Garden Isle Ladies Barbershop
Harmony Club



Pat Darby - Wight Satin

A fun-filled festive season for The Red Rosettes

Another year has come and gone and once again we look with excitement and anticipation to chorus rehearsals, sing-outs, and - dare we say it - Convention!

The Red Rosettes managed to have three Christmas sing-outs this year. The highlight being as the guest singers at a school Chocolate Bingo event which was full of Christmas cheer, teachers, parents and chocolate-filled pupils. It was a wonderful Christmas event and reminded us of how much we enjoy the season.

We also managed a couple of social outings which gave us a lovely opportunity to meet up, chat, eat cake, and of course, sing!

We had afternoon tea at the Leyland Hotel, which included a visit from Mary Poppins while we were singing 'Feed the Birds', and

we had a coach trip to Manchester to see the Book of Mormon. Wow! What a show! Depending on your point of view, you either love it or need counselling after seeing it! It was certainly very different to Mary Poppins.

At our AGM in January, the award for The Most Improved Barbershopper went to Evie Nixon, one of our younger members.

The Chairman's Award was shared by Kate White and Elisabeth Shaw, for going the extra mile in supporting the Chorus and Committee.

A very popular and much deserved winner of the Pam Ambrose Barbershopper of the Year was Teresa Phillips, who is the backbone of our chorus. She was also made an Honorary Member.



Most Improved Barbershopper, Evie Nixon



Chair, Sandra Hale, presenting Kate White and Elisabeth Shaw with their Chairman's Award



Our judging panel, presenting Teresa Phillips with her Barbershopper of the Year award



Pam Ambrose, presenting Teresa Phillips with her Honorary Membership for services to the Chorus

Quartet Corner

IN HOUSE's 2021 Top Ten Moments

We may not have done any singouts last year, but one thing we have had is a lot of fun, particularly as it was the year of being able to sing in person again! Being in a quartet does have its benefits when Covid rules strike! Here's a list of our Top Ten moments from 2021, based on Facebook reach:



10. Our nativity version of Oh Holy Night - costumes and all!
9. Our first actual face-to-face meet-up happened in June 2021. So long, Jamulus!

8. Christmas party season saw us joining our Cheshire Chord friends for

- some food, dancing, and casino fun.
7. Back in January 2021, we were pretty chuffed when we were able to sing together, even if it was on Jamulus!
6. February 4th is our birthday, and we celebrated two years of singing together.
5. Real life singing, outside on some hills, happened back in June! A lovely walk and catch-up at Dovestone Reservoir.
4. June saw us meeting online for one of many Zoom meetings. Organising your diary key!
3. We wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day, even those people who were feeling a little Down with Love.
2. An England football win and a Sally McLean coaching evening, all in one night! This was one special Tuesday!



1. Back in May we released a new video - R.E.M's Everybody Hurts, filmed on location. Definitely one of our highlights and, it seems, yours too!

Here's to a new year; let's hope 2022 sees us getting together for more face-to-face singing with not only us but you, too! Keep up to date with everything INHOUSE on social media accounts @ [INHOUSEquartet](#)

Julie Phillips
In House Quartet

Your Making Music membership

As a member of LABBS, you automatically get full membership to Making Music. We want to see the leisure-time music sector thrive, with everyone in the UK having access to play and enjoy music wherever they are. So, we offer whatever your group needs – from supporting you with the running of your group, to lobbying the government to protect your interests, and offering projects and opportunities to develop your group’s musical talents.

What do you get?

Making Music membership comes with all kinds of benefits, including access to our [unbeatable group insurance packages](#). Some of the most cited reasons for joining our diverse community are that:

- you want regular sector updates on everything from the [latest Covid-19 guidance](#) to information about [new musical opportunities](#)
- you are looking to [modernise how you manage your group](#)
- your group [website needs an update](#) or a [design overhaul](#)
- your group needs support on a specific topic such as [registering as a charity](#)
- you are looking to organise [DBS checks](#) for your group members.



**SUPPORTING AND
CHAMPIONING
LEISURE-TIME MUSIC**

Members also get exclusive access to our network of over 3,800+ amateur music groups across the UK and [priority access to our events](#).

So, what are you waiting for? For information on how to get started, check out our [website](#) today!

Alyssia Frankland
Marketing Manager, Making Music

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check out the [events page](#) on the LABBS website for more details of events in 2022-2024, and to subscribe to the LABBS events calendar.

Start date	Start time	Title	General Location
Sat, 5 Mar 2022		LABBS Directors Education Day	Coventry
Sat, 5 Mar 2022		Youth Chorus - competition chorus rehearsal (LABBS Youth Chorus)	TBC
Sun, 13 Mar 2022		LABBS Board Meeting	Virtual - Online
Thu, 17 Mar 2022 to Sun, 20 Mar 2022		BinG! Barbershop Music Festival- CANCELLED	Dortmund
Sat, 26 Mar 2022	12:00	LABBS AGM and Council Meeting	Virtual - Online
Thu, 31 Mar 2022 to Sun, 3 Apr 2022		SABS Convention - CANCELLED	Calpe, Spain
Sat, 2 Apr 2022		Youth Chorus - full chorus rehearsal (LABBS Youth Chorus)	Birmingham
Sun, 3 Apr 2022		Youth Chorus - competition chorus rehearsal (LABBS Youth Chorus)	TBC
Thu, 28 Apr 2022 to Mon, 2 May 2022		BABS Convention, Sing2022	Harrogate
Wed, 4 May 2022 to Sat, 7 May 2022		European Barbershop Convention	Helsingborg, Sweden
Sat, 21 May 2022		LABBS Music Teams Education Day - with the Music Category	Coventry

Deadline for next issue Friday 29th April 2022

Please send all submissions to voicebox@labbs.org.uk
Maximum 350 words, plus up to 2 photos (original images from a phone or camera please, rather than images

downloaded from social media or a website). More details about what and how to submit can be found in the [Voice Box Contributor's Guide](#).

2022 Deadlines: Friday 29th April, Friday 29th July, Friday 4th November.



FOR SALE

52 black pinstripe lined waistcoats and 54 purple ties for sale. Each waistcoat has been handmade and we have the following



sizes available:

- Size 8 x 3
- Size 10 x 10
- Size 12 x 14
- Size 14 x 8
- Size 16 x 2
- Size 18 x 4
- Size 20 x 5
- Size 22 x 4
- Size 24 x 2



The waistcoats are a quarter inch pinstripe polyester material, lined with nylon lining material. The waistcoats have 2 buttons on the front, accompanied by 2 false pockets and cross belted detail on the rear. The 54 Taylor & Wright ties were originally purchased from Matalan at £5 RRP and 9 of these are still in the original packaging.

Please contact treasurer@cheshirechord.co.uk with an offer for all items.

Rhapsody Chorus is looking for a Musical Director

Could you be just what we are looking for? We need a new Musical Director with drive, and ambition.

Rhapsody chorus is a four-part harmony, a cappella ladies singing group based in Peterborough.

Many of the members have been singing together and competing in national and local competitions for more than 12 years. The chorus is one of the clubs belonging to the Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers.

Ideally we would like to employ a new Musical Director with proven experience in the barbershop genre, but other musical genres will be considered. This new leader will be inspiring and motivating with a keen ear for vocal uniformity and artistry. Remuneration and expenses reimbursement will be negotiated.

If you have the passion, vision, and personality to lead this established chorus please email our Chair, Jill Foskett, at chair@rhapsodychorus.org.uk. She will then contact you with further information.

Rhapsody Chorus currently has 31 members and meets at Dogsthorpe Methodist Church, Birchtree Avenue, Peterborough PE1 4HP, every Tuesday evening at 7.30pm. More information about us can be found on our website: <https://www.rhapsodychorus.org.uk>



For Sale

Beautiful raspberry, full-length gowns.



Fully lined voile, with a beaded lace yoke, and laced back.

New dresses

Size 8 x 2, size 10 x 2, size 12 x 3, size 14 x 4, size 16 x 3

Worn-once dresses ('as new' condition)

Size 8 x 1, size 10 x 2, size 14 x 5, size 16 x 4

£25 each ono, plus postage (dependent on quantity and location)

For more information, please contact GraceNotes Acapella at gracenotessaltash@gmail.com

