

Voice Box

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

Spring 2023 £4



Mum and daughter travels, silly faces, and Junior FR performs with the pros!



Plus! Top tips for the more mature voice, 2023 grants and awards, and more!

Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers

Chair:

Natalie Feddon
chair@labbs.org.uk

Vice-Chair:

Sue Ranson
vicechair@labbs.org.uk

Secretary:

Hannah Barber
secretary@labbs.org.uk

Finance Director:

Alys Galloway
financedirector@labbs.org.uk

Membership Director:

Jill Cook
membership@labbs.org.uk

Events Director:

Kristina Mair
events@labbs.org.uk

Education Director:

Alison Thompson
eandjchair@labbs.org.uk

Marketing and Communications Director:

David Kitchenham
marketing@labbs.org.uk

Youth Director:

Lamorna Hooker
youthdirector@labbs.org.uk

Director of Diversity & Inclusion:

Natasha Nickson
diversity@labbs.org.uk

VoiceBox Editor:

Melanie Baber
voicebox@labbs.org.uk

Following the AGM in late March, please see www.labbs.org.uk/board for up to date information.



I can't quite believe how quickly two years have passed

as I write my last article for VoiceBox as Chair, before stepping down at our LABBS AGM at the end of March. I wish Sue Ranson, our current Vice Chair, good luck and best wishes as she steps up to take over the role of Chair.

My sincere thanks go to all the LABBS Directors for their continued support and tireless dedication, which contributes to the success and smooth running of LABBS. Thanks also to the LABBS teams and volunteers who give so generously of their time.

I have felt honoured to be Chair of LABBS for the past two years. You may know of my passion to make this an inclusive association, ensuring that all clubs and members feel equally valued. I have so enjoyed visiting you all. Out of the fifty-seven LABBS clubs, by the time my term ends, I will have visited fifty four!

I started my visits with The Chordettes in Teignmouth and created my first vlog in Saltash with GraceNotes. My final week of being Chair will see me visiting Celtic Chords in Truro and Red Rock Acappella in Teignmouth - please look out for my final vlogs! I will have come full circle having journeyed from the top of Scotland in Aberdeen all the way down to the tip of our country in Cornwall. Thank you to everyone who has shown me such kindness with your hospitality. I will treasure my memories of being with you.

It proves that we really are a countrywide association and wherever you are, you belong to our wonderful LABBS family. I have so enjoyed joining in with your vocal and physical warmups, and being able to join you in singing our polecats. The thread that binds us all together is our love of barbershop singing and our care and commitment to each other. I've seen that LABBS is one big family, and I am so proud of you all as you take part in charity events raising money for worthwhile causes, and joining together to enrich people's lives with your music.

I have been very fortunate to travel to Sweden to watch LABBS choruses and quartets compete at The European Barbershop Convention, including our LABBS gold medallist quartet, Avalon, who became the European gold medallists. I have been to BHS



in Charlotte to meet with CEO Marty Monson and discuss our Alliance deal. What good news we have that IN HOUSE, our current LABBS quartet champions, will be going to Louisville to represent LABBS this summer, and our chorus champions, The White Rosettes, will be going to Ohio in 2024. This news helps align with our mission statement of gaining international influence and recognition.

I started my tenure during Covid when we were all locked up in our homes, and LABBS clubs were able to stay together with the help of Zoom. How useful this has been with our quarterly Chair's Forum. I have been so pleased to engage directly with our club Chairs, to give them the latest information, and to let them share ideas with each other. Our latest forum shared the news of this year's polecat, *With a Little Help from My Friends*. This polecat is the first to be funded by Mersey Harmony, and is so appropriate for our association as we all help each other within our choruses on a weekly basis.

LABBS is keeping very busy this year with Harmony College and the rollout of grants for regional festivals, and of course our convention in Harrogate. Please make the most of all we have to offer.

And so to farewell. It has been my absolute pleasure to serve you, and my favourite memories will always be of my chorus visits and hearing you sing and rejoice in the pleasure of the music.

**In harmony,
Natalie**

Update from your Editor



I first met Natalie

Feddon when she came to visit my chorus, GraceNotes Acapella, in the summer of 2021. We had a lot of fun making her Roving Chair [vlog](#), and her husband, Grant, was very gracious when I insisted he stand on a chair (with four legs – not his wife!), to get the best possible angle for it. Thankfully, he didn't fall off, because injuring your LABBS Chair's husband is never a good idea!

A trip to the pub followed, and by 9am the following morning, Natalie had suggested I think about

becoming VoiceBox editor. It's not something I'd previously considered if I'm honest, but she put me in touch with Rita Hulands, and after a chat, I was in! Although the role hadn't been on my radar, I am so grateful to Natalie for suggesting it to me; I have found a community of wonderful, warm, inspirational barbershoppers as a result, and made some really great friends.

Natalie is a fantastic ambassador for barbershop and LABBS, and her passion for what we do struck me from our first

meeting. In particular, she has enthusiastically supported me in my editor role, encouraging clubs to contribute to VoiceBox, and introducing or putting me in touch with contributors who've shared some wonderful insights into the world of barbershop.

Although I'm really excited to begin working with Sue, I will be sad to see Natalie step down as Chair. I wish her the very best in her new role as Immediate Past Chair, and beyond.

Mel Baber
VoiceBox Editor

Finance

Grants and Awards in 2023

2022 brought choruses and quartets back

together after the strangeness of 2020 and 2021, and with that came more grant applications - here's hoping there are more again this year.

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 (15th December 2023)!

Love to Sing grants are also available for choruses running courses – full details can be found on the [Voices in Harmony page](#) in the LABBS website members area (closing date 15th December 2023).

Although the closing date for Harmony College 2023 grants has now passed, full details of Education Grants for future

events can be found on the [Voices in Harmony page](#) in the LABBS website members area.

Regional Education grants are available this year – these are for choruses arranging days with other choruses. For more information, please email me financedirector@labbs.org.uk.

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 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. SoundHouse debuted their new arrangement at LABBS Convention 2022 and Sonic will be entertaining us this year as the 2022 recipients. 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



**Deadline for next edition:
Friday 28th April 2023**

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

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

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

More info can be found in the VoiceBox Contributor's Guide.

2023 Deadlines: Friday 28th April, Friday, 28th July, Friday 3rd November

WHAT. A. YEAR!

To say we're a little

bit excited about 2023 is an understatement - it's going to be EPIC! As Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers ambassadors, we look forward to promoting British barbershop music in the best way possible!



IN HOUSE

As part of the new Barbershop Harmony Society and LABBS alliance, IN HOUSE Quartet was honoured to accept the invitation from BHS to compete as the first LABBS quartet at the International Convention, in Louisville in July 2023.

We're hoping to fundraise over the coming months, so if you'd like to book us for a show or education event to help us on our way, please contact us at INHOUSEQuartet@gmail.com. We also have a GoFundMe page, where any donations will be gratefully received! If you'd like to donate, please visit our GoFundMe page here - <https://gofund.me/a17426b9>. We'll also be joining The White Rosettes, Meantime Chorus, and Limelight for a show in Leeds in April. Please see The White Rosettes' article below for details of where to buy tickets.

We can't wait to represent the Ladies Association of British Barbershop



Our first wedding event, for our friends Karen and Dean

Singers on the international stage. What an honour it will be! Thank you for your support in helping to get us there.

Our next big event is Harmony College in April. We're super excited to see everyone there, and look forward to having a sing with you in the bar!

INHOUSE Quartet

The road to International

Within hours of the trophy being lifted

there was just one question: Are we going to compete at Barbershop Harmony Society's International competition in Cleveland, Ohio in July 2024?

Of course, in the warmth of the afterglow, and possibly a few gins, the answer was 'yes' but in the cold light of day, the realisation started to dawn: What coordination was needed to take a large chorus to the USA in 2024? Did the chorus want to go? Would members be able to book sufficient time off work, or be able to leave their families to attend? In the current cost of living crisis, was it viable to ask people to spend precious money on what is likely to be a significant cost?

Well, where there is a will, there is a way. Yes, there was an overwhelming appetite for the chorus to attend (was it ever doubted?). Yes, permission has been granted from employers and families to attend. Yes, LABBS confirmed we would be offered the first automatic spot to compete and proudly represent our association at BHS International (#MakingHistory). And so YES, we are super-excited to announce we will be competing at BHS International competition in 2024.

Now the hard work begins. We wish to represent LABBS the best we can, and that involves taking as many White Rosettes as possible. We are planning to fundraise to lessen the cost on personal finances, and a fundraising committee has been set up so please look out for announcements on Facebook and

support us whenever and however you can. If you are unable to attend an event, we do have a GoFundMe page (<https://gofundme/9b7d7765>) where you can give a donation. No donation is too small!

To get the ball rolling, we are pleased to announce that our first event will be a joint show, 'The Road to International', with Meantime Chorus, Limelight and IN HOUSE, on the 22nd of April 2023, at Pudsey Civic Hall, Leeds. That's four 2022 National Champions in one show! We do hope you will come and celebrate the joy of barbershop! Tickets are available at: <https://buytickets.at/thewhiterosettes/836429>

Ruth Kirby, PRO
The White Rosettes



The White Rosettes 45th Anniversary Celebrations



The White Rosettes singout at the fabulous Fountains Abbey

Discovering barbershop as a British Punjabi

I first heard about Capital Connection

in 2019 when they performed at a local school event. Before then, I barely knew anything about barbershop music - my impressions were that it was only sung in a quartet of white American men, dressed in a uniform of striped waistcoats and straw hats! Capital Connection was definitely not that!

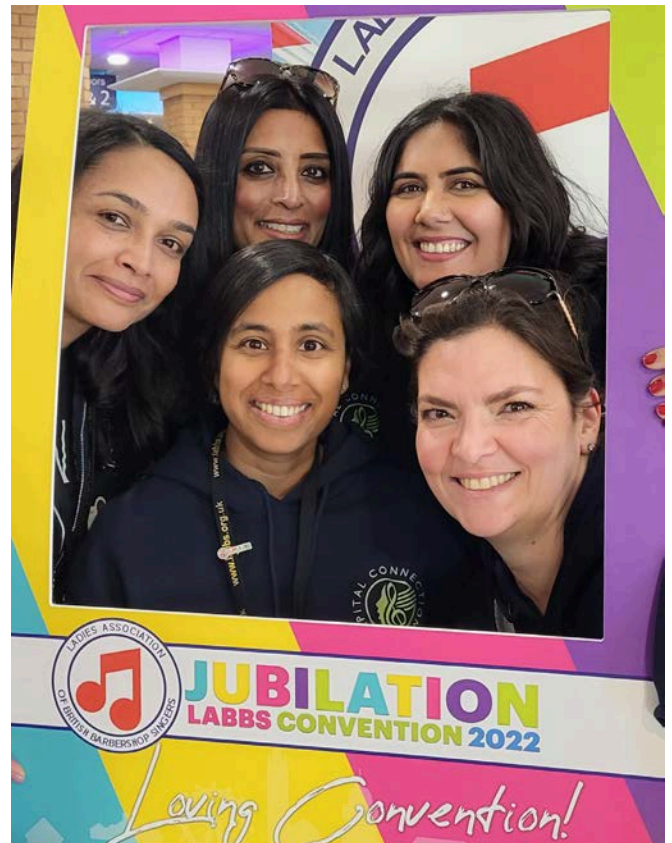
In Spring 2021, as we started to come out of lockdown, I saw that CapCon was holding an open evening and I decided to go along with three of my friends (two of whom are also people of colour). Living in Harrow, which is very multicultural, it was a bit of a surprise to arrive at chorus and find ourselves to be the only 'non-white' people there. I did wonder at the time why no ethnic minorities were part of a chorus based in the capital city, but I soon forgot about this difference as everyone in the chorus was just so friendly and welcoming! The singing united us; colour or race never felt like an issue or a difference. Over time, as our friends began to hear about the fun we had at chorus, they also wanted to join, and in total we invited another 10 of our friends and acquaintances to audition (many of whom were also people of colour).

Since then, we've been living the full barbershop life: local singouts, Unconventional Convention in Oxford, and then Convention 2022 in Bournemouth! Both conventions were a real eye-opener: the lack of ethnic diversity was glaringly obvious to us as we walked in, and I felt hyper alert to the lack of diversity in colour in most of the choruses. I felt very conscious of my skin colour but crucially, I didn't feel uncomfortable - if anything I felt proud that I belonged to one of the most ethnically diverse choruses in LABBS!

To help promote our wonderful hobby to everyone, there are questions that we as a community need to address: Why doesn't the racial and ethnic diversity of the UK barbershop scene reflect the UK population? What are the barriers to

recruitment of singers from minority ethnic backgrounds, and how can we begin to overcome them? Let's go out and discover all those hidden beautiful voices to join us as we sing in harmony!

Sharan Ghuman, Lead Capital Connection



Capital Connection newbies at Convention



Capital Connection

Contest Rules update

Your Education and Judging Committee

has been reviewing the Contest Rules which are published in the Contest and Judging Handbook. The new version is published on the LABBS website, but here are a few key points:

- Mixed quartets will now be registered as LABBS quartets and so their rules are in the documents along with LABBS women's quartets and choruses.
- The minimum size for a chorus has increased to 12 singing members. This brings us in line with BHS.
- The age limit for the Youth Quartet Contest has been raised to 29.
- Regarding the draw for choruses and quartets, we recognise that scheduling issues may arise due to a member singing in more than one quartet or chorus. This may be accommodated in the draw, providing E&J receive a request for

consideration before the contest entry deadline.

- Because of our alliance agreement with BHS, there is now the opportunity for LABBS Quartet Champions, Mixed Champions, and Senior Quartets to enter contest solely to achieve the minimum qualifying score which would enable them to be nominated by LABBS for a wildcard place at the BHS International Contest. After nomination by LABBS, acceptance into the contest is at the discretion of BHS. The current qualifying score is 78% and quartets should have a reasonable hope of achieving it. Please see the handbook for more information.
- There will be a new trophy, 'The BABS Entertainment Award'. It has been donated by BABS and will be awarded by the BABS Chair to the most entertaining LABBS chorus. Criteria to be confirmed.

You can find the updated Contest and Judging Handbook here - <https://www.labbs.org.uk/contest-rules>.

Alison Thompson
Education Director



Top tips for the older voice

In January, I received an email from LABBS Chair, Natalie Feddon,

with a subject line that gives this article its title. She had been out and about visiting choruses and had met with a group of ladies whose average age is a shade over 80. On their behalf, she asked me if I had any technical advice for their singers, with an eye also to supporting the many other association members round the country who are singing joyfully into their later years.

So, the first and most important thing, they are already doing: keep singing! Singing is like any other skill, and the best way to maintain it is to use it regularly. That said, both physical and cognitive capacities do become more fragile with advancing years, so things we once took for granted might over time need a little more care.

So, I'll share a general principle here, and you can read some more specific suggestions in the longer version of this article on my website - <http://helpingyouharmonise.com/older>

Gentle Stretching is the overall principle that underlies all those specific points. There's the literal, physical sense in which gentle stretches will help keep your vocal instrument in good shape, but the metaphorical sense is possibly more important. Whatever you can currently manage in your singing – range, breath, music learning, stamina – you need to regularly take yourself to the edge of your capacities and then stretch just a little further. Don't push yourself hard, that's tiring and counterproductive, but do make sure you keep in touch with the maximum you can do.

The point is that if you stay too long away from your [boundaries](#), the boundaries tend to contract to match. This is true for people of any age, but as we get older, it becomes harder to regain lost ground, so the impact of getting out of practice is greater. Stepping a bit beyond your [comfort zone](#) on a regular basis keeps you growing and learning, and promises a sense of achievement in exchange for making the effort.

For those LABBS members who have yet to reach their 80s, 9 to 5 chorus in Bristol is setting us a fine example, and

we should all aim to be like them when we grow up.

Liz Garnett
LABBS' Chorus Director Development Specialist



Junior FR co-star with The Femmes

Junior FR were delighted to perform at a glittering Christmas Concert alongside professional vocal trio, [The Femmes](#), in Olveston on 3rd December.

The sell-out audience were delighted in the first half by The Femmes performing songs from the 40s to the 80s including tributes to Dame Vera Lynn and the Andrews Sisters, as well as songs from well-known musicals and Disney themes. [Junior FR](#) followed in style with a gorgeous arrangement of *The Lion King* theme, *I'm a Believer* by The Monkees, and a wonderfully visual performance of *Count on Me* with the girls performing Makaton signing. The second half was a musically-filled Christmas stocking of beautiful Christmas arrangements, with witty introductions from The Femmes and even some much-enjoyed audience choreography and participation!

Jo, Seanna and Meg (The Femmes) met during their musical theatre training at The Guildford School of Acting and were drawn together by their love of close-harmony singing. The Femmes was formed in 2013 and their very first performance was at the Tockington Harvest Fayre that year. They are now spread across the UK and travel widely to rehearse and perform, but were delighted to come back to Jo's home ground for this event.

Jo Bradley, the daughter of [Fascinating Rhythm's](#) long-standing Tenor, Jane Sawyer, gained her early musical

experiences through Marlwood school, the Olveston Parish Players and of course, hearing her mum practice and perform with Fascinating Rhythm! Jo commented after the show that, "Sharing the stage with Junior FR was absolutely wonderful. The three of us all grew up taking part in choirs and performances, being part of harmony group singing, and now we're doing it professionally, so to share the stage with the next generation felt like we'd come full circle. The girls took everything in their stride in a very professional way and we really enjoyed their harmonies - such a lovely moment."

Junior FR musical director, Wendy Howse said, "It was a complete joy to sing alongside The Femmes this evening, and I am sure all the girls have been completely inspired by hearing and seeing them perform. I am so proud of how the girls held their own and received a fabulous audience response to all their songs."

Audience members stated they were, "amazed and delighted with a wide variety of well performed songs from



The Femmes

Junior FR", and that it was, "a lovely performance from a large group of well-trained young people, who shared their love of singing with the audience".

A fabulous evening that sent everyone home uplifted and full of Christmas spirit - and not just thanks to the mulled wine!

The next big event on Junior FR's calendar is the [Thornbury Eisteddfod](#) where they hope to enter several choir classes, with the girls encouraged to prepare both solos and duets to give them more performance opportunities which are so important to the development of their skills and self-esteem.

Chloe Roberts, PRO
Fascinating Rhythm



Junior FR and The Femmes

The full LABBS Youth Chorus had their first rehearsal of 2023 in February, and had a great day with their new MD, Sophie!



LABBS and Beyond

Putting Bristol barbershop on the map

At a Great Western Chorus rehearsal, a seed

was sown: How great it would be to bring together the wealth of Bristol barbershop and a cappella singing talent, and perform in a show to share our love of barbershop far and wide.

It was to be a celebration of singing freely without the constrictions of Covid risks, the joy of singing together again, and the enhancement of the friendship and great sense of community between us all.

Hayden led the small team and found a venue, set a date, and commenced marketing strategies. Bristol Fashion's Natasha Nickson won the prize for naming the show, the Big Bristol Barbershop Bonanza!

Sadly, by the summer we decided not to go ahead; Covid was still a threat and we decided we

certainly did not want to sing in masks! But, in January 2022, we tried again. We met and continued planning, and finally the show was going to happen.

At Sweet Adelines Region 31 Convention, I met up with John Beesley, producer of The Chord, the UK's barbershop radio station. I told him about the BBBB show and invited him to meet the seven choruses taking part, and asked if he'd like to attend the show to record it live for The Chord - he was very keen!

John came down to Bristol three times. He interviewed each of the choruses taking part, attended the dress rehearsal, and recorded the show, which you can find on UK Harmony Podcast's SoundCloud, [here](#) - it's well worth a listen.

We had some prestigious visitors, too: BABS Chair Alan Hughes, LABBS Events Director Kristina Mair, and the Deputy Mayor of Bristol, Councillor Steve Smith, who loved the show. The question was, 'When are we doing it again?'



Big Bristol Barbershop Bonanza - Avon Harmony, Black Sheep Harmony, Bristol A Cappella, Bristol Fashion, Fascinating Rhythm, Great Western Chorus, and The Bristol Mix

Highlights of the evening were all 170 singers standing together on stage to sing Africa in eight-part harmony, and raising over £1600 for local charities. What a Night!

**Janis Smith, PRO
Bristol Fashion**

LABBS at Harmony, Inc

With just one day to recover from LABBS Convention, Mum (Alison Thompson, Education Director) and I met up in London to travel to Verona, New York, for Harmony, Inc's International Convention & Contests. We certainly had an interesting journey, including delayed flights, missed connections, and lost luggage, but we (and the bags – eventually!) made it safe and sound.

After a day to settle in, it was all go with the quartet semi-finals, including more than 40 quartets crossing the stage, followed by around 25 choruses the next day. It was such a joy to see all the competitors back on their international stage after the few years we've all had. Mum awarded the LABBS Trophy to the non-medallist chorus with the highest performance score, Seaside A Cappella.

Some really interesting education classes followed the day after, with the incredible quartet finals in the afternoon. Huge congratulations to Northern Blend Chorus and Take 4 quartet on their spectacular wins!

Harmony, Inc always host a parade of champions with some of their past quartet champs coming together to serenade us all. This year there was a milkshake bar to keep us all going! We loved catching up with old friends and meeting plenty of new ones, and of course singing a fair few tags in between.

Congratulations to Harmony, Inc on a successful return to International Convention & Contests.

Gem Thompson



Alison with Seaside A Cappella's Director, Judy Comeau (L) and President, Yvonne Rafuse (R)



Alison with Harmony, Inc President, Linda Brehaut, and Sweet Adelines International President, Thérèse Antonini

Dr Jean Sutton, 1946 - 2022

Jean was known to many members as someone who had been actively involved in LABBS for many years, since she was first introduced to barbershop in 1984 by Tyneside Ladies. She had a Ph.D. in Music Education, also providing vocal coaching and workshops to music associations and educational establishments all over the UK.

Jean was always very active musically, leading various types of choirs, including four barbershop choruses, although not all at once! In the '60s she even performed semi-professionally, singing pop, folk, and early English music, in duet, quartet and octet. She was also happy to visit choruses to provide coaching. Some years ago, around 2010-2011, she took on the Director role at Harton Harmonisers, based in South Shields, helping for a while to keep them going - which they still are.

Most members will have met Jean and heard her deep, gravelly voice at the music table at Convention and other events, selling copies of LABBS-licenced arrangements as part of her role running LABBS Music Resources, which she did for many years alongside Marilyn Penketh. During that time, Jean helped members with music, arranging, transposing, and revoicing services, as well as copyright advice, until the service was formally wound down in 2020.

Jean was a regular at Council Meetings, being a Regional Rep/LLO for many years until 2018, and serving as the "TONSIL" rep for LABBS. Jean was also a judge in the Music Category, having started as an Arrangement Judge in the old system in 1986, before retiring in 2014. During her stint she served as Category Director in Arrangement and helped transition LABBS to the new BHS (SPEBSQSA) categories in 1994, serving as the first Music Category Director. She remained willing and available to mentor new Music Judges through their training, including myself and Liz Garnett, who says, "I credit her as being the person who taught me how to hear overtones. There are things she taught me back in 1998 that I still use today; she gave me the keys that unlocked the style for me when I was new to it."

Overall, Jean served on E&J in one capacity or another for a laudable 34 years, and will be missed by many, not least for her unwavering commitment to LABBS and barbershop. Her sense of humour too, will be remembered by those who knew her, and is one of her many qualities that I will miss.

Farewell, Jean.

In fond memory,

Debi Cox,
LABBS Music Category Director (outgoing)



Not retired yet!

We all enjoy singing in a barbershop chorus with all the fun, the camaraderie and, of course, the pleasure of singing itself. Then there comes yet another birthday and you think "I can't cope with the pressure of another Convention – am I now past it?"

Of course not! The members of 9 to 5 in Bristol are nearly all retirees from Bristol Fashion Chorus and still experience, in a smaller group, the sheer joy of singing, the friendliness within the chorus, and having lots of fun – without the pressure of competing. Instead, we regularly have the pleasure of entertaining members of the many clubs, care homes and miscellaneous organisations who are looking for entertainment during the day. 9 to 5 keep very busy singing to them, covering an interesting variety of venues in and around Bristol, South Gloucester and North Somerset. All during the daytime and no need to drive home in the dark!

Recently, our LABBS Chair, Natalie Feddon, visited our rehearsal and her enthusiasm for everything barbershop gave us a terrific boost. We sang for her, and she made a Roving Chair video which you can watch [here](#).

We may have only 17 members, but our combined LABBS membership adds up to 418 years of barbershop experience. Seven of our members are over 80, three of whom are over 85. Our ladies tell us that singing and being part of the chorus significantly helps them with issues such as grieving, coming



to terms with serious medical procedures, and coping with difficult mental health issues.

We like to think we are great ambassadors for barbershop as we take the barbershop sound and style to many of those who have not heard it before. Our singouts are quite informal and usually include a session of audience participation, which has proved very popular. We are often included in afternoon teas and yummy buffets and receive frequent requests for repeat performances. Barbershop continues to enhance our lives, keep us fit and mentally alert. Why would we stop singing?

**Jenny Wood, MD, and
Geraldine Davies-Carr, Chair
9 to 5**

Changes afoot for Junction 14 after a rollercoaster of events

Convention this year was difficult for us as a week before the competition, a third of our chorus came down with Covid. The remaining few of us did our best in Bournemouth but we had a disappointing result.

We then had a few performances lined up over the Christmas period which raised our spirits a little, although the freezing weather didn't help as some of our performances were outside!

We then had some more disappointing news as our MD,

Hannah Washington, decided the time was right to move on and resigned her post with us. We adore Hannah and she has been with us as our MD for over 15 years. Her commitment, teachings, energy and sense of fun have been wonderful, and we will truly miss her but understand her reasons for leaving.

So as we head into 2023 we will reassess our chorus and see what the new year brings! Onwards and upwards.

**Val Hutchinson, PRO
Junction 14**



Happy days for Amersham

Here at Amersham A Cappella

we love to see our calendar packed with lots of fab, fun stuff to look forward to, which is why we were thrilled to find that we'd been booked for a Christmas stocking-full of seasonal singouts. It's always great to perform in our 'home sweet home' town, so we were jubilant to be booked up for not one, but three local events.

First on our list was brightening up the Old Amersham Christmas Lights Evening, AAC-style. We returned the very next day to rock the crowds at the Amersham Christmas Festival, organised by the Amersham Action Group. Then a week later we were back again, delighted to be taking part in the Big Choirs Event at St Michael & All Angels Church, where we helped to raise over £1,100 for the Wycombe Homeless Connection.

As if that wasn't enough, we reached Christmas cloud nine with two more sing outs further afield. We braved the snow and the rail strikes to bring some sparkle

to the Keller Group plc Christmas do, at their super-swish offices in London's Paddington. Just 24 hours later we followed that up by daring the arctic conditions again, to trek out to the wonderful Wormsley Estate - home to the Garsington Opera - to get their staff party started.

Now 2023 is here, and boom! Our chorus diary is already filled with a stellar line up of events.

Our very first five-week 'Love to Harmonise' course started in January, aimed at a cappella lovers who wanted to take their harmony singing skills to the next level - and hopefully stay with us once they'd graduated! 21 newbies registered on the course, which wrapped up in February with an informal concert to showcase everyone's achievements.

Just four days after our course ended, we had a mad, fun day of quartet speed dating (yes, seriously!), and we're still scheduled for extra coaching, a fabulous joint concert with the Cottontown Chorus guys, and lots more to be super excited about!

So here's to lots of happy days ahead for us and all the amazing LABBS choruses out there - and the best year ever for Barbershop!



Hils Apicella, PRO
Amersham A Cappella

2022 ends with a surprise and a bang!

If you have ever met

Adrienne Brooks, you will know she is no shrinking violet. She is one of Crystal Chords' founding members (42 years ago!), and lights up the room when she is around, with her infectious energy. So it came as an absolute shock to our entire chorus when she casually dropped into conversation that at the weekend she had married Brendan, her partner of 23

years, in a beautiful ceremony. Now the secret is out, we can share their joy! We are incredibly pleased for Adrienne and Brendan, and wish them many many years of happily married bliss.

So, Crystals ended 2022 with bang:

Heartwarming feel-good concert in a freezing cold church ✓

December AGM ✓

Cameos on the annual ITV Christmas Carol Concert ✓

Secret wedding(!) ✓

Now onwards and upwards for 2023 - a year of recruiting, singing and making more memories together.

Laura Orton, PRO
Crystal chords



It might have been cold, but it didn't stop us from sparkling!



Congratulations, Adrienne and Brendan!

Bristol Fashion celebrates 45 years and completes Challenge45!

What a year 2022 was for Bristol Fashion!

We celebrated our 45th birthday and wanted to mark the momentous occasion by sharing 45 ways we show the true essence of Bristol Fashion. We chose various aspects of BF life which bring our chorus together, enrich our musical endeavours, and gift the general public a big slice of BF cake (well, a cappella cake!)

The year started with a bang! The first of our coaching sessions was with our great friend, Rob Mance. We strive to bring out the very best in our voices and Rob certainly helped us do that!

We excitedly donned our new walk-out gear for our first singout since 2020, at the beautiful St Alban's Church. The singout gave us a wonderful opportunity to take advantage of the beautiful acoustics at the church, and record some of our songs!

We flew the Barbershop flag at the Bristol Festival of Music, Speech, and Drama, gaining a distinction and an outstanding in two categories, and we performed as part of a summer program at a very sunny Keynsham bandstand.

And there's more! Awards night shone a light on those members who really go above and beyond; we sang with the legendary Deke Sharon; we had a retreat weekend where we enjoyed vocal

coaching, friendship building and relaxation, and 'BF's Got Talent' topped the bill. We embraced new members, and celebrated two weddings and a big seven-oh birthday, pirate style – arrrrr me 'arties!

It goes without saying that Convention really was a time of jubilation. Seeing friends from other choruses and stepping back on those risers to sing our hearts out was amazing! Placing seventh, improving on our previous convention's score, and rejoicing as our wonderful quartet, Sonic, who placed fifth, left us elated. Don't even get us started on the afterglow – what an evening!

There were two events which really put the cherry on the celebratory cake, though: Our 45th birthday party where we and the fabulous Fortuity quartet performed to friends, family, and the Lord Mayor; And of course, the Big Bristol Barbershop Bonanza – seven Bristol choruses, singing and raising money for charities, in a spectacular, collaborative show. You can read more about that on page 8.

Our 45th year has been legendary!

**Naomi Mallinson, PRO
Bristol Fashion**



Bari section's BF's got talent sketch



Debbie getting carried away at the BF 45th party



BF's retreat first-timers Lamorna, Tash, Sarah, Justine, Naomi, Hannah and Anna

Cheshire Chord Company – Top Ten Moments of 2022!

A New Year for Cheshire Chord

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

This year, our Julia Bird award was presented to Geraldine Curry for her ongoing commitment to the chorus and overall enthusiasm! Although a relatively new member of the chorus, Geraldine has thrown herself into chorus life, going above and beyond what is expected of her. Similarly, the Musical Directors award was presented to Paula McEwan, for her overall commitment to chorus and barbershop. Paula has been a member of LABBS for over 40 years and can always be called upon for sound advice. A truly dedicated, seasoned performer!

Each year, our PRO creates a video of Cheshire Chord's Top 10 Moments according to Facebook reaches. So, for all of you readers, here are our Top Ten Moments of 2022! (Read this with the original Top of the Pops soundtrack in your head!)

10. 1,746 reaches

Wishing you ALL Good Luck at LABBS 2022 Convention!

9. 1,749 reaches

Our THIRD place at LABBS 2022 convention

8. 1,782 reaches

Our pre-Convention dress rehearsal

7. 1,998 reaches

A Sunday rehearsal with the magnificent Dale Kynaston

6. 2,115 reaches

A little bit of advertising about our Wigan singout

5. 2,294 reaches

A Christmas singout at the amazing Bents Garden Centre

4. 2,847 reaches

Back at Bents Garden Centre for a Spring singout - a little warmer than the Christmas one!

3. 3,482 reaches

Wigan Church show

2. 4,211 reaches

Our retreat weekend - what a great weekend it was!

1. 4,626 reaches

Winning silver at the North Wales Choral Festival in March

If you'd like to see all posts from last year and any future ones, make sure you follow us on [@CheshireChord](https://www.facebook.com/CheshireChord).

Julie Phillips, PRO

Cheshire Chord Company



Geraldine Curry and Julie Westgate



Paula McEwan and Jo Braham

Celtic Chords get everyone singing!

Celtic Chords spent a wonderful afternoon singing at Carnon Downs Memory Cafe, near Truro, in early February.

Service users, carers, and volunteers were entertained with a lively repertoire of favourite songs, and were taught a four-part version of *How Much Is That Doggy in the Window*, so they could join in with the singing. CC ladies were rewarded for their efforts with tea and cake, and were asked to return the following day! Although CC were unable to oblige, they have promised to return for more singing fun in the very near future.

Sian Netherton, MD
Celtic Chords



Celtic Chords, getting ready to sing at Carnon Downs Memory Cafe

A celebratory start to 2023 for More Harmony!

Here at More Harmony Women's Barbershop

Chorus, we'd barely had time to recover from an exceptionally busy Christmas singout season before we were back at it in January, learning new songs to take to Wadebridge Festival of Music & Speech in early March. As current trophy holders, we had everything crossed for great scores again and to maintain our winning position!



Barbara, recipient of the Pauline Gobbitt Award for Musicality, and Liz

Keeping busy is just the way we like it and at our Annual General Meeting, held in mid-January, we all agreed that whilst 2022 had been a year of working hard on our sound, 2023 would be all about performance. We've got coaching from a local dance tutor coming up, to help us work on emoting our songs and to get us moving a bit more. It feels like

a year to step out of our comfort zone a little!

As is tradition at our AGM, the chorus voted on our Barbershopper Of The Year. This year, the clear winner was our Bass Section Leader, Liz. Liz served as More Harmony's only bass for the majority of 2022, appearing at several sing-outs and making sure she was always available for rehearsals, so the chorus was never missing a part. Then, after a singing course in the Summer, she gained three new members to her section and spent the latter part of the year working incredibly hard, helping them get up to speed with Christmas repertoire ahead of a busy programme of events throughout November and December. Hosting extra section practises became a weekly thing for Liz and she was - and continues to be - a constant source of support for her bass section as well as the wider chorus. She is a very worthy winner!

Our other award, handed out each year by our Musical Director, Lesley, is the Pauline Gobbitt Award for Musicality, given in remembrance of one of our founder members. This year, Lesley opted to present the award to Barbara. Barbara joined the chorus in the Spring of 2022 and, despite having sung lead in her last group, she saw that our baritone section was small and joined them 'for a challenge!'. Barbara's enthusiasm shines through in every rehearsal and her performance skills are second to none. Since joining the chorus, she has become a regular on our warm-up rota and our members have gained an enormous amount from her musical knowledge, and her ability to bring a song to life through movement and

facial expressions. Barbara has now returned to singing lead and continues to inspire both her section and the chorus as a whole.

We have lots of exciting plans for the year ahead and we feel like we've really hit the ground running. We can't wait to see where we end up!

Emma Tofi, PRO
More Harmony



Liz, More Harmony's Barbershopper of the Year

Fascinating Rhythm brings the Christmas glitz to Weston-Super-Mare

Before Christmas, Fascinating Rhythm hosted a very successful Christmas Concert in aid of [Ups and Downs SouthWest](#), at The Blakehay Theatre in Weston-Super-Mare.



FR performed songs from their diverse repertoire to a very appreciative audience, from jazz classics, show tunes and pop songs, to Christmas carols (yes - with bells!) by in-house small group, RhythmMix. Home-grown quartets, Ebb Tide and Specs Appeal, also joined us to perform a show section and a Christmas section.

MD, Jo Thorn, said "What an incredible evening! This was our first full concert since before the pandemic, so it was such a joy to work on and perform the majority of our repertoire. We particularly enjoyed blowing the dust off our Christmas songs, and just to be back under the spotlights and singing at the beautiful Blakehay Theatre was pure magic. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who was involved in making this such a special evening for an amazing cause, but particularly the lovely ladies of FR who gave so much of themselves to put on this epic concert".

Shania Davies, a musical theatre graduate commented "Watching the Christmas concert performed by FR was such a joy. The musical genius behind every song, showed in every member of the chorus, and the beautiful voices collated together to create an incredible sound. I would definitely recommend going to watch this chorus; they were vibrant, fun, mesmerising and just brilliant. The quartets also brought a little something new to the show. I've never seen or heard such a beautiful set - I will be watching them again, that's for sure".

FR members voted Ups and Downs as their chosen charity for 2022, and throughout the year, they have participated in fundraising activities. During the show, three young people who have been supported by the charity joined FR on the stage for a Makaton-signed performance of *This is Me* from *The Greatest Showman*. They had learned the signed choreography

when they collaborated with FR in 2019 to produce a [music video](#) which raised awareness of Downs Syndrome. The concert raised £1,346 and the charity's representative, Michelle Bull, enthused after the show, "We feel so lucky to have had the support of Fascinating Rhythm this year. They have really gone the extra mile to not only raise funds for Ups and Downs Southwest, but to also raise our profile through their website and social media channels. With no statutory funding at all, we are solely reliant on public donations and grants and every little bit really does make a difference to our families and our children and young people. The money raised by FR through the year will go directly towards our children and young people's events, allowing us to create more opportunities to build up their skills, knowledge, and social networks".

**Chloe Roberts, PRO
Fascinating Rhythm**



Fascinating Rhythm's Ups and Downs concert

GEM Connection wrapped up 2022 in style

During a busy December, we had our Christmas Open Evening where we held a raffle and received donations for Gem's chosen charity of the year, ovarian cancer charity, Ovacom.

Then on a cold and rainy day, the Gems wrapped up warm for our final singout of 2022 which was a Christmas event in Derby city centre. We took along our charity collection tins and raised over £400 for Ovacom.

Now it's 2023 and The Gems are preparing to celebrate our 25th birthday in May, followed by our 25th anniversary show in June. Watch this space for updates! So, we have lots of hard work ahead. After mic warming at Convention in 2022, we're also note bashing the songs for our convention package in October. We can't wait to get on the Convention stage and perform our socks off.

**Jenny Smedley PRO
GEM Connection**



The Gems, all wrapped up



GEM Connection Open Night

Having a Winter Ball with Welwyn Harmony

Like many choruses, Welwyn Harmony has kept busy since Convention in late October. We've had a number of successful singouts, both as small quartet and octet groups at local Women's Institute groups, and as our full chorus over the Christmas period.

In December we hosted a joint concert with Shannon Express in Hitchin, which also featured quartets Nightingale and Loose Chickens.

Despite a very chilly, icy day coinciding with some World Cup football, we had a small but enthusiastic audience who helped us get into the Christmas spirit with their participation with the carols and the 12 days of Christmas, complete with sleigh bells and actions!

Nightingale is a new quartet made up of Welwyn Harmony's MD Nickie James, Assistant Director Cath Dear, Tenor Jules Jones and Amersham A Cappella's MD Helen Lappert. Formed during

the pandemic, this was their first public performance and despite battling illness on the day, they gave a beautiful rendition of *Come What May* followed by a lively and cheeky *Ain't Nobody's Business!*

More recently, Welwyn Harmony sang at The Chambers Grove Winter Ball Christmas party. Residents and their families dressed up in their best sparkly outfits and we donned our famous flapper dresses once more, to celebrate together through music. A highlight of the occasion was singing *Bohemian Rhapsody*, especially for one audience member as we knew it was his all-time favourite song. He was blown away by our performance ('*any way the wind blows oooooh*').

We're looking forward to welcoming some new members to chorus at our



Love to Sing course in February and March. As ever, follow us on [social media](#) to keep up to date with our latest singing adventures.

**Emma Harper, PRO Trustee
Welwyn Harmony**

New LABBS members London City Singers and Meantime Chorus – Live in London!

As we head into Spring, and the weather warms up, do you dare to remember the dark days of winter? Just for a moment, I'd like to take you back in time, to a chilly December afternoon when [London City Singers](#) and [Meantime Chorus](#) warmed us all up with their first [live concert](#) since 2019. Led by Simon Arnott, Musical Director, the two choruses got Christmas underway with a bang.

To mark London City Singers' arrival in LABBS, Natalie Feddon and Jill Cook presented LCS with their pins and membership just before the show,

which the chorus marked with a [tag](#) – of course! (*Almost There* from *The Princess and the Frog*, arr. Simon Arnott)

In a two-and-a-half-hour extravaganza, we were treated to Christmas favourites old and new, including *I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas* (who doesn't?) and *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. We all joined in with gusto in traditional congregational singing and enjoyed LCS's interpretation of *Vuelie* from *Frozen*, alongside Meantime's fun rendition of *I've Got a Golden Ticket* from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Contributions from quartets added to the musical safari in a great variety show.

It's great to see how live music brings us all together. We spotted folks from [Amersham A Cappella](#) and [Capital Chorus](#), amongst others, and Alan Hughes from BABS was guest of honour at the evening show. The interval mulled wine and snacks kept us all going, and the music swept us along so when it came time to head out into the dark, we danced and sang our way to our trains and tubes, full of festive spirit!

**Lan O'Connor, Secretary
London City Singers**



The Red Rosettes, blowing the roof off!

How quickly the seasons change!

Christmas was looming in our last edition and here we are with Spring around the corner (even if no one has told Mother Nature!).

The Red Rosettes were delighted to achieve second place in the Lancashire Choir of the Year Competition. As the only all-female and a cappella choir, we felt very proud to reach the finals. It was amazing to be back onstage competing and we thoroughly enjoyed it. Of course, our loyal supporters said we were robbed, bless 'em! One (only slightly biased) husband said the power and energy of our opening chord nearly blew the roof off the theatre! Given that

he has worked in the theatre for over 40 years, we will take that!

We received a beautiful crystal trophy and a free coaching session with Tim Uffindell. The session proved to be extremely enjoyable, very physical, inspirational, and thought provoking. If I tell you we sang with our tongues sticking out at one point to improve our diction, it will give you an idea! Tim indicated that the competition may become an annual event, in which case, Rossendale Male Voice Choir, we are coming for you!

We ended the year with some wonderful Christmas shows, performed in front of the local Mayor, and involving a local school choir who were coached by our

very own tenor, Stacy Bridge. It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm on the children's faces.

Our final concert was as guests of the award-winning Leyland Brass Band, in the historic Leyland Motor Museum. What a privilege, and a wonderful way to round off a very busy year which ranged from a Bandstand Bonanza (see [Autumn 2022 VoiceBox](#), page 21), inspirational coaches, brilliant newbies and booming brass bands.

Life's a song, we sing it.

Ann Atkin, The Red Rosettes



The Red Rosettes , performing at the Lancashire Choir of the Year Competition



Coach Tim Uffindell



The Red Rosettes being coached by Tim Uffindell

Singing into Spring

Returning from the fabulous 2022 LABBS

Convention, GraceNotes Acapella jumped straight into Christmas singouts with barely any time to catch our breath!

We love our festive repertoire (and our sparkly Christmas jumpers!), and enjoyed singing together in our local area, both indoors and wrapped up warm outside, more often than not, surrounded by Christmas trees and twinkling lights. Our schedule was jam-packed, and we even got scouted to sing at another event, whilst we were mid-set! As always, singing in the stunning and historic Great Barn at Buckland Abbey, Devon - which was transformed into a magical winter woodland, complete with 100 Christmas trees - was a winter highlight.

At our AGM in January, we not only thanked the outgoing committee members and welcomed the new, but we had the opportunity to look forward to the year ahead. It seems that our committee have not only been making their own New Year's Resolutions, but have made lots of exciting plans for GraceNotes, too.

Collaboration and community are our main focuses this year and we want to celebrate the wonderful music made down here in the South West, by singing with as many regional choruses as we can at community festivals, events and concerts. We were so inspired by the LABBS Unconventional Convention regional hubs in 2021, and really enjoyed hosting the South West one, so we plan to host another regional barbershop event later this year.



GraceNotes celebrate their success at Saltash Music Festival, winning not only their class, but also the awards for best barbershop performance, and best vocal performance of the festival.

We started 2023 well, competing with local barbershop choruses at the annual Saltash Music Festival where we won an award with our highest score yet. Singing our Convention package out in public again, for the first time since Bournemouth, was a huge high! Our official chorus photographer (and bari Elspeth's husband), Malcolm Halloway, was on hand to capture the moment as we celebrated in GraceNotes style with a silly selfie!

As barbershoppers will know, there's usually a song in your repertoire that

other choruses are guaranteed to know, and so we rounded off the evening singing *Can You Feel The Love Tonight* with BABS choruses, the [Kingsmen](#) and [Ocean City Sound](#). And what a wonderful rendition it was!

Spring brings in the new and this year is no different. New members, new barbershop friends, new songs, new events, and new opportunities to enjoy our amazing artform. Here's to 2023 and all it will bring!

**Shellie Joynes, PRO
GraceNotes Acapella**



GraceNotes Acapella at Saltash Music Festival, with BABS choruses the Kingsmen and Ocean City Sound

Silver Lining sparkles into 2023

Three months later, and while it is early spring, we can still reflect on a great Christmas, and an exciting start to 2023.

Our Friends and Family Concert was a great success. Santa delivered his presents to the children, and kept the adults entertained with jokes and the football scores!

Our Fundraising Coordinator, the lovely Lynne, presented a cheque to our charity of the year, the Motor Neurone Disease Association, who do such great work locally and are a charity close to the hearts of many at Silver Lining.

Early 2023 meant giving our fantastic MD, Sara J, a couple of days away from us to attend the BABS Directors Academy. Old friends and networks were renewed, and new friends were made. Apparently, a 'lovely, nerdy time' was had by all!

We are so looking forward to learning new things and refreshing old things over the next few months. And, as we start the new year with our new competition song (no, I'm not telling you what it is!), we also see a new bari and a new bass join the family of Silvers. So welcome to Mereta and Annette - we hope you enjoy your first summer with us.

Heather Morton, PRO
Silver Lining



Lynne presents our cheque



The Silvers' Membership Secretary Liz Mountain-Town, with new members Mereta Brown and Annette Maxted, and Chairlady Janice White (L-R)



Santa delivers at our Friends and Family Concert

Signature A Cappella Singers Love to Sing: six months on

In June 2022, Signature A Cappella Singers decided to grip the recruitment bull by the horns and ran a Love to Sing course, the first we had done in a number of years. It consisted of a five-week programme incorporating note learning, singing technique, and performance where our 'signets' and the chorus embarked upon learning a new song. Everything then culminated in a singout and celebration which friends and family were invited to attend. We also had the pleasure of welcoming LABBS Chair, Natalie Feddon, to the singout, and our LABBS Liaison Officer, Lynne Owen.

Well....what an evening! Signature was able to share some of our repertoire songs with an audience again, something we had not done in a while due to lockdown, and our signets, despite lots of nerves and some trepidation, did a fantastic job with our newly learned song. We were even lucky enough to feature on Natalie's [vlog!](#)

But this was only the beginning. We had our new recruits hooked and we were ready to welcome them to the world of a cappella singing! Of our 30 course attendees, we had 13 wanting to audition (we were so pleased!) and the process started. We got right underway with our audition process and after a few weeks, we welcomed several lovely ladies to Signature as full members.

Big thanks must go to our wonderful recruitment team who did a fabulous job getting us ready for the Love to Sing course, as well as keeping the chorus and our signets on track throughout and after the process. Also huge thanks to our music team for the many hours of support given to our new recruits during the auditions; a demanding but rewarding process! Although lots of hours have been dedicated to ensure the success of the course, and the onboarding and support to our new members, we are undoubtedly sure that it was absolutely worth every second! We continue to grow and develop together as a chorus, and look forward to what 2023 will bring!

Rachel Pickard, PRO
Signature A Cappella Singers



Our new members breathe a sigh of relief following their successful auditions



Signature A Cappella Singers, and their Love to Sing signets

VEEL GELUK Barberlicious!



Barbs are off to Holland Harmony 2023 in March, and Crystal Chords could not be more proud of them.

We are all cheering for you, competitor number 22! Veel geluk!

Crystal
Chords
.org.uk

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check out the [events page](#) on the LABBS website for more details of events in 2023-2024, and to subscribe to the LABBS events calendar.

Start date	Title	General Location
Fri, 24 Mar 2023 to Sat, 25 Mar 2023	Holland Harmony's Sing! 2023 Festival	Netherlands
Sat, 25 Mar 2023	LABBS Council Meeting and AGM	London
Thu, 13 Apr 2023 to Sun, 16 Apr 2023	SABS Convention - En Armonía 2023	Spain (place TBC)
Fri, 28 Apr 2023 to Sun, 30 Apr 2023	LABBS Harmony College 2023	Nottingham
Fri, 12 May 2023 to Sun, 14 May 2023	Sweet Adelines Region 31 Convention	Coventry
Thu, 18 May 2023 to Sun, 21 May 2023	BinG! Music Festival (Convention)	Dortmund
Fri, 26 May 2023 to Mon, 29 May 2023	BABS Convention, Sing2023	Bournemouth
Sat, 24 Jun 2023	LABBS Quartet Prelims contest	Coventry
Sun, 25 Jun 2023	LABBS Quartet Prelims coaching day	Coventry
Sun, 2 Jul 2023 to Sun, 9 Jul 2023	BHS International Convention	Louisville, KY
Sun, 23 Jul 2023 to Sun, 30 Jul 2023	BHS Harmony University	New Orleans
Fri, 29 Sep 2023 to Sun, 1 Oct 2023	LABBS & BABS Joint Judges Seminar	TBD
Fri, 6 Oct 2023 to Sun, 8 Oct 2023	IABS Convention	Killarney
Fri, 27 Oct 2023 to Sun, 29 Oct 2023	LABBS Convention	Harrogate
Mon, 30 Oct 2023 to Sat, 4 Nov 2023	Sweet Adelines International	Louisville, KY
Wed, 8 Nov 2023 to Sat, 11 Nov 2023	Harmony Inc. Convention	Grand Rapids, MI
Tue, 9 Jan 2024 to Sun, 14 Jan 2024	BHS Midwinter Convention	New York, NY
Mon, 1 Jul 2024 to Sun, 7 Jul 2024	BHS International Convention	Cleveland, OH
Wed, 6 Nov 2024 to Sat, 9 Nov 2024	Harmony Inc. Convention	Louisville, KY

VoiceBox: The Contributor's Guide

Many of our clubs have their AGMs during the early part of the year and so I get to meet loads of new PROs while putting together Spring VoiceBox.

It's wonderful that so many of you get stuck in and send me great copy, but I also know some newer PROs can find it a little daunting, and have questions about what, when and how. Never fear, help is at hand!

What: Anything barbershop related! I chatted to lots of you over Convention weekend about what kinds of things you'd like to see in VoiceBox, and got some fab feedback. A question I was asked several times though, was 'Isn't it just about singouts?'. Well, yes and no. Singout news is always welcomed, but if you have something else to share about the wonderful world of barbershop, that's welcomed too! The usual limit is 350 words and two photos, but if you'd like to submit more than that, please just email me and I'll see what space I can make for you.

When: Copy deadlines are always the last Friday in January, April, and July, and the Friday following Convention. Specific dates are published in each edition of VoiceBox, usually somewhere near the front.

How: Please send your submissions to voicebox@labbs.org.uk. Text can either be in an attached Word document or



typed into the body of your email. You don't need to format your text at all; the printer takes care of that for us. Please also let me know your name, club, and role so I can credit you properly. Photos need to be sent as email attachments, rather than embedded into the text of your article. To ensure your photos are the best quality they can be, they need to be 1MB+ and the original rather than a copy downloaded from a website or social media, or sent through a messaging app (e.g. WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger). The easiest way to achieve this is to get the person who took the photo to email it to me straight from the device it was taken on. Please remember to let me know who's in your photos, or if you have a specific caption you'd like me to use.

Need a little more guidance? I had great fun last year making some short video guides with More Harmony's Lesley and Emma. If you want to check them out, click on the links: [Intro](#); [Great Content](#); [Fab Photos](#); [Terrific Writing](#). There's also an awesome Facebook page for LABBS PROs and media people, which you can find [here](#), or by searching for LABBS PRO & SM Network.

If you have any other questions which aren't covered here, either now or in the future, please do just ping me an email – I'm happy to help!

Mel Baber
VoiceBox Editor

