

# Voice Box

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

Autumn 2022 £4



## Excitement!

### Prelims, the Conga, and The Great Bandstand Bonanza



#### In This Edition

Convention updates, new quartet support role, D&I music advice,  
and more!

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# Hello again, and welcome to the latest edition of VoiceBox

**It has been so wonderful** for me to visit so many choruses over the summer; thank you for making me welcome. I have been up and down the country meeting members and watching rehearsals, and I am so proud to see the love and care you show to each other, and how each chorus supports its members. It's great to see the pride you show in your music and the high esteem you hold for LABBS, too.

Besides visiting our clubs, I have had the pleasure of going to the BABS convention and seeing the very entertaining Meantime pick up the gold medal in the chorus competition. I am so pleased that they have agreed to perform at the LABBS Convention in October, so you will get a chance to see them alongside the quartet Limelight, who took gold in a very fierce competition.

I have had two trips up to Warwick. One for the Sweet Adeline convention where I saw the quartet Muddy Stilettos - who have been together for only a year - win gold. That should give hope to all you budding quartets! Forth Valley Chorus won the chorus gold medal and put on a spectacular show.

My second visit was for our own Prelims. What a treat to see over 30 quartets taking part; you could see the sheer joy of being back together singing. Congratulations to everyone who took part and particularly to In House who took first position.

Alison Thompson and I had a fantastic visit to the BHS Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, watching the first Everyone in Harmony competition. We had a meeting with CEO Marty Monson to talk about our Alliance agreement, which will give our top chorus and quartet the opportunity to compete in

future BHS competitions. I was so pleased to visit the rehearsals of Parkside Harmony too, meeting the wonderful Sean Devine, and Central Standard with MD Rob Mance. You can read more about my visit on page 12. The greatest wonder was to see women on the BHS stage, competing on an equal footing. It made the competition really entertaining.

Seeing all these competitions has made me really excited about our own Convention. See you in Bournemouth!

**Natalie Feddon,  
LABBS Chair**



## Not long now!

**So, who's excited for Convention?** I know those of you who'll be crossing the stage next month have been working hard on your Convention packages for many months. You've booked your hotels, you've picked your costumes (and if you're anything like my chorus, you'll have discussed and agreed that there's no such thing as too much sparkle!), and you're raring to go.

I know too, that an army of LABBS volunteers are working hard behind the scenes to get everything ready for you. Here at the editor's desk, I've been busy working with the M&C Team to put together all sorts of wonderful things, including your 'At a Glance' Weekend Guide, and I'm super excited about what's in store. From singing to socialising to fringe events, there'll be so much to get involved with.

As I mentioned in the Summer edition, since becoming your editor it's been a joy to get to know so many of you through your emails and submissions. So, as well as enjoying

everything our wonderful organisation has to offer over the weekend, Bournemouth is going to be a great opportunity for me to put some faces to names. If you see me, please do come and say hello!

Bournemouth 2022 really is shaping up to be an amazing, colourful, and jubilant return to in-person Conventions, and I'm so looking forward to it. All that's left now is for me to wish my very best to everyone who'll be performing over the weekend - you're all going to be amazing! See you there!

**Mel Baber, VoiceBox Editor**



# Amershamly fabulous at 40!

## It's time to paint the town ruby red

because Amersham A Cappella has officially reached the big Four-Oh, and after two years of sitting on the singing sidelines, we're crazy happy to be able to celebrate our major milestone anniversary. There's an awful lot to get all nostalgic about. We've packed so many memorable moments into the forty years since we started out as Chiltern Harmony.

On top of all the LABBS medals and trophies we've been fortunate enough to win, we've competed in Holland, Spain (where we won the 2018 SABS Gold) and Sweden. We even won The Good Housekeeping Choir of the Year in 2010, and the Sainsbury's Choir of The Year in 1996. And how could we forget winning Gold as the mixed chorus A Kind of Magic with The Cottontown Chorus at BABS in 2018?

We've had some pretty extraordinary experiences in our time too. Like pitching

on the pitch at Twickenham before an England match in 2012, wearing wacky rugby socks under our lovely red dresses! Or starring in a video for Innocent Smoothies at Sainsbury's for the launch of the Big Knit the same year. And then of course there was our (literally) out of

this world, two-night, space-age show at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2018.

But with a trip to the European and LABBS Conventions, and a show with Royal Harmonics plus special guests to prepare for this year, the question was how to mark the occasion without sending our schedule spiralling out of control?

We had loads of amazing ideas, but in the end we just had to focus on saying a big Amersham thank you to the people who've been there for us over the years, with some Community events (starting with our royally good Chesham Platinum Jubilee Street Party singout) plus a fab party with lots of singing (and cake) for our families and some of our former members. We can't wait to share all the photos with you.

So cheers, and here's to many more years in fabulous harmony together.

**Hils Apicella, PRO,**  
**Amersham A Cappella**



## Quartet Corner

# Quartet Liaison – announcement!

## LABBS is thrilled to announce

the creation of a new role on the team, which has been created to provide all-round support to all LABBS quartets, both competing and non-competing.

Hannah Barber will take on the role of Quartet Liaison, effective immediately,



Hannah Barber, LABBS Quartet Liaison

and we are sure she will be full of useful advice and information, and ready to help out where she can.

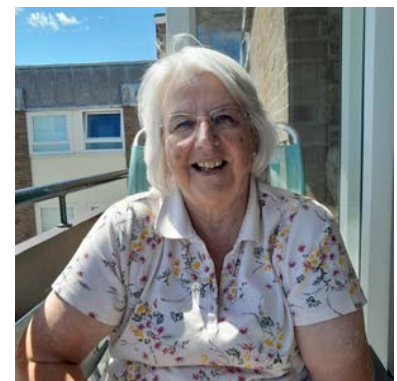
Hannah is an experienced LABBS member, double gold medal quartetter, and LABBS Board member, and is passionate about the encouragement and development of all LABBS quartets.

The role of Quartet Liaison will run alongside the current LABBS Quartet Registrar, and the fabulous Rita Wood will still be taking care of all quartet administration and registration for contests; please do keep using [quartetregistrar@labbs.org.uk](mailto:quartetregistrar@labbs.org.uk) for contest registration, etc.

We hope that with this additional role, quartets will have a single point of contact where they can direct all questions, concerns, and suggestions regarding all manner of things! Whether it be a new quartet looking for tips on

how to start, or our Gold Medalists needing to know what to do next, Hannah is there to help.

You can reach Hannah on [quartetssupport@labbs.org.uk](mailto:quartetssupport@labbs.org.uk)



Rita Wood, LABBS Quartet Registrar

# Quartet Prelims and coaching weekend

**We were so pleased to be back judging** live contest at Prelims. It felt as if we'd never been away and entirely different all at once. We had a panel of nine scoring judges, several shadow judges (to practise and experience the contest before coaching the next day) and of course, Contest Admin who set up and ran the whole contest smoothly. We were pleased with the consistency of the scoring across the board. This is of course, what we train for at our seminars, and at the online sessions we have been running throughout the pandemic.

There is feedback (and feed forward) to be digested and considered, with many good ideas and suggestions, but I'm sure you can imagine, for everyone who said they didn't like the delay and moving venues for the results, there was someone who said it was good to be able to go and get a drink and have a specific time to come back!

The paired quartets coaching model seemed as successful as ever, with many celebrations and much progress made. It is heartwarming as a coach to see the bond that develops between quartets in this situation, and how supportive and encouraging everyone is of each other.



Prelims attendees, excited to be back!

So, thank you to all the events team, the couriers, the judges, the MCs, the supporters, and most of all, to the enthusiastic, excited, maybe a tiny bit nervous, well-prepared quartets who performed for us. It was a truly wonderful experience, and we cannot wait for Convention!

**The E & J Team for the weekend:**

**Contest Admin:** Jax Mumford, Rita Wood, Gail Grainger, Denise Addis with Cath Hunter shadowing

**Music:** Emma Shanks, Alex de Bruin, Angela Sanchez Rosemurgey with Debi Cox shadowing

**Performance:** Anna Conochie (who stepped in at the last minute, thank you Anna), Rachael Murphy, Kirsty Williams with Rachel Small shadowing.

**Singing:** Nancy Kelsall, Craig Kehoe, Sarah Netherton with Alison Thompson, Jen Carson-Fox and Emma McManus all shadowing

**Alison Thompson, Chair, Education & Judging Committee**



Prelims first place quartet, IN HOUSE, being interviewed by LABBS volunteers

## A Pitch in Time at LABBS Prelims

**In a moment of newbie quartet madness**, we entered our first ever competition, LABBS Prelims. We've been together for approximately 18 months and went to Prelims with absolutely no expectations, just the hope of spending a great weekend together with people we admire, and who we could learn from to progress and improve as a quartet. We certainly did all that: We were warmly welcomed, encouraged, and inspired by each and every quartet we saw on the Saturday. We went on stage at 11.25am and it honestly wasn't as scary as we thought it would be. The supportive audience was friendly, with lots of smiling faces as we walked in. We sang After You've Gone and Smile, enjoyed every moment, and came off stage feeling euphoric. We were thrilled

to achieve a score of 1120 in our first competition, with 62.2% overall. There was much celebration in the evening with scrummy fish and chips and a little drinky or two.



A Pitch in Time - Bari Jo, bass Elspeth, lead Mary and tenor Tracy

On Sunday we had the privilege of receiving excellent coaching by amazing, inspirational members of

the judging panel, Angela Sanchez-Rosemurgey, Rachel Murphy, Alison Thompson & Jen Carson, who all gave us such encouraging feedback for which we are extremely grateful.

Huge thanks to the fabulous Jenny Savory and John Palmer for helping us start our quartet journey, and Spinnaker Chorus for being so supportive - we love you. Many thanks also to The Pitchpipers and Cascade - Southdown Ladies Harmony Chorus for your kindness and encouragement. Thank you to everyone at LABBS for such a fun, exciting and enjoyable weekend of harmony and friendship; we had the most wonderful time, and we can't wait to do it all again in 2023. Like Arnie said, "We'll be back!"

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

# Barberlicious are back at Quartet Prelims after a three year gap!

**We were excited to head to Warwick University** to start our LABBS 2022 contest campaign in June, and had the privilege of opening the LABBS Quartet Competition with a new package of songs. Being drawn first meant an 5.15am start to the day, ready for a 6am two-hour rehearsal to warm up and practise our Tango moves for Please Mr Brown. It was great to bump into old quartet friends and catch up with everyone, as well as meeting new quartets who had formed over the lockdown.

Being drawn first meant we were able to sneak in a cheeky post-performance glass of fizz, before enjoying watching lots of quartets cross the stage and cheering them on, especially Hat Trick who are also our Crystal Chords buddies. We were super proud of their fabulous performance as we still remember our first time crossing the LABBS Prelims

stage, way back in 2013.

After a long but wonderful day watching quartet singing and live draws, we managed to fit in a quick dinner and a bottle of fizz, before heading off to the Quartet Party on Saturday night to complete our day.

As in previous years, one of the things we enjoyed most about Prelims weekend is that on Sunday, we had the opportunity to receive invaluable coaching and feedback about our fabulous third place results, from our LABBS judges. We were coached by Alex De Bruin (Music Category), Kirsty Williams (Performance Category) and Alison Thompson and Emma McManus (Singing Category), and had the privilege of sharing the experience with IN HOUSE Quartet.

So, we are back doing what we love after an extended break. We've really missed



singing together and we can't wait to see you all in Bournemouth, for the Quartet Semi-Finals.

We'd like to congratulate all the quartets who made the top 18 slots, and send good luck wishes to our fellow semi-finalists! See you in October.

**Anna, AMB, Beck and Bushy, Barberlicious**

## Barbershop bubble

**What a weekend!** It's the Monday after Prelims, and yes, we're still in the barbershop bubble! I'm sure you all know what we mean!

We were so excited to take first place at the 2022 Prelims. Everyone who crossed the stage was fantastic, and what an experience to finally be able to compete again after three years. It's soooooo good to be back!

A special thank you must go to everyone who helped this weekend. Without those amazing volunteers, we'd be lost! LABBS is a fantastic organisation and one we are certainly proud to be members of, as a quartet and a chorus. A shout out too, to the coaches who supported all the quartets on the Sunday. We had a brilliant day with the Barberlicious girls, and we're looking forward to sharing our newly learned, pelvic twisting choreo move; by the time this edition of VoiceBox is published, we might have stopped waking up singing their catchy uppy! It's an earworm!

If you haven't already, make sure you check out the [LABBS YouTube channel](#) to watch all of the quartets from Prelims weekend. Well done to the 16 who made it through to the semi-finals Bournemouth - we look forward to seeing you all then!

Keep up to date with IN HOUSE QUARTET at @ INHOUSEquartet on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) & [Twitter](#).



**Julie Phillips, IN HOUSE**

# A day to remember for Prelims first-timer, Emma

## June 25th 2022 will be forever etched

**on my mind!** I'd never sung a note of barbershop until January 2020, and we all know what happened next! But, I was so lucky to discover a group of wonderful women, and despite covid and lockdowns, I was able to immerse myself in the fantastic world of barbershop!

When our names were called at Prelims we were ecstatic, and to watch our dear friends IN HOUSE walk away with first place, well that was the icing on the cake! And, I got to sing a tag with two of the Sharrow Vale Blues - two to go!

On behalf of Four Crying Out Loud, I'd like to thank Jo Braham, Rob Barber, Cheshire Chord Company and Olivia Williamson, along with many others, including LABBS, for a fab day at Prelims. Congratulations to everyone who competed - you were all AMAZING! We can't wait to see everyone in October, and share the stage with you all.

**Emma, Four Crying Out Loud**



Four Crying Out Loud: bari Emma Stones, tenor Alison Tyzack, lead Jo Robley, and bass Gill Orchard

## Anything is possible

### After three years, Jabberwocky were

**so excited** to finally be able to compete at Prelims again! Since June 2019, we have been working hard on our performance, singing and blend - despite all the challenges of zoom, social distancing, weather, Covid, etc..

We were drawn 5th, and so decided to travel down to Warwick on Friday evening. After a relaxing evening we had a leisurely breakfast and a warm up outside near the lake, surrounded by geese and duck poo. Then, into 'the system' we went. Nerves pretty much under control and feeling quietly confident, we did our best and felt it went as well as could be expected. The stage was pretty dead to sing on, but having been singing outside, this didn't deter us too much. It was a real boost knowing that many of the chorus were

watching the live stream and sending good vibes, and seeing the audience's and judges' lovely smiling faces willing us on was a real help too!

After we had performed, we went for lunch and watched some of the other quartets perform. It was lovely to be able to watch live music again, and to catch up with old friends! Finally, time for the draw and results. We were looking forward to the evening shin dig but never in a million years thought our name would get called. But it did. To our utter surprise, we won the Tapestry award for Most Improved Quartet! All our hard work had paid off and it just shows that 'Anything is possible', and the sign on the hotel wall seemed to sum up our weekend perfectly!

**Victoria Perry, Natalie Kendrew, Amy Crampton and Catrina 'Trot' Webb, Jabberwocky**



Anything IS possible!



Jabberwocky

# Hard work, harmony, and ice lollies!

## July 16th saw the start of the hottest weekend

recorded in the UK. Most of the country were gathering in front of fans, sharing ice lollies, and lounging about in the sun. This group of brave young people decided to band together in the heart of Birmingham for our LABBS Youth Chorus retreat (ice lollies included!).

It was a weekend of remarkable progress, piecing together our convention set, and I don't think I will tire from hearing our members shout "WE'RE GOING TO WIN!" after every run-through.

The weekend did not go without stress or panic, from the original accommodation cancelling our booking less than 24 hours before, to train strikes in the morning. However, none of that mattered once we were with our wonderful friends making amazing harmony.

The LABBS Youth Chorus only rehearses a handful of times throughout the year and so when we do get to meet, we really go for it! At 10am sharp, we began with an empowering and energizing physical warm up, then moved on to the faithful 'pancake run' of our 2 songs. By 4pm our hearts were full, and so were our tummies (thanks to the aforementioned ice lolly break!).



Ellie Blackeby (front right), and the LABBS Youth Chorus 'sponge brains'

The Saturday evening found us in what could only be described as a 90s school disco, except it was full of 18-30 year-old barbershoppers, and the floor was significantly less sticky; the perfect way to wind down after a full day of singing and choreography!

Sunday was just as jam-packed, as we welcomed coach Ellie Blackeby into the mix. Ellie immediately fit in and put our 'sponge brains' (her words, not ours!) to the test to ensure the message of the music was clear, and the chords were even clearer. Needless to say, we would definitely welcome her back.

We finished our weekend exhausted, confident, and more than a bit sweaty, but I doubt we would have it any other way.

Huge thanks need to go to Lamorna (Youth Coordinator), Ros (MD), Ellie (coach), Bethany (venue organizing), Tash (choreographer extraordinaire), Lucy (last minute hotel guru), and all our amazing members!

**Sarah Thompson, Bass Section Leader, LABBS Youth Chorus**



LABBS Youth Chorus enjoying their well-deserved ice lolly break

# Junior Fascinating Rhythm – taking 2022 by storm!

## Junior Fascinating

**Rhythm** has had an amazing 2022 so far, with several successes at music festivals and singouts in the South Gloucestershire area. These amazing young singers are talented vocalists and their 'big sister' chorus, Fascinating Rhythm, is hugely proud of them.

### Thornbury Eisteddfod

In March, the girls competed in the Thornbury Eisteddfod as part of [Thornbury Arts Festival 2022](#).



Junior Fascinating Rhythm on stage

The juniors (aged 7-10) were Commended for their performance of Hakuna Matata from Disney's The Lion King and Janie Mama, a Jamaican children's song, and were awarded a trophy for being the Best Performing Choir in their class (Choirs 11 and under).

The seniors (aged 11-16) received a Distinction for their performance of Lullabye by Billy Joel, and ELO's Mr Blue

Sky. In recognition of their musicality, the adjudicator presented them with two trophies: Best Performing Choir in their class (Choirs 18 and under), and Best Choir Overall in Competition.

During the Presentation Concert, Junior FR were presented with the Robert Hall Bursary of £100 in recognition of their outstanding performance, and Kate Phillipson-Masters, Chair of the Eisteddfod Committee, said "It was so good to have the Junior FR girls perform at the concert. They really are a most impressive group."

### Iron Acton May Day

[Junior FR](#) had a fabulous day entertaining audiences at the [Iron Acton May Day](#). Their Director, Wendy Howse, said "It's been three years since we last performed at Iron Acton May Day, due to Covid, so we were

very excited to be back at the event again. Plus, I had the privilege of singing a duet with one of the girls and realised my lifelong dream of performing on the side of a truck!"

### Yate Rocks...

On a soggy Sunday in June, JFR entertained an intimate audience at the [Yate Rocks... in the Park Festival](#) from another truck-side stage.



Junior Fascinating Rhythm Seniors

JFR unleashed their inner 'rock chicks' with a set that included the Guns n Roses classic Sweet Child of Mine, Hold Back the River by James Bay, a medley of Queen songs, and Skin by Rag n Bone Man. The girls then joined voices with the [Raysfield School](#) Choir to sing one of their favourite anthems, ABBA's Thank You for the Music.

**Chloe Roberts, PRO, Fascinating Rhythm**



Junior Fascinating Rhythm Juniors



# JUBILATION LABBS CONVENTION 2022

## Jubilation

**We are back**, and the theme of this year's Convention is Jubilation.

But what is Jubilation? It's a celebration of the joy of Convention and all the colour it brings to our lives. It's not just the colour of music, it's about the colour we bring when we are together.

The theme for this year's afterglow is colour. Bring your colour; bring the colour of Convention. Dressed up or dressed down, be bright, be bold, and be colourful!

Attending Convention has always been an enjoyable experience. If you're not performing with your quartet or chorus, consider making the trip anyway as a day out on the south coast seldom gets any better. Even autumnal Bournemouth has more of an appeal when LABBS is in town!





# Volunteering for Convention

**Coming to Bournemouth? Got a couple of hours to lend a hand?**

Whether you're performing or not, we'd like to invite you to join our team of volunteers, to help us deliver the best possible Convention, create fabulous experiences, and make great memories.

With a couple of thousand delegates, two shows, three contests, multiple social media channels, live streams, people to greet, a busy reception, and numerous events happening across Convention weekend, it's a busy time! We have a cracking team covering all the Convention roles, but could do with more support.

We need help in the following areas:

- Reception Desk
- Meet and Greet
- Social Media
- Steward
- General help

What will you need to do?

You'll be supporting the core team by covering for them when they need a break. You may also be on a post for an hour or so. You can volunteer as much time as you can spare; all we ask is that you enjoy your Convention weekend, and put your performance first!

Complete the form here to join the team: <https://tinyurl.com/yeah-Im-ready-to-help>

## Bring your bras to Bournemouth!

### Look out for pop-up bra bank bins at Convention

this year, where you can deposit your used, new or surplus bras to help raise funds for Against Breast Cancer, an organisation which aims to increase the survival rates of all breast cancer patients and ultimately, discover a vaccine against breast cancer. You can read more about Against Breast Cancer's brilliant work, [here](#).



**LADIES!  
GIVE US YOUR  
SUPPORT**

**AG INST** breast cancer | Bra Bank

Deposit your used, new or surplus bras into our bra bank. Give them a new lease of life - raising vital funds for research into secondary spread breast cancer.

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For more information, or to order your own bra bank email [recycling@againstbreastcancer.org.uk](mailto:recycling@againstbreastcancer.org.uk) or go online at [againstbreastcancer.org.uk](http://againstbreastcancer.org.uk)

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# Eurovision style

**The Convention experience** has evolved to make sitting in the audience the most exciting experience possible. The lights, stage, drama, colour of the contest, and the abundance of goosebump moments makes it the best experience possible if you're an avid fan of barbershop music.

This year, Convention is being given an additional layer of enjoyment by evolving an idea we had in 2019. Back then, Llandudno was the venue and the theme was all things Welsh. The LABBS Marketing and Communications Team created video intros for the competitors as they took to the risers or crossed the stage.

This year, choruses and quartets have been invited to submit intro videos that'll be stitched together with Convention

theme footage, giving an additional dimension to the viewing experience in the auditorium.

We asked choruses and quartets to be inspired by the intros that run before each competitor of the European Song Contest. No Euro cheese: just another dimension to introduce the chorus or quartet, and a bit of fun for the auditorium.

The brief to choruses and quartets revolves around creativity and colour, with the freedom to drop hints or reference to their sets, if they so choose. The response so far has been really positive!

Get watching those side screens and keep an eye out for a montage of video intros after Convention!

## The Competition Process: A first-timers guide

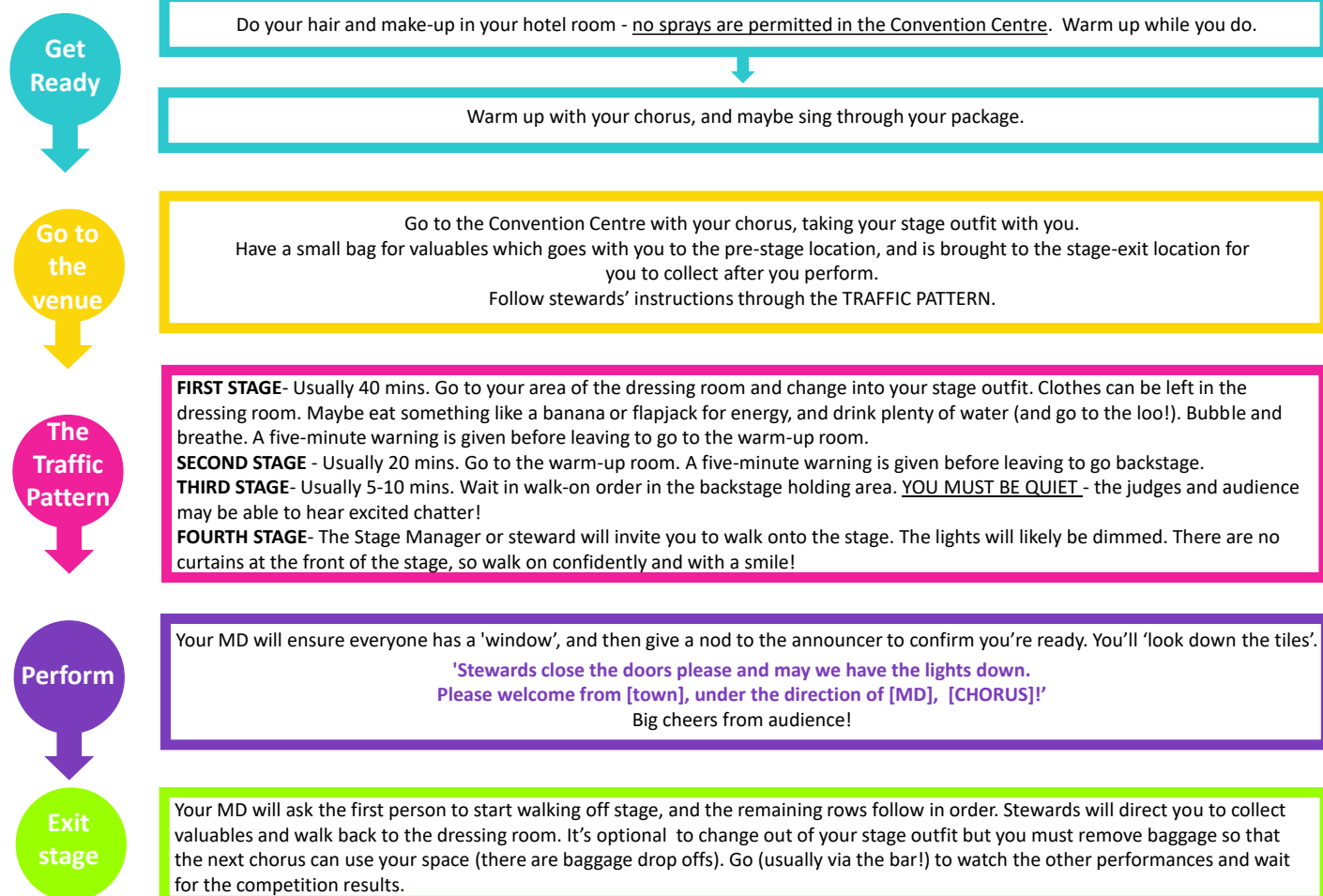
**Convention will soon be here**, so no doubt you'll be putting the final touches to your performance over the next few weeks, and getting excited about what the weekend has in store.

Although we've all been focussed on our packages for many months, and know exactly what to expect and what to do when our MD gives us that first, all-important direction, for some of our newer members, what happens before we perform, and straight after, is a bit of a mystery. With that

in mind, I got together with Convention Shows Manager and seasoned competitor, Jo Stevenson, to give our first-timers an idea of what typically happens on either side of a performance.

The process is straightforward, and similar for both choruses and quartets. Stewards will be on hand to guide you through the Traffic Pattern, with all timings carefully calculated and published in advance to give you plenty of time to plan.

**Mel Baber, VoiceBox Editor**



# All In Good Taste?

**Quartet Prelims – didn't we have a fab day!** What a treat to experience the excellent standard of fun and heartfelt performances from the large and ever-increasing number of competing quartets. Well done everyone!

Building on the success of Quartet Prelims, Convention participants have been reminded to check that their songs and performance choices are in good taste and not likely to cause offence. To aid this activity, the Performance judges have collated some information to assist those involved in choosing songs and planning performances, which can be found at <https://www.labbs.org.uk/good-taste>

Whilst chorus' choices are most likely decided by Music Teams, it is the responsibility of all members to understand the implications of diversity and inclusion. Members should be mindful that they don't cause unnecessary offence, and understand how to avoid breaching LABBS contest rules, which assign responsibility for judging good taste to the Performance Category.

As responsible performers, we should

ensure that all our performances – both on and off the LABBS stage - reflect contemporary attitudes and opinions and do not inadvertently cause offence to minority groups or people with protected characteristics. If you're unsure what these terms mean, check out the LABBS Diversity and Inclusion policy on the LABBS website, here <https://www.labbs.org.uk/diversity>

Fortunately, 'good taste' penalties are extremely rare. However, we should take time to educate ourselves, ask questions, seek advice and take action to address areas of concern. As the author, Maya Angelou, once said "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better".

The website-based song research resources will continue to be revised and so, if you have any links or information that may be useful, please email details to the performance category at [performancecategory@labbs.org.uk](mailto:performancecategory@labbs.org.uk) for their further attention.

Quartet Prelims was a truly joyous weekend, and Convention promises to be even better (so exciting!). All the performance judges would like to wish you an enjoyable, entertaining and



Rachel Small, Trainee Judge,  
Performance Category

fun-filled Convention. We look forward to seeing you on stage and to catch up with you for a chat, a few drinks, and a song or two at the afterglow.

**Rachel Small, Trainee Judge,  
Performance Category**

An advertisement for the Fortuity quartet. The top half shows a large group of women in red dresses on a stage. The bottom half shows four women in blue sequined dresses. Text includes: 'BRISTOLFASHION@45', '1st October', '7.30pm Trinity Academy Lockleaze, Bristol', 'Fortuity International award-winning quartet', and 'Tickets £15'.

# Natalie visits Central Standard's rehearsal in Charlotte

**I felt so privileged to be invited** by Rob Mance to watch the rehearsals of his chorus, Central Standard, in the lead-up to their participation in the BHS International Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. Rob started the rehearsal by introducing me to the whole chorus before the 37 members started warming up. Then, everyone took their places on the risers ready to practice their convention package.

The first song was Some Enchanted Evening, and it sounded amazing to me, with wonderful resonance and dynamics, and a beautiful, rich sound. Rob assured me there had been many rehearsals leading up to this point, including sectionals, and Rob had invited Will Lagos from Westminster Chorus to help bring out the chorus's emotions through the song's words.

It was incredible to see the guys performing the line Locked in a trance with only one glance focussing from trance, then looking straight through the MD. The men were encouraged to imagine the love of their life, and for that emotion to show on their faces. Wow, did it work! I hoped the guys would look at their partners like that the next time they saw them!

The next song was Old Devil Moon. The guys were encouraged to release their inhibitions and not be self-conscious. I was interested to hear that it was easier to shave off movement rather than use a camel prod to start one. Someone immediately shouted out that they had stopped using the camel prod!

I was blown away by the whole experience. Marty Monson dropped in and congratulated the guys on taking part saying, 'We are back together again - did we believe this would ever happen?' The quartet Kansas City BarBQ, who were all members of Central Standard, came in and announced they had come 25th in the quartet competition with a score of 79.5! They were given a round of applause and promptly sang their set.

The session rounded off with me having my photo taken with Rob and the chorus, and the filming of my Vlog. They sang 'The Impossible Dream', and that was exactly how I felt. You can watch that performance [here](#).

**Natalie Feddon, LABBS Chair**



Natalie and Rob



Natalie with Central Standard

# Waiting for a Barbershop bus

**You know the old saying,** 'you wait for hours for a bus and then two come along at once'? Well, here at Bristol Fashion we are delighted to not only share the details of our extra super-special Anniversary Concert with Sweet Adelines International Quartet, Fortuity, but also that we are taking part in the The Big Bristol Barbershop Bonanza featuring the seven groups based in Bristol and the surrounding areas.

Along with preparing for Convention (eek!), our rehearsal calendar is looking very full, and we couldn't be happier.

Fortuity needs no introduction, but you may be surprised to know that their first performance in a show was with

BF back in 2011! We have celebrated their success ever since and cannot wait to have them on our stage at the super venue, Trinity Academy, on the 1st October. Tickets are £15. Contact us via our [website](#), through [social media](#), or a member of the chorus to book your seat.

Then, excitingly, just as the nights get darker, and everyone is full of post-Convention blues we are back with the ultimate concert: The Big Bristol Barbershop Bonanza. This is a huge collaborative event and includes BABS gold medallists, Great Western Chorus, and BABS 2022 Mixed Chorus gold medallists, The Bristol Mix!

So, if you want to get onboard the Bristol Barbershop Bus, get in touch so we can send you all the details!

**Debbie Trotman,**  
PRO Team,  
Bristol Fashion



**avon harmony**

**black sheep harmony**

**bristol a cappella**

**bristol fashion**

**fascinating rhythm**

**the bristol mix**

**the great western chorus**

**SAVE THE DATE**  
19 NOVEMBER 2022

**big bristol barbershop bonanza!**

ST MICHAEL'S CENTRE, BS34 8PD, 7PM

# A dream come true for The Bristol Mix

## 'The Bristol Mix, Gold Medal winning BABS Mixed Chorus Champions 2022'

- a phrase we never in our wildest dreams thought we'd hear. We were formed in 2019 and then all our plans were put on hold because of Covid. Our first singout was the BABS Convention in Harrogate, in May this year.

With 60 members, who all belong to LABBS or BABS, we are an inclusive team who have fun working hard together and individually, all committed to continually improving the quality of what we do.

All our members have Bristol connections, coming from either the six other fabulous barbershop choruses in Bristol, or now from non-barbershop choruses. We are not competing with those choruses – we simply provide another avenue for those who love to sing. As well as enhancing the barbershop hobby, we're spreading it as well. The Bristol Mix is a perfect vehicle to aid collaboration across the whole spectrum of barbershop and non-barbershop, bringing us all closer together.

We meet four to six times per year meaning we all take personal responsibility for learning the songs thoroughly

before rehearsal. Under the joint direction of Linda Corcoran and Craig Kehoe our rehearsals are fun, focused, and excellent. We sing to be the best we can, and now we have a strong base to be even better.

Amazingly, almost 90% of those singing with TBM on the BABS stage had never won a chorus gold medal before, some had never won a medal of any description, and some had never even been on a barbershop stage. The resulting buzz was tremendous, with so much positivity being taken back to all our other choruses. Following Convention, some members wrote:



The Bristol Mix

*"Wore my medal with pride at my other chorus rehearsal tonight! They were so pleased for us."  
"I've been singing with my current chorus for nearly 33 years, and it was such an amazing moment winning a Gold medal."  
"I can't tell you how proud I am to be part of TBM."  
"I wake up and see my gold medal every morning."*

On to preparing for the future now. Watch out for us at LABBS Convention,

and then on November 19th at the joint Bristol show featuring the seven Bristol barbershop choruses (including all seven choruses on stage at the same time!). See you there.

**Andy Balchin, Chair, The Bristol Mix**

## Club Updates

# Capital Connection have an outstanding day out!

**The chorus has had a fantastic first year** back post-lockdown. So much has happened including a rehearsal venue change, implementing our rebranding and most importantly, we have gained 10 fantastic and enthusiastic new members as a result of our monthly 'Welcome Wednesdays!' The one thing we haven't had since returning however, is stage experience. So, on 1st July, 20 members of the chorus, including four of our newest members, travelled down south to take part in the Bournemouth Music



Debi & Linda showing off the silverware!

Competitions Festival.

As with so many choruses, our last experience of competing was back in 2019, and although the chorus has been very active on the outside singout front in recent months, it is a very different experience singing inside and in front of a captive audience! There were, of course, some pre-performance nerves, but overall, there was a sense of excitement and a desire to get out and perform to others.

We premiered our 2022 Convention package in the Barbershop Class and it's fair to say we were all extremely surprised when we were announced the winners and awarded an Outstanding certificate. We then came second in two other classes, gaining distinctions, and couldn't believe our ears when we were announced overall Choir of the Year! We came to the competition with no expectations, other than to enjoy ourselves and entertain the audience, and from the judge's comments, this obviously shone through. We were particularly amused by one of his comments on synchronicity that said



We won!

we had "spanked it" – Debi did double-check with him afterwards that this was a positive comment!

It was such a wonderful experience to be amongst fantastic choruses and choirs doing what we all love once again, and it was great to see other barbershop choruses too, including Spinnaker, who put on some fabulous performances. Our newbies have now got the taste for competing, so we're sure they'll love our next trip to Bournemouth in October. See you all there!

**Sue Madden, Capital Connection, PRO**

# Cleethorpes Festival of Music and Words

18th June 2022 saw the

**Belles** travelling to Cleethorpes for our first competition since 2019. It was a fabulous day, socialising with the Belles after the last couple of years of zoom, social distancing and wearing masks. It was a first 'Belles outing' for several of our members, including our newest Belle, Gill, who only joined us two weeks prior. Another bonus was seeing our friends from Main Street Sound and Spirit of Harmony again after so long and getting to sing altogether. And the icing on the cake: coming home with a trophy!



Winners!

We excitedly boarded the coach and set off. We started on our packed lunches

straight away and a few songs were sung (quite reservedly for us!). On arrival, before going to get ready and warming up, we first did a conga down the street!



Shall we warm up then? No let's do a conga!

Next was the scramble to change into our lovely new blue tops with accompanying yellow beads and earrings, and get warmed up. We then went to watch the other classes which started with our quartet Jabberwocky in the Ladies' Barbershop Quartet Class and continued with Spirit of Harmony and Main Street Sound in various classes. It was so lovely to be able to watch live performances once again. The last class was the one we had all been waiting for – the Barbershop Chorus Class where we had the massive honour of winning the Gertrude Moorman Shield which has been around since 1926!

We ended the festival with an en-masse sing of Make Your Own Kind of Music – what a fantastic sound! But, the day wasn't over yet. Fantastic fish 'n' chips

followed, and a very rowdy bus journey home, where we sang through the entire repertoire, the full version of On Ilkley Moor Bah Tat, and we were just getting started on the back catalogue which only half of us still remembered, when we arrived back in Selby. We ended the evening with a proper afterglow in Nat 'n' Liz's barn where, once the karaoke machine was on the go, it was the early hours of the morning before the last Belles left.

Such an enjoyable day and one which we will remember for a long time. Thank you all!

**Bernice Haslam, Bass, Abbey Belles**

## Belles honoured to sing in Coventry Cathedral ruins

**A beacon lighting event took place**

in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral on 3rd June, to start the four-day celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. On this evening, more than 2,000 beacons were lit across the UK, beginning with the Queen touching a globe which then sent a chain of lights from Windsor Castle to Buckingham Palace.

The theme of the evening was 'Hope for the Future'. BBC radio presenter Brody Swain introduced the event, followed by a musical performance from Caitlin McGlynn. Councillor Abdul Salam Khan, deputy leader of Coventry City Council, made the opening speech, and the audience included many local dignitaries as well as athlete David Moorcroft

OBE, and his wife.

The Belles of Three spires sang Jerusalem, Mr Blue Sky, and The Writing's on the Wall. Mr Blue Sky is a significant song to Coventry, as it's the song adopted by Coventry City Football Club. Although we did have to sing a bit more quietly than usual as we had a sound team and microphones on stage.

The Lord Mayor of Coventry, Kevin Maton, made the final speech, and Warwick Chamber Choir also sang. At 9.45pm, the beacon was lit by the Lord

Mayor to a performance of Fanfare to The Commonwealth and Song for The Commonwealth.

It was wonderful to be a part of this special celebration. The ruins are a unique place to sing, and the occasion, lighting, and performances made it a very memorable experience. It was also our first singout following lockdown and we enjoyed performing for an audience once again. We also got to wear our walk-out clothes, and it was great to put on our black and white striped jackets.

It was so wonderful to get back to singing for an audience, and we are looking forward to more performances later this year.

**Linda Nicholson, PRO, The Belles of Three Spires**



The Belles at Coventry Cathedral ruins

# Albacappella wins in season of success

## What makes success sweeter?

When it is shared. Aberdeen-based Albacappella was delighted to share first place with Granite City Chorus at the 2022 Aberdeen Music Festival. Both entered the a capella contest held at the Aberdeen Music Hall on June 15. We hoped that our versions of The Skye Boat Song and You Gotta Be would fit the bill – and they did! In the end the adjudicator could not choose between

choruses, and to our mutual joy he awarded us joint first place. Albacappella's sassy bass section was singled out for praise, as was our 'wonderful connection' with musical director Mike Warner. Both choruses headed straight to the pub, where we continued the competition to the astonishment of customers and bar staff!



Albacappella at the Aberdeen Music Festival – joint first place in the open a capella category



Singing for the platinum jubilee: Albacappella's Musical Director Mike Warner with chorus members Faybianne Warner, Anna Peachey, Lorna McLachlan, Yvonne Lumsden, and Elspeth Winram

Albacappella's return to singing in public has been gradual, but an early highlight this year was singing at the Aberdeen Camphill Community's beautiful Phoenix centre on April 9. It was the first ever singout for some of our new members, but the day gave us the performance confidence boost we needed after such a long time away from the stage.

The chorus was also invited to provide some va va voom at the Crathes Vintage Car Rally at Milton of Crathes on May 29. The beneficiary of this event was Clan Cancer Support, an organisation close to our hearts.

Then came a very special event on June 2 at the Jubilee Beacon Lighting in Peterculter, close to our rehearsal home. We were delighted to contribute to such a happy event, on a lovely early summer's evening.

After music festival success, we couldn't resist another chance to sing alongside Granite City Chorus to celebrate Make Music Day UK on June 21. Thanks to the boys for another joyful opportunity to sing together – and go back to the pub again!

**Judith Robson, PRO, Albacappella**

## From microphone whisk to the Convention stage

### Last summer, my daughter Ellie and I

decided to take the plunge and join the GraceNotes, and LABBS, family.

We had been aware of GraceNotes Acapella for a few years as we had worked with MD Heidi on a number of musical theatre productions; we had also heard GraceNotes sing on several occasions and found their passion and enthusiasm to be infectious.

Ellie was keen to join: she had sung in musical productions and was comfortable performing publicly, whereas I was not. My comfort zone is definitely behind the scenes – creating not the creation! However, I had such precious and enjoyable memories of working with my daughters on theatre projects, that I found myself agreeing to join with her.

It has now been nearly a year since we went along to our first open air, socially distanced rehearsal, at a local rugby stadium. We knew immediately we wanted to come back. Hearing the wonderful sound around us and meeting all sorts of friendly, quirky people made joining easy.



Ellie (L), and Jaq (R), successfully passed their auditions, and were welcomed to the GraceNotes, and LABBS, family

Less easy, for me though, was the audition process and learning the repertoire. I think I probably took longer to audition than any member in the history of GraceNotes! Other than bounding around the kitchen with a microphone whisk and singing enthusiastically to many-a-tune

from the 80s, I had never sung before, not even in a school choir. Nevertheless, with lots of encouragement from Ellie (there has been a reversal in the parent-child relationship!), I managed the audition and have been slowly building my confidence ever since. I still need lots of support from everyone around me and find it takes a lot of effort to learn, but I love it.

The thought of Convention in October absolutely terrifies me, but I know I have 40 fantastic, amazing women around me who will take some of that fear from me - and it will be a blast!

**Jaq Kevern, Baritone, GraceNotes Acapella**



# Beyond singing

## Back in May, Bristol

**Fashion** had some glorious 'us' time at The Mill House Hotel, Abingdon, with our illustrious coach, Rob Mance.

It was such a special retreat weekend, and caused a flurry of reflections:

Debbie T:

*'Retreat is excellent coaching to a level only achieved when you dedicate that amount of quality time. It's singing in the bar, sharing stories, new friends, scratch quartets, and, as Performance Director, it's keeping the energy high through warm-ups, cool-downs and wake-ups in between. I'm not sure which was my favourite of the weekend: The Zorba the Greek meele, tai-chi tango, or the elegant cool-down to Conchita Wurst's Rise Like a Phoenix.'*

*'More than anything though, I adore the Talent Show. It always entertains, but this year was outstanding! The baris were hilarious, the tenors had a frog chorus, the basses and leads led quizzes, and a rousing God Save The Queen, complete with kazooos, finished the evening in BF style.'*



Bristol Fashion, stretching it out

Debbie P:

*'It's easy to take things for granted and Covid has made us much more appreciative of the little things. Here's what I noticed during our weekend away: friendships forming and growing between long-standing and newer members; laughter and tears as we made music together and played silly games; the bravery of everyone who sang alone when asked, safe in the knowledge that they were in a safe place with love and support surrounding them; the look of joy/shock when they realised what their voices could sound like. We undoubtedly strengthened our bonds during the weekend, and continue our journey of harmonious friendships, melodic singing, and a much greater sense of self-belief. This was Beyond Singing!'*

Jill:

*'I really look forward to retreat; for me it is the highlight of the year. You get to sing without the pressure of competition, meaning total enjoyment of our barbershop craft. We have been lucky to have top notch coaching too, and loads of technical information, which I love!'*

Jenny:

*'BF's retreat was full of activity, singing and fun. We did do a lot of walking around the maze of corridors in our hotel, which certainly made us conscious of breathing techniques! The rehearsal sessions were lively and interesting, and each one took us a step closer to the type of singing we're aiming for.'*



Bristol Fashion at retreat

Hannah:

*'After only two months of singing with BF, the prospect of retreat was a touch daunting. However, I need not have worried. A perfect weekend of singing, coaching, laughing, and time to get to know a super group of warm-hearted and supportive people. I left feeling a proper part of BF and cannot wait to do it all again'*

Janis Smith, PRO, Bristol Fashion



Kings of Barbershop, Craig and Rob

# Celebrations and excitement for Harmony InSpires

**Harmony InSpires** enjoyed a busy and fun-packed June and July. We welcomed LABBS Chair, Natalie Feddon, in June, wearing red, white and blue for the jubilee celebrations, and enjoyed a Union Jack cake and fabulous food made by Marge Hoek. In Natalie's words, we have 'a very talented Musical Director',



Harmony InSpires members with Sally

'bringing out the best in the chorus. It truly was a delight'.

As well as celebrating several very special birthdays, the 18th June saw the chorus participate in the Wantage Music Festival, with outfits fashioned by our creative costume team in white and blue, with a flash of pink lipstick! Great fun was had by all, and we gave a performance to be proud of, full of commitment and team spirit.

Most exciting of all, the chorus was pleased to welcome back Sally McLean, and enjoyed two more days of coaching. We learned so much about performance, warm-ups, dealing with nerves and pressure, choreography and working as a team. These were truly fabulous days with a fun meal thrown in, organised by social secretary Donna Prayag. As we

build towards the convention, our spirits and energy levels are high.

Rachel Buglass, PRO, Harmony InSpires



Harmony InSpires rehearsing before the Wantage Music Festival, at The Bear Hotel, Wantage

# Row, row, row your boat!

## What a wonderful feeling it is to be able to write a VoiceBox article

after we've seen some big barbershop events take place in the past months! Back in May, a few members from Cheshire Chord went to volunteer at the BABS weekend, and what a fantastic weekend it was! The standard was so high, and seeing quartets and choruses cross the stage after so many months away was amazing (the afterglow was pretty good too!).

It's also been an exciting time for some of our members who are in quartets. In May, our very own IN HOUSE and Four Crying Out Loud attended the Alderley Edge festival, with IN HOUSE winning the best barbershop song of the night. In June, both quartets, and Mary from Northern Soul, competed at LABBS Prelims. What a weekend that was, with all three quartets qualifying for the next round in October, and IN HOUSE quartet taking first place! We're so proud of them all and can't wait to see them in Bournemouth in October.

May and June were also busy months of Sunday rehearsals and coaching. First

up we had the fabulous Peter Kennedy work with us for the day on our new context package, and then we had Rob Mance for a weekend of singing, aligning and rowing boats! A weekend of 'mancing'! We're working hard but loving every minute. Is it October yet?

With the end of Summer upon us, it won't be long until everyone is back together at Convention. In the meantime, if you'd like to know what we're getting up to, please check us out on social media at [@CheshireChord](#) or visit our website [www.cheshirechord.co.uk](http://www.cheshirechord.co.uk)

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



IN HOUSE and Four Crying Out Loud



MD Jo Braham, with Rob Mance



Cheshire Chords, with Peter Kennedy

# Time flies!

## These past six months have been busy ones

at Crystal Chords HQ - so busy we forgot to send in a VoiceBox article for the last edition. Oops!

In May we had the absolute honour of representing LABBS at the European Barbershop Convention in Helsingborg. Thank you for having faith in us to represent our organisation and for all the well-wishes we received. We hope

we did you proud - we were so pleased with our performance and result.

In June we sang our hearts out in a fundraising concert for Stockport Foodbank. Stockport Foodbank was our chosen charity in 2020 and 2021, but we hadn't been able to do that much while not allowed to sing, so this was our way of raising some much-needed cash for this vital charity. We are proud to have ended up with a total of over £2,000 for them to help the people of Stockport.

And in July we were coached by the one and only David Sangster (MD of Forth Valley Chorus) and let us tell you, he is AMAZING.

The cherry on the cake is we have welcomed some new members who are currently working through our joining process. Fingers crossed we can introduce them to you all soon!

**Laura Orton, PRO, Crystal Chords**



A cheeky audience snap from EBC in Helsingborg



Crystal Chords fundraising for Stockport Foodbank



David Sangster comes to visit

# Fascinating Rhythm wins Gold Cup at Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts

## Fascinating Rhythm

**competed** in their first competition in nearly three years this May: [Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts](#).

They competed in two classes:

1. **Songs from the Shows**, giving an energetic rendition of We Go Together from Grease, followed by an emotionally charged performance of This Is Me from The Greatest Showman. Adjudicators, Ula Weber and David Crown, described it as a "great performance, full of energy, passion, and feeling" and "full of conviction", and awarded a score of 86 marks.

2. **Female Voice Choirs**, scoring 89 marks with Billy Joel's And So It Goes, Nina Simone's Feeling Good and Pie Jesu by Andrew Lloyd Webber. The adjudicators said they "loved the sassy attitude", and described the performance as "magical - you held the audience in a delicate bubble".

Fascinating Rhythm had the most wonderful surprise when they were awarded the Gold Cup by the

adjudicators for the most memorable performance of the day for And So It Goes.

Mark Barstow, Director of [Bournemouth Male Voice Choir](#) said "I had the great privilege of hearing this performance 'in the flesh' and it was simply stunning. The ensemble was absolutely extraordinary. I was in the front row of the audience, probably 25 feet away from the choir, and was listening so intently, actually looking closely at each and every singer, and straining to focus in on each person to see if I could hear individual voices and absolutely couldn't. My accompanist was just behind me and doing the same thing... nope - just a perfect ensemble. Respect, love and care over every word with beautiful shapes and gorgeous tuning. I found I was holding my breath at the end. Thank you for one of the most memorable performances I have ever heard in 30 years of choral directing."

[Fascinating Rhythm's Musical Director](#), Jo, said "I'm so proud of everyone! We enjoyed watching the other choirs perform, especially [Peterborough Voices](#), [Peterborough Sings](#) and [Peterborough Male Voice Choir](#). And we send huge congratulations to



Fascinating Rhythm's MD, Jo, with the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts' Gold Cup

[Insole Court Community Choir](#) and [Peterborough Voices](#), who won the classes we performed in together. We are absolutely delighted that our favourite song, And So It Goes, was considered worthy of the Gold Cup!"

**Chloe Roberts, PRO, Fascinating Rhythm**



Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts Gold Cup winners, Fascinating Rhythm

# A summer of fun for Junction 14

**May, June and July saw a mixture of fun events for Junction 14** In May we entered the Northampton Music Festival. We didn't win but had a lovely afternoon performing with other choirs and choruses.

In June we had a fantastic afternoon singing in the sunshine at Stony Open Gardens, helping to raise funds for a local charity, Willen Hospice. Whilst people looked around the lovely gardens and drank tea and coffee, we entertained them with our songs. Our lovely lead, Sarah Manchester, performed for the first time in public with us on this day, which was very special.

Also in June, we were invited to attend a very special event. Our wonderful Music Director, Hannah Washington, held a naming ceremony for her gorgeous little boy Myles. We had a lovely afternoon at her beautiful home, even though the weather did its best to spoil the day!

In July, we had a super weekend of first class coaching with Peter Kennedy and our lovely MD, Hannah. We learned lots of new techniques, and by the end of the weekend we had improved our two convention songs immensely. Onwards and upwards! We are looking forward to performing and sharing our songs with you all in October!

**Val Hutchinson, PRO, Junction 14**



Sarah Manchester (L) and Hannah Washington, at Sarah's first public performance at Stony Open Gardens.



Junction 14 at Stony Open Gardens



Peter Kennedy coaching Junction 14

# The Great Bandstand Bonanza

## The morning of Saturday the 9th of July

2022 dawned bright and sunny. The Red Rosettes Show Chorus assembled in Leyland at 8am and climbed aboard our coach, ready to be transported all around Lancashire for our Great Bandstand Bonanza.

Our challenge was to sing at 12 Bandstands throughout the county. We asked for sponsorship from friends, families and businesses, and set ourselves a target of £1500 which would provide funds for costumes, coaching, and transport for singouts.

What a wonderful day it was. We started at the foot of Clitheroe Castle and serenaded the assembled park runners. We then moved on to

Accrington, Barrowford, Padiham, Burnley, Rossendale, Darwen, Blackburn (where the bandstand has been dismantled as the metalwork was used in the second world war), Rawtenstall, Astley Park, Preston, Lytham St Annes, and finally, Stanley Park in Blackpool at 7.30pm.

Watching the sun go down over the sea as we sang on the beach at Lytham was such a beautiful, moving moment, and our final song in Blackpool's Stanley Park was celebrated with a glass of fizz kindly supplied by Helen's husband. It was the perfect end to a wonderful, musical, sunny, fun-filled day.

We were so grateful to friends and family members who supported us on our journey and encouraged us as

the long day drew to a close. Special thanks to Emma McManus for her marathon directing achievement. A lot of preparation was needed beforehand too - permission from all the different councils, risk assessments, and keys acquired for some - all of which was ably undertaken by tenor, Helen Jones. Thanks to ex-Rosette, Sandra Mangan, who kindly travelled with us all day and photographed the event. I must also mention our wonderful driver, Chris, who kept us entertained with jokes all through the day.

I am delighted to say that we surpassed our target, and monies are still being donated. Here's to next year - who knows where we will end up singing!

**Ann Atkin, The Red Rosettes**



# Spinnaker fun in the sun

## In May we had the pleasure

of singing at a Spinnakerette's wedding when our lovely lead, Bethany, married her fiancé, George. The happy couple were initially introduced by their mums (also Spinnakerettes), who arranged a blind date for them. A year or so on, and George proposed to Bethany at one of our rehearsal evenings, and we were delighted when she said yes.

Their wedding day was stunning. Bethany, her mum Jo, sister Megaan, little niece Florence, and mother-in-law Kay, all joined Spinnaker as we sang to guests. We wish this lovely couple a lifetime of happiness together.

Our first June rehearsal turned us red, white and blue as we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Everyone embraced the colourful theme and

dressed up for the evening, with our Lead Section Leader, Julia, even providing a corgi! Great fun was had by all and of course the cakes were delicious and fit for a Queen.

On 2nd July, 35 members of Spinnaker Chorus competed for the first time since 2019 at Bournemouth Music Competitions Festival as it reopened its doors to Choral classes following the pandemic. The festival was well attended, and we had a full day of singing in five classes. We were delighted to win two: Single Voice Choir class with the beautiful ballad Come in From the Rain and the Springsteen classic Dancing in The Dark, for which we received the Spinnaker Chorus Cup (donated by us), and the Sacred Song class with You Raise Me Up and our signature song, Something Inside So Strong, receiving the David Marris Trophy. We also received second place in the

Barbershop Chorus Class and third place in both the A Cappella and Music From The Shows classes. Huge congratulations to Capital Connection who won the Choir of the Year and Barbershop classes; they were fabulous.

In July we also held an outdoor rehearsal in Guildhall Square, Portsmouth. How delighted we were to be there while George, a baton bearer for the Queen's Commonwealth Baton Relay, passed through the square. We sang for him and The News, Portsmouth photographers, before they continued their journey towards Southsea Common. What an exciting night!

**Tracy Daniel, PRO, Spinnaker**



Congratulations, Bethany and George!



Spinnaker's Platinum Jubilee celebrations



Spinnaker performing at Bournemouth Music Competitions Festival



Spinnaker and baton bearer, George

# It's getting hot in here!

**What is the White Rosettes' favourite thing** to do on (nearly) the hottest weekend of the year? Why, have a retreat of course! Were we phased? Not a bit. With fans, iced water, and the coolest clothes we could find, we were just thrilled to have our first face-to-face retreat for three years. Day one commenced with a best-in-section outfit competition, and then we were full steam ahead as MD Sally McLean put us through our paces with the more challenging aspects of our convention package.

In the evening we were entertained by our very own quartets, In Cahoots and Yorkshire Blend. Both quartets, as well as our tenor, Rae Watney, who performed with Flamingo Road, entered Quartet Prelims. What cracking performances they gave. Congratulations to Yorkshire Blend and Flamingo Road, who will both be competing in the quartet competition at Convention, and to In Cahoots, who just missed out on a mic-warming slot.

Back to retreat. After our wonderful entertainment, we enjoyed a three-course meal and a glass or two of vino, and we let our hair down, reminiscing about past singouts and conventions. We also introduced a few of our new Trainees (Louise, Pam, Tracey, Linneke and Sophie), to a taster of an afterglow by singing some songs and tags. We didn't stay up too long though as we were looking forward to coaching the next day from Craig Kehoe, MD of Bristol Fashion.

And boy what a fantastic coaching session Craig provided! Although there were some nerve-wracking moments for the MPT who were put under the spotlight - great job team! And, who knew that singing through a cup would make such a difference? But, like all great things, retreat had to come to an end. Tired and exhausted, yes, but I do not think there was one



Jenny, Liz, Louise and Jane, winners of the section competition

White Rosette who did not go home with a smile on their face, dreaming of once more walking out onto that Convention stage.

Looking forward to seeing you all there.

**Ruth Kirby, PRO, The White Rosettes**



Coaching with Craig

# Thank you, LABBS

### Four members of 9 to 5

were recently awarded Long Service Awards. They were gratefully received, acknowledging our happy association with LABBS, and a reminder of so much fun and enjoyment singing barbershop. One of our repertoire songs is very appropriate, not just for us but for all of us: Where Does the Time Go?

The awards were presented to: Joyce Smith and Val Davis (40 years), and Betty McCullen and myself, Geraldine Davies-Carr (30 years).

All four ladies spent most of those years singing with Bristol Fashion and wanted to continue singing, but for various reasons, decided a less competitive choice with daytime, rather than evening meetings, would be more

suitable for them.

Our weekly rehearsals are well-attended, and we have 17 singing members travelling from all over Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, with another coming along to assist. Since the rules for Covid have been relaxed, we have been back entertaining groups, clubs etc. who have their meetings during the day, and we often get invited to stay for afternoon tea. It is great to be back!

If there are any ladies in the south west who would like to sing in the daytime,



L-R, Joyce, Val, Betty and Geraldine, with Natalie Feddon

we rehearse not far from the M4/M5 interchange, and we would love to hear from you. Ring Jenny on 0117 3305095, Mary on 01275 835512 or myself on 0117 9681705 for more information.

A big 'thank you' to LABBS for all their enthusiasm and support.

Looking forward to seeing you all there.

**Geraldine Davies-Carr, Chairlady, 9 to 5**

## LABBS memories

### I arrived in Yorkshire from Scotland in 1997

for work. One of the girls in the office took me to a Pennine Chimes rehearsal and I was hooked. I became Lead Section Leader after a while, as I read music and could put down teach tapes. The trouble was the chorus sang with Scottish accents until I knew what I was doing! I was also a lead in Satin Dolls quartet.

I became involved with the Exec (The Board as it is now) early on, as Cath Morton was Chairman and there were no volunteers from the floor to take on the post of Secretary. I was co-opted and served for 10 years as Secretary, Treasurer, Vice Chairman and then Chairman from 2005-2007. At the same time, I went through the Judging

Programme and qualified in the Singing Category.

My directing career started with an invitation from Cath to teach a song to Coast to Coast. I assisted her for 10 years. I was invited to become director of York Ladies (Main Street Sound) in 2002 after directing the Leeds Queen's Jubilee Beacon linkup for the BBC, which involved local choruses and other groups. Main Street Sound had just joined LABBS and we made 12th after 6 years. I was also lead in A Touch of Class quartet. Sadly, I had to take early retirement because of ill health.

All these activities with LABBS involved travel. I was lucky enough to go to Ireland, Holland, USA, Germany, Cyprus, Spain, and the Czech Republic. When I had to run a government project in Perth, Australia, the first port of call was Perth Ladies. Cath and I visited them at every opportunity. The barbershop family is truly worldwide.

Coaching continued for some years, especially in Spain as we had a holiday home, and many ex-LABBS friends who were living there were starting choruses and quartets. At Convention there, when Crossroads were the American guests, Jim Henry announced a barbershop cruise round the Caribbean with multiple world champion quartets, including The Gas House Gang (their swan song), Vocal Spectrum, The



25 year Long Service Award recipient, Pauline Corrieri

Buzz, and Crossroads. We had been looking for a special trip for Cath's 80th birthday, so took ourselves to Miami for the last couple of days of the BHS convention and then sailed off for a week of magic.

LABBS and barbershop have given me a plethora of amazing experiences. Now a member of Club at Large and limited by increasing disability, the music goes on. I still direct a chorus of ladies who just want to sing for fun. I learned from the best and feel it's important to continue to enable people to sing to the best of their ability. To me, LABBS means sharing, friendship and making wonderful music.

Thank you, LABBS.

**Pauline Corrieri**



45-year Long Service Award recipient, Cath Morton



# Congratulations!

**Crystal Chords are proud** to have long-serving members who have achieved awards this year. Sue Hulse (25), Gill Irwin (25), Yvonne King (30), Marion Crawshaw (30) and Julie Robinson-Kneale (35). Here's to many, many more.

Thank you to our wonderful LABBS Membership Director, Jill Cook, for combining Gill, Marion and Julie's previous chorus records, so they could have their hard work recognised.

**Laura Orton, PRO, Crystal Chords**



Sue Hulse, and Chair,  
Carole McGlone



Gill Irwin, and LABBS Chair, Natalie Feddon



Yvonne King, Chair Carole  
McGlone, Julie Robinson-Kneale,  
and Marion Crawshaw

## Congratulations, Christine!

**In July, Junction 14**

**presented** our longest serving member with her LABBS 35-year Long Service Award certificate and pin in July. Well done to Christine Milner, a founder member of our chorus from our inception in 1987. A wonderful achievement.

**Val Hutchinson, PRO, Junction 14**



Christine Milner being  
presented with her 35-year  
pin and certificate by our  
lovely Chairperson, Sue Bass

## Congratulations, Jean

**Jean Curson started her barbershop life** as a bass,

joining the Aultones in Carshalton in around 1990. While she was a member there, she travelled up to Leicester about once a month to sing with Coast to Coast chorus. This popular chorus had a large membership and they travelled abroad to perform in countries such as Spain, Cyprus, Germany, and Southern Ireland.

In around 1998 Jean joined Thameside Harmony Chorus in Hampton. While she was still a bass when she joined, the then Music Director, Mike Spiller, asked her to sing baritone for convention one year and she ended up moving permanently to

the bari section. Through the years, she sang in quartets as well as the main chorus, and participated in numerous singouts at all sorts of venues. In Thameside she also took on a committee position as Treasurer due to her day-to-day experience working in payroll, and she fulfilled the Treasurer role for many years. She gave up that role once everything turned mainly online.

Recent ill health has prevented her from attending on a regular basis, but she is still a member of LABBS and hopes to return to rehearsals soon.

**Angela Sharp, Chair, Thameside Harmony Chorus**



Jean Curson receiving her 30-year Long Service Award from Chair Angela Sharp (L), and Jacquie Edwards (R)

**I can't believe I've had** so many years of song, friendship, fun, experiences, challenges and adventures through singing barbershop. Hoping there are many more to come!

**Helen Perkins, Second City Sound**



Helen Perkins, 40-year Long Service Award recipient



Diane Baker (L), receiving her 25-year Long Service Award from Chair, Suzi Bubb



Kate Hyde, 25-year Long Service Award recipient

**I went to Second City Sound** to check out whether they would sing for our ladies club. Unfortunately, they were far too large a group for our meeting room, but I stayed and listened and was encouraged to step onto the risers to hear the harmonies better. SCS were so welcoming that I went back the next week and finally joined, I think they were desperate for basses!

I have so many memories of the variety of places we have performed, some very prestigious, some very intimate, but all of them have been fun with my SCS family.

I've learned many things at SCS, but one of the most surprisingly helpful in my daily life was raising the soft palate. I had always had trouble swallowing tablets, but now I just open my throat and lift the palate - bingo!

**Kate Hyde, Second City Sound**

**I have been with Second City Sound** for 30 years and, as Barry Manilow said 'Where does the time go?' I first watched the Anvil Chorus and a ladies quartet performing in a show at Sutton Coldfield Town Hall. I loved the harmonies, so my dear friend John Carter from Anvil Chorus introduced me to Olive Ryder and a few other ladies who had formed Second City Sound - I joined on the following Monday

Within a few weeks I was blowing the pitch pipe and 30 years on I still do. I became the lead section leader and formed a small chorus called Black Magic with some S.C.S. members. We sang at retirement homes etc. and had a lot of fun while raising a lot of money for the club funds through donations. I was also in SCS's first ever quartet, Cariad.

I have seen many people come and go over the years, but I have always enjoyed singing with such lovely friends and with very talented MDs. I love this hobby and feel so privileged to belong to what I consider to be my extended family.

**Carol Smith, Second City Sound**



Carol Smith (L), receiving her 30-year Long Service Award from Chair, Suzi Bubb

# How it all started

**So, LABBS! I've been with you for 45 years** and everyone seems to think I must have started when I was a baby! Not far from the truth, I suppose!

I was 7 years old when my mum, Marilyn Penketh, started the chorus, The Pitchpipers, in our front room back in 1976. I used to sit at the top of the stairs and peer through the bannisters at our house every Tuesday before bed, because I wanted to hear what was going on. I was also jealous that my

sister, Toni-Ann, got to sing and I didn't. She was 10 at the time! So, as soon as I turned 8, I was allowed to join and became a member of LABBS then. My first part was tenor and my first song was Wait 'til the Sun Shines, Nellie. From then, I have never looked back.

Thank You, LABBS and The Pitchpipers, for a wonderful 45 years so far!

**Karen Penketh, The Pitchpipers**



Karen Penketh



Hilary Simpson (L), and Joan Collins (R), receiving their 25-year Long Service Awards from Vectis A Cappella Chairman, Chris Sloper. Congratulations, ladies!

**Deadline for next edition:  
Friday 4th November 2022**

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

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

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

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

**2023 Deadlines:** Friday, 27th January, Friday 28th April, Friday, 28th July, Friday 3rd November.

# Music group insurance - cover for what your group needs

**If you organise events or rehearsals**, you will almost certainly need public liability insurance to protect your members and the general public. [Making Music membership](#), which is included with LABBS membership, gives you access to specialist music group [insurance](#), tailor-made for leisure-time music groups to cover your musical activity.

Feel safe in the hands of leisure-time music specialists. If you ever need to use your insurance, our claims helpline is ready to support you wherever and whenever you need it. This comprehensive cover includes public liability cover, employers liability, products liability, charity trustee cover and money insurance as standard, with property cover and cancellation/abandonment insurance available as added extras.

To find out what else you get with your membership, check out your [interactive Welcome Pack](#).

If there's something that you need support with now, feel free to call us on 020 7939 6030 or email us at [info@makingmusic.org.uk](mailto:info@makingmusic.org.uk) and we will help you in any way that we can! Making Music is the UK's largest leisure-time music community offering support and guidance for your music group, whenever and wherever you need it.

**Alyssia Frankland, Marketing Manager, Making Music**



**SUPPORTING AND  
CHAMPIONING  
LEISURE-TIME MUSIC**

## MD WANTED

**Small but perfectly formed, Celtic Chords has been singing together for 20 years, and are well known for their friendliness and welcome.**



At the moment, our rehearsal night is Monday, and we meet in Devoran Hall, just outside Truro.

Ideally, we would prefer someone who is already in the barbershop world to help us develop confidence and ability. Although we do not intend to perform on a LABBS stage, we do perform regularly in the locality which we thoroughly enjoy.

Please get in touch if you think the post may be just what you are looking for!

Contact Pam on 07480230035 or email [celticchords@hotmail.com](mailto:celticchords@hotmail.com).