

Voice Box

ONLINE

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



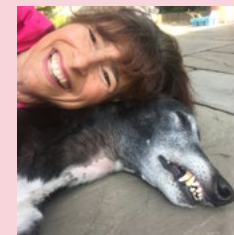
Winter 2020 £4

LABBS BIG WEEKEND - All the highlights inside

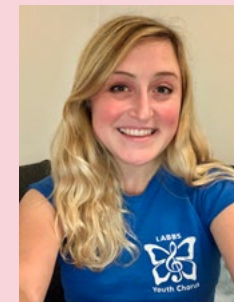


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Update from your Editor

Welcome!

Well the Convention may not have been what we are used to but I am sure everyone who attended will agree with me that the LABBS Big Weekend was phenomenal. So much engagement from our choruses and quartets and wonderful speakers, awards and Fringe activities meant the weekend was action packed. This edition of Voice Box brings you highlights of the weekend and links for catching up if you missed it, along with the latest news and some behind the scenes looks at some of the fabulous videos.

Enjoy.
Yvette



Hello and welcome to our latest online edition of Voice Box.

2020 has certainly not been the year that any of us had anticipated but I am delighted to see how our choruses and quartets are staying together in the name of harmony and friendship.

Since March our LABBS teams have provided exciting and different online opportunities for our members with regular LABBSi events, LABBSi education sessions throughout the summer for members and MDs, a quartet weekend as an alternative to prelims and of course our LABBS Big Weekend, which was a resounding success. We send our thanks to Rita Hulands and our wonderful volunteers for giving something incredibly special, not only to our own members but to the barbershop world in general. How brilliant it was to be able to provide a virtual Convention, to watch from the comfort of our own home! It was an amazing weekend and one that we will never forget.

I am pleased to let you know that we have finalised our review

of LABBS' 5-year strategy to take us forward into 2021 and beyond, identifying five strategic opportunities to enable us to achieve our vision, which is "To be the UK's leading community in education, entertainment and promotion of Barbershop singing, with international recognition and influence."

As a Board we felt that it was important to seek the opinion of our members, giving them the chance to have a say in the future of their Association, and with that in mind we consulted with the Chairs of our clubs as well as all of our volunteer groups. In line with our action to give younger members a voice, Lamorna Hooker will be co-opted on to the LABBS Board with effect from 1st January 2021 and we are excited and very much looking forward to working with her.

Additionally, we identified an opportunity to co-opt a Board member with specific responsibility for starting Diversity and Inclusion conversations with the membership and will invite applications shortly.

The full strategy presentation slides will be shared with our members via email to club contacts and if you would like to become involved in delivering the plan, please contact Jill Cook – membership@labbs.org.uk

Read more on page 4.

In addition to the D&I post mentioned above, you will no doubt be aware that we have three Board vacancies coming up, and at AGM in March 2021 we will be looking to appoint a new Vice-Chair, Events Director and Secretary. We will be starting an advertising campaign for all four of the positions shortly and if you are interested in any of these and/or would like further information, please email me at chair@labbs.org.uk.

**In harmony,
Nancy**



Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers

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events@labbs.org.uk

Champs Corner

Sing Along with Amersham!

Normally after Convention, everyone is pumped with adrenaline, on a post-performance high. This year, despite the unusual circumstances, I'm sure we all feel exactly the same way. That's because the Big Weekend was a masterclass in showing how technology can connect us all and create a real sense of sisterhood. Whether you were watching in small groups (fuelled by wine, nibbles and glitter) or at home on your own, you couldn't help but enjoy all of the contributions and feel a fantastic sense of camaraderie.

For Amersham, our charismatic MD Helen Lappert set up 24-hour Zoom rooms each day so we could drop in and chat together whenever we liked. We had coffee time each morning and pre-show drinks on the Saturday night. It actually felt like we were at Convention!

We were honoured to have been able to play such an integral part of the weekend. We have five quartets associated with Amersham who premiered their videos on Quartet Friday: Avalon, Chaos Theory, Red Velvet, Something for the Weekend and Venus Effect. Our multi-talented Helen 'Flash' Watson ran an engaging Fringe Education workshop, teaching the signing for 'Make Your Own Kind Of Music'. On Chorus Saturday we aired our video of 'One Moment In Time', which was produced by the lovely Soozi Hyde and her son David ([see it here](#)). We think it really gets under the skin of what it's like to be part of the wonderfully mad world of Amersham A Cappella!

We featured again in the **Future is Bright** Show, re-living our emotional gold medal win on the Convention stage last year, followed by the premiere of our lockdown video project 'Sing!' ([see it here](#)). This was arranged from the Pentatonix song by our fabulous Boo de Bruin and followed Flash's story vision (aided by the production and sound



engineering skills of Rob Foot - of Tagline fame - and Ian Watson). The video shows how lockdown drained the colour from our lives and it highlights the rejuvenating power of singing... a strong message which drums home why we all love this amazing hobby so much! Did you spot the cameo performances from some international stars of the barbershop world?

Sunday was also a busy day for Helen Lappert, who ran a sell-out 'Sing with the Champs' session on Zoom together with our section leaders and then a final sing through of 'Anthem' and a dance to LABBS' new signature tune 'We Are Family' - an arrangement by Liz Garnett commissioned by Venus Effect as part of the Jen Mills award which they won last year. What a fantastic way to end such an amazing weekend. Elated... and without that long journey home!

Amanda Dawson

PRO, Amersham A Cappella

Deadline for next issue Sunday 31st January 2021

Please supply approx 300 words accompanied by photographs in the highest resolution possible, in colour, as separate jpeg files to voiceboxeditor@labbs.org.uk. Photographs taken on phones are usually fine, but please send direct from the photo gallery on the phone via email for maximum resolution.

Looking ahead to 2026 – a future of opportunity and change for LABBS

In June, Nancy Philbin instigated a strategic review looking ahead to 2026. “It seemed timely,” she explained, “the previous LABBS strategy had run from 2015 to 2019, and the extraordinary times we were living through gave a sharpened focus to the future and to change.” Nancy asked Membership Director Jill Cook to lead and facilitate a process, supported by Caroline Poole, to develop a strategic plan with input from key stakeholders.

Early on the Board decided that the Association’s long-term goal (as set out in 2015) remained valid and provided an on-going sense of vision and direction:

“To be the UK’s leading community for education, entertainment, and promotion of barbershop singing, with international recognition and influence.”

Initially, the Board reviewed the progress already made towards that goal and created a baseline from which to look forward. “It’s always a worthwhile exercise to take stock,” said Nancy, “and of course it’s incredibly rewarding to see just how far we’ve come since 2015.”

We considered the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing LABBS and sought input from sub-committees and volunteers for balance.

The Board agreed that to achieve our overall vision we need to ensure that:

1. **LABBS’ membership numbers are sustainable and representative of society,**
2. **Communication and engagement with LABBS members are modern and effective,**
3. **Volunteer resource is sufficient to sustain LABBS’ programme of activities,**
4. **LABBS membership delivers value to competing and non-competing member clubs,**
5. **LABBS is seen as a leading innovative barbershop organisation in the UK and internationally.**

Of course, strategic objectives are only as good as the action plans that make them happen. In July, a virtual brainstorm session was held and 17 practical ideas were identified as being both achievable and impactful – all fully aligning to the Vision and agreed objectives.

In order to get as many members involved as possible, the draft plan was shared at a Chairs’ Forum and with members of sub-committees, LLOs and LABBS volunteers on Zoom hosted sessions. The feedback was incredibly positive with all groups endorsing the key aspects of the strategy and providing invaluable suggestions that have since been integrated into the plan.



The strategic plan was then presented to Council with a call to arms for members to get involved. The plan is ambitious but will be progressed over the course of the next five years. The Board is working on a schedule of actions. Nancy said, “Some actions will inevitably take longer to achieve than others, but we want to energise the plan by creating small teams to take forward the different elements.

“The past nine months have been incredibly challenging for us all, but we genuinely believe that change and good things can emerge from adversity. As an Association we have seized the opportunity to work in different ways, and we have shown how creative and positive we can be. We are determined to go from strength to strength and our newly agreed strategic plan gives us a roadmap and the momentum to make that happen.”

Strategic Opportunities

In order to achieve our vision we need to ensure that

**LABBS' membership
numbers are sustainable
and representative of
society**

**Communication and
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effective**

**Volunteer resource is
sufficient to sustain LABBS'
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**LABBS' membership
delivers value to
competing and non-
competing member clubs**

**LABBS is seen as a leading
innovative barbershop
organisation**



Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers

LABBS EVENTS DIRECTOR

The LABBS Board is looking to appoint a new Events Director from March 2021

We need an enthusiastic and committed person with strong organisational skills, excellent interpersonal skills and someone comfortable working in a digital environment who will:

- Ensure that proposed LABBS events fit within the organisation's objectives
- Maintain an overview of all LABBS events, facilitating their occurrence where appropriate
- Provide administrative support as required
- Maintain an overview of the budgeting of LABBS-run events
- Find appropriate venues and monitor catering and facilities
- Chair Event Team meetings

The position is voluntary, as are all Board positions. Expenses incurred will be reimbursed in line with the LABBS Expenses Policy. There is a requirement for the successful candidate to become a Director of LABBS and a Charity Trustee.

For a more detailed job description and to apply please contact Nancy Philbin chair@labbs.org.uk

Closing date for applications is 31st January 2021



... leading the way in harmony

Count on Us!

At LABBS Big Weekend 2020, the LABBS Youth Choruses were excited to show everyone what all their hard work had created. We put together a fun video of 'Count on Me', sung by the whole chorus, and the Competition Chorus sang a tag from 'Children Will Listen'.

On the Saturday, a few of the chorus got together over Zoom to watch the virtual performances and reminisce about past conventions. This would have been a lot of our members' first convention, so it was fun explaining what it was really like.

Both Youth Choruses have been having Zoom rehearsals once every couple of months, practising the songs we were going to sing at convention, and learning a couple of new tags. We've had lots of fun seeing each other virtually and thinking of fun new warm-ups. Our MD, Ros Kipps, has loved seeing everyone's faces on Zoom. She said, "Our rehearsals have covered everything from pets' corner to Disney singalong, but as a director I've really missed hearing everyone singing as a group when they're muted. It was lovely to hear their voices coming together as we gathered the recordings and I'm really proud of the result. We have so much talent within the chorus and it was wonderful to be able to showcase this to LABBS. All aspects of the video were done by members of the chorus including audio editing by Bethany Southworth and video editing by Lamorna Hooker. We're so lucky to have these skills in-house."

"Our rehearsals have covered everything from pets' corner to Disney singalong."

We also loved putting together our video of 'Count On Me', and made sure that it was fun to record and watch by putting lots of personality into it! If you didn't get a chance to see it, head to our Facebook page.

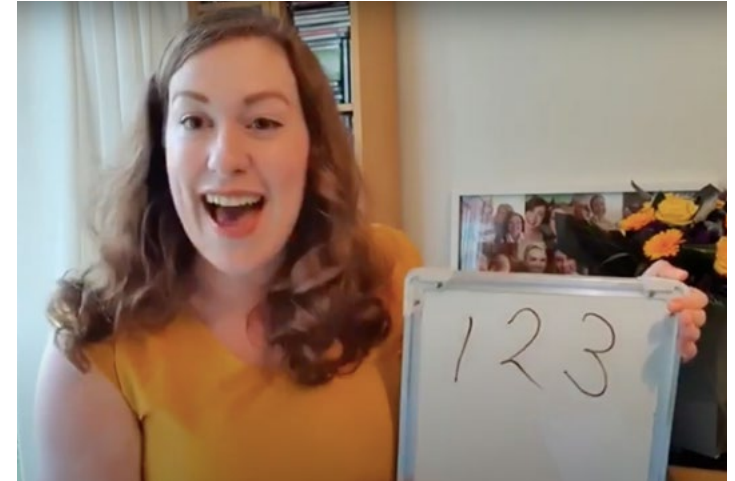
The Competition Chorus (for over 18s) also put together a really beautiful tag from 'Children Will Listen', again with the audio being done by Bethany Southworth and the video being done by Jasper Stritt from Great Western Chorus (BABS).

I would like to take this opportunity to say goodbye and a big thank you to Pippa Goodall, who has decided to step down as MD. We really enjoyed having Pippa as our MD and all of the knowledge and insight that she brought to the chorus. We wish you all the best with your future endeavours, Pippa.

We have a REALLY exciting project coming up for January, so keep your eyes and ears peeled! If you are aged 7-29, or have family and friends who might be interested, keep an eye on our Facebook page or email youth@labbs.org.uk for more information.

Lamorna Hooker
LABBS Youth Coordinator

Ros Kipps
MD, Full Youth Chorus



It's The Music That Brings Us Together...



Well it certainly was for the LABBS Big Weekend! Despite not being able to cross the stage in person in Bournemouth this year, we all strutted across many virtual stages to show that COVID-19 was certainly not going to stop us from enjoying Convention. What an abundance of talent, creativity, information and all-round awesomeness we were treated to!

A snippet of feedback received from Welwyn Harmony members:

"Gave us a much greater opportunity to put faces to names, to get up and personal to so many faces that would just be shadows in the auditorium."

"Able to see the whole of the quartet and chorus performances."

"Excellent international keynote speakers – widened the connections."

"Videos were so imaginative and entertaining."

"The more I watched, the more I wanted to watch."

"I feel proud to be a part of this amazing organisation."

Who predicted the rise of the Zoominator? The weekend showed us how innovative we had all become in the face of silenced adversity, and actually how using Zoom, Bandlab, Audacity and the like made us realise that such tools can enhance our experience. With lots of valuable insights from the Barbershop world, we were given much to enable us to create holistic harmony.

A standing ovation to the LABBS Teams and everyone involved in realising this epic tour de force – you are all Gold Medal winners this year!

Welwyn Harmony has been active in trying to keep ourselves connected and provide a worthwhile experience for members. We've grappled with Zoom, and managed to do three virtual projects so far. Our grateful thanks to our amazing Monika Szita-Rimann for all her hard work! We held joint socials with the lovely ladies of Rhapsody Chorus, met for socially-distanced small group sings in lots of lovely gardens and were just beginning to hold slightly larger rehearsals in a school before the second lockdown.



Like everyone, we cannot wait until we can sing in a room together again, devoid of face coverings, etc!

Julie Jones
PRO, Welwyn Harmony

Arun Getting Together

Like many other choruses, the members of Arun A Cappella have been trying to find ways to get together to sing where we can. As well as sessions on Zoom, some of us have met in members' gardens, joined virtual choirs and even managed four socially distanced rehearsals at our hall before we were back to lockdown.

In August we were able to gather to present LABBS long service awards to Pam Budd for 35 years and Doreen Lea for 25 years. The awards were presented (at a distance) by LABBS Liaison Officer Jacqui Edwards. Pam Budd was also made an Honorary Life Member of the club although sadly Pam was not able to attend in person so the awards were accepted on her behalf by her daughter Lynsey and grandson Jamie.



Members also enjoyed putting together our video for LABBS Big Weekend including recording Hannah Briggs' arrangement of 'We'll Meet Again'. Many thanks to Hannah for editing the audio tracks, we were really pleased with the result. These last few months have shown how important the music and friendships are that we have found through barbershop. We look forward singing in person soon.

Joyce Stroud
Musical Director
Arun A Cappella

Cornish Holiday

*Glorious Cornwall,
you will never want
to go home!*



2 BEDROOM HOUSE

Meadow Rise,
St Columb Major



3 BEDROOM HOUSE

Hengar Manor, St Tudy
(Close to Port Isaac)



4 BEDROOM BEACH HOUSE

Bodannon, Porthtowan

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Missing the Risers with The Belles

What an honour it was to produce the video for the Belles, and a challenge, especially starting from scratch! My plan was to create a video that reflected who the Belles are and how they have managed to stay together during lockdown. Our MD, Lucy Guess, produced the audio track, a medley of 'Writing's on the Wall' and 'Mr Blue Sky', and various phrases were emphasised by appropriate photos.

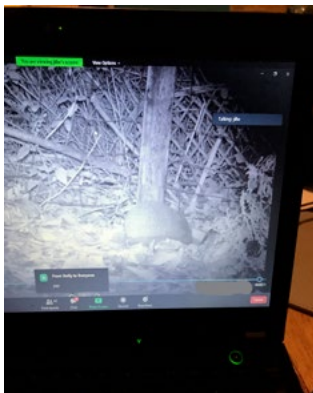


The photo that epitomised the lockdown was Norma Ward touching the glass door to see her granddaughter, as it showed how separated from our loved ones we had become. The storm coming (with a soaked Sandra Nothdurft) showed the hard months ahead. However, there were blues skies amidst it all: our gardens and flower arrangements, VE day,

and our many and varied Zoom sessions giving hope and encouragement to our members.

We managed to sing via Zoom rehearsals, have fun with socials, create beauty and discover who knows most in our quizzes. Recently Jill Warren showed the night-time wildlife that comes to her garden. Val Simmons was the inspiration behind the SAFFY (Stay Away from the Fridge, You) group to help lose those lockdown pounds; over 70lbs have been lost collectively.

Although the final third of the audio track was quite poignant, *"when you're not here I'm suffocating"*, it is also hopeful in spirit as



we raise a glass to each other. Let us raise a glass to a hopeful future together.

Eileen Askew
PRO, The Belles of Three Spires

*The Writing's on the Wall by Sam Smith



Eileen Askew

Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again!

We, like so many other quartets across the country, have really missed getting together regularly for some singing and socialising. Thankfully, with some wonderful technological wizardry

was the way forward and what fun we had filming these. I'm sure many of our neighbours must have wondered what was going on when they saw us walking around in full on ABBA gear!



we've been able to record a total of four songs and videos! The most recent one being for the LABBS BIG Weekend; and what a weekend it was! The weekend consisted of so many fantastic videos from choruses and quartets. We may not have been in Bournemouth, but it was certainly the next best thing!

Back in the summer months, when we realised LABBS was not going to take place, IN HOUSE got our (virtual) heads together to decide what our video showcase would be. Mamma Mia made the final cut, probably because we all realised we could wear some amazing costumes! With this in mind we got to work learning the song and planning our video. Filming together was not going to be possible so individual videos

If you missed our video, make sure you pop over to our [website](#). You can also find our other three Lockdown videos:

Let's Go Fly a Kite
Gentleman Jack and
Sweet Dreams

Keep your eyes peeled for any updates from us over on our social media pages, particularly with Christmas fast approaching.

Julie Phillips
IN HOUSE quartet

Coming In With A Bang!

We were absolutely delighted to make our debut at the LABBS Big Weekend, encouraged by our somewhat 'experimental' approach at the Quartet Weekend in June.



in Hannah's garden, with a friendly neighbour shouting encouragement from the other side of the hedge! And we took a mindful wellbeing walk through Westonbirt Arboretum a few weeks ago to admire the autumn colours.

Whilst we felt very sad not to be able to bring our competition package to LABBS this year, we were keen to make our mark on the Big Weekend celebrations and we had a lot of fun putting together a lockdown video to share with you all. Our new song has allowed our nerdy nature to shine

through and given us a lot to laugh about over the past few months.

We hope you enjoyed our version of The Big Bang Theory song and our geek chic wardrobe. We can't wait to be able to actually sing it together in true harmony and to share it with you in person. [See it here.](#)

Hannah, Amy, Becky & Kate
Specs Appeal

With two contestable songs underway, hotel bookings planned and new stage dresses at the ready, we were looking forward to introducing Specs Appeal as a novice quartet at Prelims in Birmingham. But our hopes and preparations have been put on hold by the pandemic lockdown.

Like so many other quartets, we've had to content ourselves with weekly Zoom calls for most of the year - although, over the summer, we managed a handful of garden gazebo get-togethers. We were able to sing through our new song once in socially-distanced-four-person-glory

Until We Meet Again

What better way to show off our new logo than a virtual convention with an audience of friends and our harmony family.



Set to a musical composition by our very talented MD, Craig Kehoe, we chose images which reflect the journey that Bristol Fashion has been on since last year's convention in Llandudno where we were thrilled to become LABBS 2019 Mid-Chorus champions and achieving our highest placing and score ever.

In March this year Rob Mance returned for a coaching weekend for the up-tune we were going to compete with in Bournemouth, and during the weekend the committee and PRO team started to think about new ideas to promote the chorus and wanting to change our image and brand to reflect our vision for BF's future. We met with Rob over lunchtime, in between rehearsing, and he gave us some ideas of how he developed this vision with his two choruses back home in Kansas City.

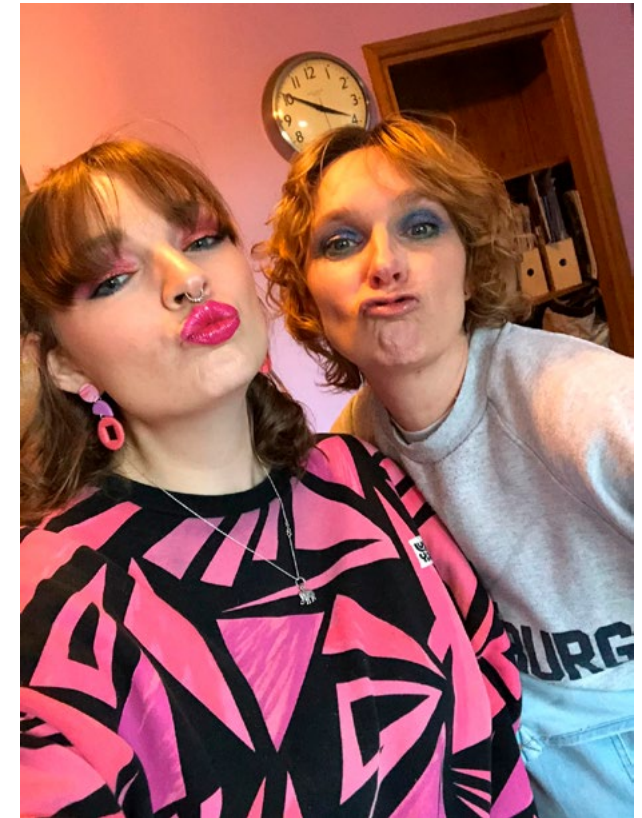
We talked about changing our public facing image and a small group set about planning a new look. This included a design brief for a new logo, increasing our presence on social media and an update to our website. After some months planning and working with an agency to produce the logo for us, we were so pleased with the end product. We wanted it to feel smart, vibrant, confident and bold... just like us!

We wanted to ensure we were still represented as a friendly, supportive and inclusive group but also we have the motivation and drive to achieve our dreams and goals.

Meanwhile our Zoom rehearsals continue and we have welcomed special guests such as Rob Mance, Sally McLean, Jo Braham and Cheshire Chord Company. We also managed a 98 person strong joint rehearsal with the four Bristol and South Gloucs choruses which was great fun and we are planning to do this again. We have a joint rehearsal with Signature Chorus coming soon and are continually trying to be inventive to make our rehearsals fun and social but also with educational aspects to keep the learning alive.



Finally, we'd like to say how much we enjoyed the LABBS Big Weekend virtual convention, we all met on Zoom to watch our video when it was aired and a few of us partied together at the afterglow!



We take heart from Mo Field's keynote speech and can't wait to be reunited as part of the BF family... Until We Meet Again.

Janis Smith
PRO, Bristol Fashion

Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers

LABBS VICE CHAIR

The LABBS board is looking to appoint a new Vice Chair from March 2021

This is a chance to be involved at the highest level to ensure the smooth running of our association and help move the association forward.

The LABBS Board is looking to appoint a new Vice Chair at the AGM in March 2021. Specifically, we are looking for an enthusiastic person to support the strategic aims and vision of LABBS and work as part of a progressive team. As Vice Chair you would be an active member of the LABBS Board, deputising for the Chair when required and play an active part in the decision-making process.

The term of office is two years with the expectation that you would progress to be Chair after this period. The above position is voluntary, as are all Board positions. Expenses incurred will be reimbursed in line with the LABBS Expenses Policy. There is a requirement for the successful candidate to become a Director of LABBS and a Charity Trustee.

For a more detailed job description and to apply please contact Nancy Philbin chair@labbs.org.uk

Closing date for applications is 31st January 2021



... leading the way in harmony

Sharing The LABBS Love At Work

I was asked, just as the first lockdown ended, whether I would write an article for my work team newsletter linked to mental health and wellbeing, and how I was coping without being able to run my chorus during lockdown. The following is a slightly edited version of the article, written for the audience of non-choir members.

"Outside of work I run a ladies' chorus and doing that in lockdown has been like working in lockdown, but much, much harder!"

The first thing that happened was that new Facebook groups started up all over the place trying to find out what app could be used to allow choirs to meet up together. Teams? Nope. Skype? Nah! It came down to three apps that might work for choruses and choirs which were offering things which were platform independent and relatively cheap/free – GSuite (part of Google) and Zoom and a few Facebook Livestreams.

Within a week or two those same groups were inundated with requests for an app that actually allows us to sing in sync. (I can just see those of you with knowledge of the words "network latency" and "bandwidth" shaking your heads). So singing in sync is a no-no. Although there are some new apps claiming it's possible on a small group basis, but the cost for the equipment is just not feasible.

As a result, choirs around the world have developed a new process called "singing on mute". Yes, we all sit in our homes listening to a track and sing to it; as a result, there's also a reverse phrase (compared to work) ... "Who's not on mute?". To be honest, the biggest issue with singing over these apps,

isn't actually the network side of things, but the sound side – these systems can't cope with multiple people singing at once so it cuts out and you end up with a chorus full of Norman Colliers ... if you're too young for that reference, Google him.

I'm pretty certain that being able to continue with the chorus in some format over the last eight months has helped my mental health. And on that note, I'd like to share with you our lockdown video which we released last week <https://youtu.be/nC0drKh74Iw>. I guess the choice of this particular song is obvious (well at least to those of you who click on the link)."



Finally, I'm sure you all know what a fab job your MDs and CDs normally do, so please realise that this time has been even more stressful for each of us, whether you carried on with some sort of weekly rehearsals via Zoom or did something else over the weeks and months. We generally hide the stress from our choirs but this year, it may have shown more than usual, so please take a moment to say thank you to your MDs and CDs - they will appreciate it.

Donna Whitehouse
MD, Cleeve Harmony

CCC's Lockdown Legacy

Cheshire Chord Company has risen to every challenge it has encountered during this challenging time and we have managed to keep our chorus together, singing, supporting one another and most of all, still laughing and benefitting from the love and friendship so evident within our chorus.

The committee and Music Team have worked so very hard on our members' behalf over the week, cancelling events, overseas competitions and making sure that vulnerable members are given support as and when necessary.

During lockdown, the Music Team was keen to find a way of documenting this extraordinary event with a new song for our repertoire. The intention was to give every member of the chorus an opportunity to record a joyous message for all to see, and to emphasise that it will take more than a pandemic to keep the ladies of CCC down!

The recording will serve as a lasting reminder to each and every one of us of our time in lockdown and will also serve as our contribution to the LABBS online event.

All members, who wished to be involved, had the opportunity to produce a soundtrack which was accompanied by a high-quality video recording of a new song. The video was created to reflect a feeling of love, fun and friendship and a legacy of things which have been instrumental in getting us all through these tough times.

The song chosen was 'I Couldn't Live Without Your Love', a popular song from the 1960s which really encapsulates a strong message of love and belonging that we wanted to portray with this project. The song was written in 1966 by Tony Hatch & Jackie Trent and was recorded by Petula Clark. Using Hannah Briggs' teach tracks of Fran Carter's arrangement, our members set to work, recording their tracks and sending them in for Tim Briggs to mix together. Alongside the audio recordings, members were asked to send in images and videos of things that they treasure the most – a visual collage of this unusual time.

After a premiere showing of the video the week before LABBS Big Weekend, all chorus members enjoyed viewing the final edit over the



massively successful online convention. The weekend was enjoyed by all members and we really appreciate the work and effort that went in to all the 'backstage' organising! A massive success LABBS - thank you.

If you 'd like to see our video please visit www.cheshirechord.co.uk/ videos

Julie Phillips
Joanne Braham
Jude Dadswell
Cheshire Chord Company

We Love Being Here With You

When LABBS put the call out for chorus videos this summer, there wasn't a more appropriate song to describe how The White Rosettes feel every time we cross the stage and we knew 'I Love Being Here with You' was the one. It gave us a great excuse to dust off our stage wear (and those pink feather boas...), get those false eyelashes out, dance and have a sing in our gardens and on our summer holidays, and more than anything, just have some fun. We wanted to remember and celebrate our performances over the year, and [the video](#) gave us the perfect opportunity.

It also gave us a chance to debut our new logo, designed by our very own Molly Martin McClean. And, because we could, we wanted to include a tag, recorded from when we could all sing together (as



real life human beings in the same space!) that really seemed to encapsulate what's keeping the chorus going: friendship. Did anyone recognise that joyously

infectious cackle at the end of the tag? Oh, we can't wait to get back to experiencing that in person again soon.

When the video aired, it was fab to know we were sharing the virtual stage with so many great and creative choruses, it really felt like a small nod back to normality. It was great to see the comments rolling in and having time to attend the fringe sessions without scoffing down a quick sandwich and running about everywhere. Thank you so much to LABBS and all the choruses, quartets, presenters, and all those behind the scenes that put this much needed weekend together. Here's to being together on the other side!

Holly Parker
The White Rosettes

More Friendship, More Fun, More Harmony!

More Harmony Women's Barbershop Chorus began life ten years ago, as a result of friends Catherine Hudson and Pauline Gobbitt's shared passion for singing and mutual desire to set up a brand new chorus in North Cornwall. Originally named "Moor Harmony," to reflect the fledgling chorus' rural rehearsal location, the group moved to Wadebridge a year after it was formed and remain there to this day.



Over the years, the chorus has become known for its inclusive atmosphere, eclectic repertoire and most importantly, the friendship and fun that being a member brings. In 2018, we decided to celebrate these things with a name change and Moor Harmony became More Harmony, complete with a change of look - our snazzy purple jackets and silver sparkly trainers are often commented on when we perform!

At More Harmony, we start with a belief that singing should be enjoyable and that anyone can do it, if they learn the basics. The laughter that rings out at our rehearsals is testament to this and - trainers aside - one of the things we're told most often by audiences is that when we perform together, it's obvious how much fun we're having!

Sadly, in 2019 we lost our founder member Pauline. One of Pauline's most passionate wishes was for the chorus to compete at LABBS convention and so, with rehearsals on hold due to the Coronavirus pandemic, it felt like the next best thing to get involved with the LABBS Big Weekend, especially as 2020 is our tenth anniversary year. We chose a song arranged by our very talented MD Lesley and created a video that we think shows how much fun singing can be!

We'd like to think Pauline would be proud. Here's to the next ten years!

Emma Tofi
More Harmony

"We'd like to think Pauline would be proud."

Afterglowing Spinnaker Style

Huge congratulations to LABBS for a most fantastic virtual convention weekend. Spinnakerettes excitedly tuned in online for the entertaining daily programme of events.

Friday's quartet day saw brilliant performances from so many wonderfully talented quartets, including videos from our very own Sapphire and A Pitch in Time. Saturday was packed with imaginative submissions from choruses, despite all of the challenges this virtual convention posed the standard was phenomenal. None of us were able to be physically together but the LABBS family vibe was palpable in abundance all weekend.

We were also so overwhelmed to be nominated in the Inspirational Performance category, what an honour!

As is tradition at convention we even had an Afterglow party, this year via Zoom. We made it a Halloween themed fancy dress fundraiser in support of our new charity Off the Record, which provides confidential support and counselling for local young people aged 11-25.



We played Spooky Bingo, had an extremely competitive Silent Auction of donated items, including a Spinnaker pink ornamental sheep. We watched a marvellous slideshow looking back over 14 years of conventions in which we've participated, featuring photos of members

past and present and filled with special memories. Our 2019 LABBS performance set video was played, evoking a tremendous sense of pride as we were transported back to that magical moment a year ago when we won our second LABBS bronze medal.

The highlight of the evening was having our Special Guest join us. When in Llandudno for convention in 2019 we partied on the Saturday at our hotel in the company of resident vocalist Eryl Restall. This amazingly talented lady kindly agreed to sing for us once again via Facebook live, what a tremendous finale to our fundraiser. We are delighted to have raised over £400 on the night for our deserving charity.

Stay safe and well everyone, we look forward to the day we can join together in harmony once again.

Tracy Daniel
PRO, Spinnaker Chorus

"We were transported back to that magical moment a year ago."



Advertise in Voice Box

Voice Box is sent to every LABBS member, so it's an ideal way to let your fellow members know what you are up to, to sell items or to advertise your goods and services. Advertisements do not have to be barbershop-related – we are happy to share hobby or work messages.

There are discounts for all LABBS members, and you can make savings by booking more than one ad at a time.

From January, adverts in Voice Box will be charged at the following rates. A discount will be available for an ad run – detail to be agreed on application.

	LABBS*	NON-MEMBERS
FULL-PAGE	£65	£85
HALF-PAGE	£35	£65
QUARTER PAGE	£25	£35

* LABBS rates are applicable to all LABBS members and clubs/quartets

Send your advertisement to voicebox@labbs.org.uk

Helen Lappert - What Makes Her Happy

Amersham A Cappella's own Helen Lappert is not just a MD, she has also been a host on LABBSi and was an integral part of LABBS Big Weekend. So here is a little insight into who makes Helen happy – and a bit bonkers!



When did you first start singing?

When I was very young - probably not long after birth! Mum loved singing and the three of us - Mum, my brother and I - would harmonise with each other on car journeys.

What do you do on your days off?

There's no set plan for a day off. Depends who is available and what's going on! If hubby is golfing, I might take the opportunity to meet a friend for a dog walk and coffee or get together with friends to sing and have coffee! If he's not golfing, then the two of us might go out for a dog walk to a beautiful space like Verulamium Park in St Albans or Hampstead Heath followed by coffee in a cosy cafe.

"Vibrant, fun-loving and a bit bonkers"



What makes you smile?

Lots - hanging out with people I love; making music with others; my son who has a wicked sense of humour and an infectious laugh; my daughter who does great impressions of dogs and other animals; our dog every time he howls along to vocal warm-ups while I'm giving a singing lesson; seeing technicolour fish when snorkelling; alpacas; wildlife; landscapes; mountains; sunshine; thunderstorms...

What's your favourite warm-up?

I don't have a favourite but my dog's favourite is the de-gunking exercise which involves singing up & down scales with light snoring in-between each series of five notes. That one really gets him going - he has a tremendous vocal range!

What has been the highlight of your singing life?

If there has to be one, it would be winning Gold at LABBS with AAC in 2019 but if I'm allowed more than one, especially bearing in mind that I wasn't actually singing, I'd add my quartet NoteOrious winning LABBS in 2008.

Three words to describe Amersham A Cappella:

At the moment, AAC has a very different vibe to normal, as we, like most others, have only been meeting virtually. Ordinarily, I'd describe AAC as: Vibrant, Fun-loving and 'a bit bonkers' (quote from Craig Kehoe).



WEST MIDLANDS BHC

SEEKS A NEW MUSIC DIRECTOR

To lead the enthusiastic 30-man Anvil Chorus

Having regularly secured a top-10 finish at BABS Convention in recent years, we are keen to develop further and build on the enjoyment of our hobby, so would like to make an appointment prior to resumption of rehearsals when Covid-19 restrictions permit.

We meet 7.30-10pm Tuesdays in Great Barr, Birmingham, just 5minutes from J7 of the M6

Enquiries and applications to our Chairman John Brough

johnbrough@icloud.com

Closing date: 31st December 2020

It's Impossible Not to Mention Barbershop

Most of my barbershop friends will know that I'm very proud of LABBS and Crystal Chords and it has become a personal goal of mine to try and ensure that everyone in some capacity not only knows that 'I sing', but also that I sing barbershop.

So when I made it to the selection of candidates to appear on the BBC 1 gameshow 'Impossible' hosted by Rick Edwards, it was probably no surprise that one of my objectives was to ensure I mentioned barbershop at some stage.



I applied for the show in 'the old days' when you were allowed to stand near people and was really quite surprised to be selected as it can be fiercely fought for a place. The dates for the filming of the show quickly came round and they were immediately after LABBS 2019 in Harrogate so on the Sunday of the convention weekend, I hot footed it back home to Manchester and packed eight different outfits for a two-night stay in Glasgow to film the show. 'Impossible' has the same set of contestants for the whole week, and so whilst we actually filmed four shows in one day and the final

show on day two, I had to pretend I was there for five days and change outfits (and in some cases hairstyle) continuously to try and create the TV illusion.

For those who have followed my amateur TV gameshow career you will remember that I managed to get the whole of LABBS and the 'Ladies Association of British Barbershop singers' into my two minutes of chat when I appeared with my now husband, then fiancé, on BBC1's 'Pointless'. Based on my opportunity for five days on 'Impossible' I was hoping I'd at least be able to talk about barbershop once and despite a very nervy and poor performance on the first show, on 'Tuesday' I was thrilled to get the chance to 'do a grid' and have a proper chat with Rick. It was at this stage that I hit him with the facts about Crystal Chords and our recent silver medal win at IABS. The fact he then demanded that I received a round of applause was great.

I had a fun couple of days in Glasgow meeting new people and trying not to embarrass myself on TV. Thank you to everyone who watched and commented or emailed me about my performance and if you haven't seen it yet then you may be able to search for it on BBC Iplayer – I am on series 7 episode 1 – 5 (although fair notice that really I only get airtime on episode 2 and 3!).

I would highly recommend the experience and am already investigating potential next opportunities for me to get out there and spread the barbershop word – and if I win some money at the same time then that's a bonus!

For now though, who fancies joining me on Tenable..?

Alison Liddell
Crystal Chords



Mabel Thomas

It was Harrogate 1982, "Classic Collection" were on stage and Mabel Thomas said one word 'WOW'. She was hooked, and her new passion was barbershop. She hot footed it to Llandudno and joined the chorus where she sang Bari and perfected the 'Bari Shoulder.' She was MD for Llandudno Ladies before her move to Mountain Harmony, where she also stood in as MD, bridging the gap between permanent MDs. She also sang with Coast to Coast. She loved singing with Mountain Harmony and, together with music and glamour, what more could you ask for? In 2016 Mabel was presented with her thirty years long service award for Singing in Harmony. Thirty years of fun, friendship and commitment.

Failing health forced Mabel to retire from singing, but she kept in touch and enjoyed her occasional visits to rehearsal, always ready to hold our hand, had the grace to listen to what we said with words of wisdom and humour. Sadly the singing stopped and Mabel passed away at home with Leighton by her side on the 15th October 2020, but the memories and sparkle live on.

Hwyl Fawr ein hanwyl gyfaill, gorffwys mewn heddwch.

Goodbye our dear friend, rest in peace.

Janice Peterson
Mountain Harmony



Mabel Thomas 2nd from left on front row

A Gem of GEMS

Brenda Southgate signed up and registered for Gem Connection's first Love To Sing Course back in 2010 and was smitten from the word go.



After completing the course, she successfully auditioned and became a loyal and dedicated member of the Baritone Section.

Brenda always had a smile on her face and gave a warm welcome to everyone she met and always offered words of encouragement to any prospective new member of the chorus.

Brenda's husband Tony became a "Groupie" and supported us on our travels. He acted as Stage Manager for many of our shows and was always around to help serve refreshments at our functions and events.

Brenda was truly a Gem of Gems. We will miss her smiles and friendship by her being taken from us all too soon.

LABBS. Member 2010 – 2020

Jenny Smedley
GEM Connection

Bette Fitzgerald

We were sorry to say goodbye to Bette Fitzgerald, who passed away in October.

Bette Fitzgerald sang a vibrant bass with Liverpool Ladies' Barbershop Chorus for many years. She won three gold, a silver and two bronze medals as well as stage presence trophies with her chorus. As a quarteter, Bette achieved a silver medal with Pastiche in 1984 and a silver plus a stage presence trophy in 1985 with City Limits. Then in 1987, Impromptu gained a silver medal and a stage presence trophy.

We will miss her.

Thelma Anderson
Mersey Sound



City Limits, 1985

A Masterclass with Chorus Iceni

Chorus Iceni has been busy over the last couple of months. We had a number of Master Classes, which were hosted by Helen Owen (Finesse Quartet), Liz Garnett (Harmonising Guru) Dawn Waterhouse (Homeopath) plus two of our own - Catherine Scott and Claire Collen.

We also performed at LABBS Big Weekend, with our rendition of 'Laughter in the Rain' and 'Eight Days a Week'.

And we enjoyed presenting our lovely lead Lesley with her 25 year LABBS pin.


We are looking forward to singing in person again.

Marvellous Mandy Miller
Chorus Iceni

Autumn 2020 Masterclasses


Chorus Iceni

28th September 2020, 8.00 – 8.30 pm
Helen Owen – Finesse Quartet




Talks to us about what it's been like to be a member of Finesse – a ground-breaking quartet from the UK who made it to the dizzy heights of the Sweet Adelines International quartet finals seven times and made it to a staggering Bronze medal 3rd place in the world! We will share one of their wonderful performances and she will share what magic ingredients went into their huge success.
Helen was also a member of Colne Harmony which was our name before the name changed a few years ago!

5th October 2020, 8.00 – 8.30 pm
Liz Garnett



Crafting the Vision: a look inside the arranging process
Ever wondered how an arranger decides to go about turning that famous song into a barbershop chart?
This 30-minute presentation will work through the central questions an arranger has to answer, and which shape the whole process. Artistic, technical and pragmatic factors sometimes turn out to interact more than you'd think!

12th October 2020, 8.30 – 9.00 pm
Dawn Waterhouse




Dawn is a Homeopath, Nutritionist, Reiki Practitioner, Meditation teacher and also practices a number of other therapies.
During this 30 minute session we will explore:
What is anxiety
How to help yourself
Some major do's and don'ts
Breath Works
A Short Meditation

Autumn 2020 Masterclasses


Chorus Iceni

19th October 2020, 8.00 – 8.30 pm
Catherine Scott – DISC Personality types



Have you ever wondered why we get on better with some people than others, why we don't see things in the same way as others do, why we think different things are important?
With the help of a short on line questionnaire we will explore how our personality type affects the way we see the world and how by having a better understanding of why others behave differently can help us work more effectively with others in our group.

26th October 2020, 8.00 – 8.30 pm
Claire Collen - Learning styles



One core element of our wonderful hobby is learning; learning notes, learning words, learning interpretation, learning breath points – you name it, we learn it!
Research shows that different people learn in different ways and that we usually have a particular style of learning that we prefer. Having an awareness of our personal preferences and then following four key steps can really help to make our own learning more effective and productive, and that's got to be a good thing...
This 30 minute session will cover:
The learning cycle
The four key learning styles
What's your learning style?
And the really important bit – how can I apply it to singing...



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Woodland Wanderings With Amersham

Standing under a tree in late April I can hear great tits calling, sounding like a squeaky wheel. A chiff chaff is loudly singing to advertise his location to the local females and the branches rustle in the gentle breeze.

I am lucky enough to have a job where I spend a lot of time hanging out in the woods and enjoying nature, usually I am sharing that with visiting school children. During lockdown earlier in the year I was still able to access my local patch and was sharing photos and video snippets from the woods on my social media.



Around this time our chair Lesley Dell was sharing daily "keeping in touch" chats on our chorus Facebook group and I came to realise that other people might enjoy what I did so started doing weekly "woodland wanderings" live from the woods.

Mostly this consisted of just taking a minute or two to "be" in the woods, listening to the sounds of nature and watching the trees. Our chorus includes several members who were shielding, staying indoors for weeks or months at a time. Lead Tina James was shielding following cancer treatment and tuned in regularly, saying: "I looked forward to the posts, especially the videos. They kept me in touch with nature when I wasn't able to go and look at it for myself". Tina in turn shared some of her delicious baking recipes in the group during "Teatime with Tina"

Spending time in nature has proven health benefits, even looking at greenery can reduce cortisol levels and calm brain waves, and studies have shown that patients recover from operations faster and hospital stays are shorter if patients can see nature from their hospital bed, and GPs in some areas are now prescribing nature connection and walks for health. If we could combine singing and walking together, we'd surely be super healthy!

Jenny Lewis
Amersham A Cappella

Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers

LABBS SECRETARY

The LABBS Board is looking to appoint a new Secretary from March 2021

Get involved and help maintain the smooth running of our Association. We are looking for someone to sit on the Board as a Director of LABBS and as a Trustee of the Charity. The main responsibilities are to:

1. Act as a key member of the LABBS Board, liaising with other Directors as necessary, and contributing to the collective decision-making process with respect to delivering LABBS strategy and operations.
2. Document meeting minutes, maintain records and provide administrative support to the Board of Trustees. This is a role of a confidential nature.
3. Respond to emails, letters and telephone calls from LABBS clubs and other Barbershop Organisations, after consultation with the LABBS Chair and other Board Members.
4. Take a lead role as Company Secretary to ensure LABBS complies with the governance requirements of being a limited company and a charity, as set out by Companies House and The Charity Commission, which includes the submission of Annual Returns.
5. Confirm the agenda with the Chair and circulate all reports prior to a meeting.
6. Send out communications to clubs.

The position is voluntary, as are all Board positions. Expenses incurred will be reimbursed in line with the LABBS Expenses Policy. There is a requirement for the successful candidate to become a Director of LABBS and a Charity Trustee.

For a more detailed job description and to apply please contact Nancy Philbin chair@labbs.org.uk

Closing date for applications is 31st January 2021

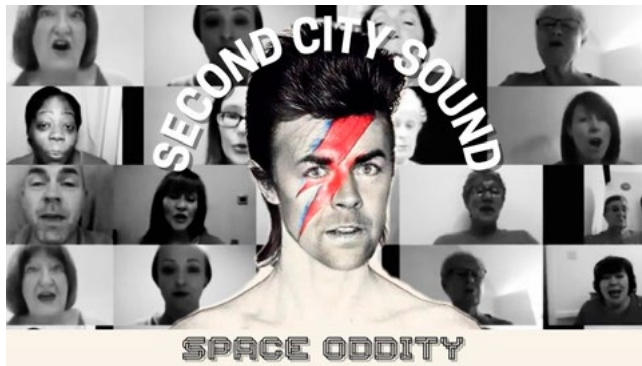
... leading the way in harmony



Rhapsody Chorus



Second City Sound



Gracenotes



CHORUSES



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Amersham A Cappella



Affinity Show Chorus



Fascinating Rhythm



Crystal Chords



The Chordettes



LABBS Big Weekend - Choruses

Cambridge Harmony



The Belles of Three Spires



Zero Degrees



Black Sheep Harmony



The White Rosettes



Main Street Sound



Arun A Capella

Celebrating milestone birthdays



Red Rosettes



More Harmony



Click the links to see the videos

LABBS Big Weekend - Choruses

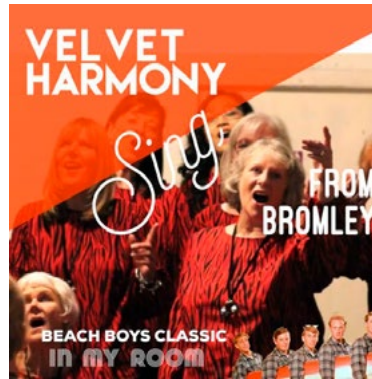
Mersey Harmony



Harmony InSpires



Velvet Harmony



Winchester A Cappella



Chorus Icen



Mountain Harmony



Welwyn Harmony



Coast to Coast



Norwich Harmony



One Acchord



Three Crown Sound



Click the links to see the videos

LABBS Big Weekend - Choruses

Cheshire Chord Company



Silver Lining



Capital Connection



Bristol Fashion



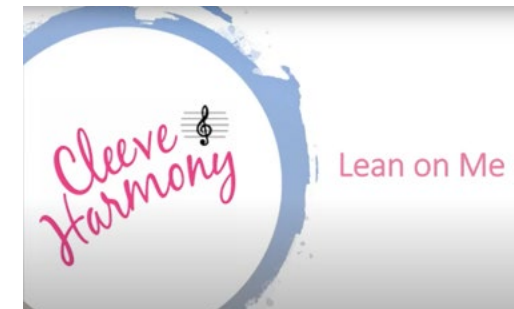
Spinnaker Chorus



Pennine Chimes



Cleeve Harmony



Cheshire A Cappella



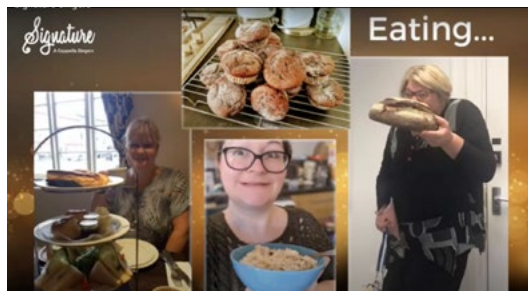
Steel City Voices



GEM Connection



Signature A Cappella



Click the links to see the videos

LABBS Big Weekend - Choruses

Avon Harmony



LABBS Youth Competition Chorus



Albacappella



LABBS Youth Chorus



Abbey Belles



Click the links to see the videos

QUARTETS



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[Catra](#)



LABBS Big Weekend - Quartets

[Chessnuts](#)



[Nova](#)



[Jabberwocky](#)



[In Cahoots](#)



[Pitchcraft](#)



[Jiggle](#)



[In House](#)



[PZAZZ](#)



[Nightfall](#)



Click the links to see the videos

LABBS Big Weekend - Quartets

Quattro



Sahara



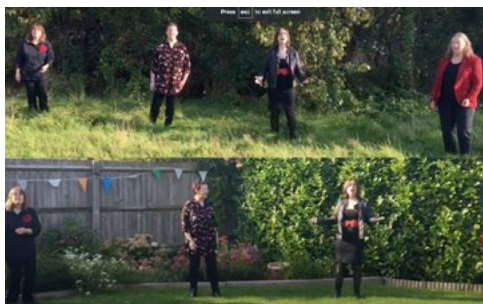
Shortcomings



Hat-Trick



Red Velvet



Sapphire



Something for the Weekend



Specs Appeal



Revolution



Sonic



Ruby Tuesday



Tartanigans



Sound Central



Follow the Dots



Click the links to see the videos

LABBS Big Weekend - Quartets

[The Chaos Theory](#)



[The Rolling Tones](#)



[The Songsmiths](#)



[The Firebirds](#)



[Twinset and Pearls](#)



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Coming Out of Lockdown Intact

Based in Canada, Mo Field, a Certified Performance Judge, a chorus director with multiple award winning performances, an active coach, quarteter and arranger.

Unsurprisingly, the pandemic has affected me deeply. And whilst I miss travelling around to visit choruses across the world, I am grateful to be able to sleep in my own bed at night.

Zoom meetings can be stressful – 2D in a 3D world. So I encourage you to liven it up and screen share, have props, move around – anything to make it a bit more like real life.

It's important that we try to be positive. Imagine you never had any kind of life before the pandemic, and someone said to you, there's this thing called the internet and you can use it to connect with anyone in the world. You can drop into any chorus rehearsal – anywhere. It's amazing. Actually, I have never felt more connected.

We are actually pioneering how to engage with people in a new way. It's time to innovate.

We are no less musicians than we were before coronavirus. Ask yourself – what do I want to be at the end of all this? I have decided – I want to be a smarter musician. After all, I am learning every day.

We must carry on creating – your brain is a muscle – use or lose it! Duet with friends, create a quartet. Call up friends every day to sing through a few lines – I guarantee within a few days you won't want to miss that call.

By creating, innovating and learning, we will come out of lockdown smarter and stronger.

It is important to remember what we are and what we want to be. When this is done, our communities will need healing – and we can do that.

Mo Field



Your brain is a muscle – use or lose it

The Katy Philips Award

The LABBS community was sad to lose our beloved Katy, and her family asked to set up a memorial award in her memory. The Katy Phillips Award aims to enable a young barbershopper to further their barbershop education, and has previously been won by Beth Sumpner, Ros Kipps, and Hannah Briggs.

Hannah used the £250 award to develop her coaching skills, as did Green Street Blues MD Ros Kipps. Unfortunately due the pandemic Beth has yet to organise her training but looks forward to doing so in 2021.

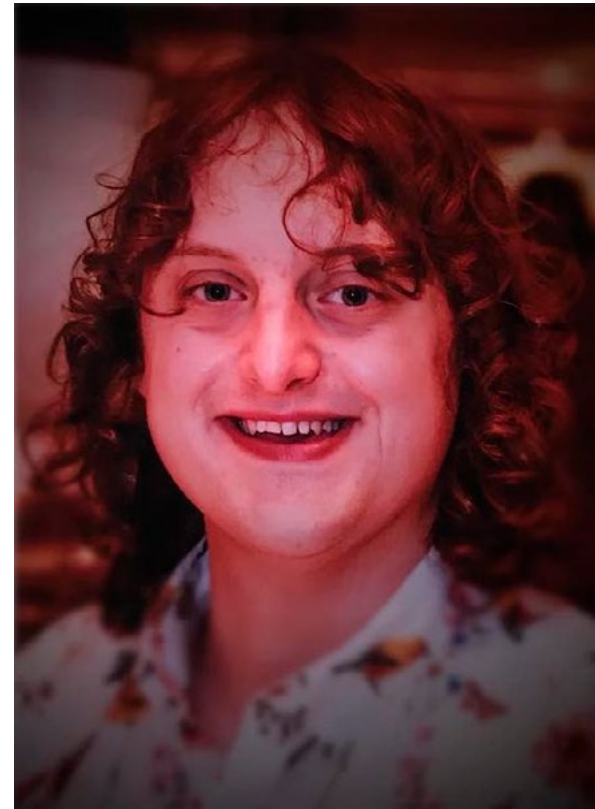
The winner of the 2020 award is Oliver Downer, musical director for Winchester A Cappella.

Carol Agg said: "Ollie joined us in 2018 and is incredibly generous with his time and wonderful skills. Our LABBS Big Weekend video, Mr Blue Sky is an example of the enthusiasm and musical skill he has brought to the chorus. Ollie is a natural leader and will go on to great things."

Ollie works as a musician based in and around Southampton and he directs Rising Stars Productions, Gospel Phonics, Romsey Ladies Choir and Winchester A Cappella.

Ollie teaches singing for Southampton Music Services, clarion for the National Open Youth Orchestra and is a private peripatetic teacher. He is currently working with the SÓN Orchestra as their Education Officer and is the Youth Ambassador on Southampton Music Hub's board.

He achieved a degree - first class honours in Music at the University of Southampton with his studying specialising in performance, conducting and composition. He is an accomplished musician, having been awarded Grade 8 in singing, clarinet, recorder and saxophone.



Ollie says; "Thank you for awarding this to me. I am honoured to have been the recipient of the Katy Phillips Award 2020. It is amazing that LABBS recognises a young Barbershopper every year and I am delighted to have been a part of that. This year, I finished studying my undergraduate in Music at the University of Southampton with a First Class Honours. I have been working with Winchester A Cappella for two and a half years and it is the highlight of my week. I hope to use the money to fund a conducting course to help me continue to bring new things to the chorus."



The Jen Mills Award 2020 Winners - Ruby Tuesday



What a year 2020 has turned out to be! Definitely a year no one could have predicted.

When the four of us got together in 2016, we dreamt maybe one year we would compete at convention, but as a new quartet we didn't feel quite ready. Then last year Ruby Tuesday decided 2020 would be the year and we were excited about the prospect of Prelims.

We made plans, had ideas and like many choruses and quartets, were making goals for the year - this would be the year we went for it. Then COVID-19 hit and we were plummeted into a different world- almost overnight everyone's world changed.

Determined to carry on, we continued to meet online, and once lockdown eased in the summer, we met in person at our Tenor Paula's smallholding - socially distanced of course. We used the time to find and learn fantastic new songs, play with technology and discover new ways to sing together.

"We can't express how excited we are."

We had recently returned from an excellent weekend retreat with the fabulous Emma Shanks just before

lockdown hit. She helped us find our inner voice and style, discover our individual strengths and courage to develop the Ruby Tuesday sound. 2020 had other plans, but we still had ours and were determined to try and achieve at least some of them.

One plan we didn't have to halt (thankfully) was applying for the Jen Mills award - an opportunity for quartets to have something special or different arranged. This was an exciting prospect and one we hoped one day we might win, as it was for us, a way to perform different music full of rhythm and soul - something we would love to sing.

The LABBS Big Weekend was a different but incredibly successful alternative to convention, so to have the chance to produce our video performance of Crabbuckit and to see so many other quartets and choruses performing their chosen songs was amazing. And then to win the Jen Mills Award too, well, that just made our year! We can't express how excited we are!

Even as Sam read out our statement, I didn't realise we'd won; I still didn't until she announced Ruby Tuesday as the 2020 winner. We watched the announcement together online and were shocked, very pleasantly surprised. And a few tears may have been shed. What an incredible opportunity for

us to have, amidst all the uncertainties and ups and downs this was perfect timing - It couldn't have come at a better time for us, but even more so for me, only just recovering from cancer surgery a few weeks ago.

We all knew Jen and loved her energy and enthusiasm - she was so passionate and positive about the music she loved, and that passion was, and still is, infectious. We feel so proud to have this opportunity to not only have known her, but to continue her passion for music. We feel incredibly honoured and privileged to win. I'd say speechless but that's not Ruby Tuesday! Oh, and have I said how excited we are?

We love what we do and have found a connection this year despite the lockdown. We feel stronger than ever and cannot wait to bring a song to Convention that Jen would have been proud of; one we hope you'll enjoy watching us perform as much as we will do performing it.

Rachel England
Ruby Tuesday

Lockdown With Lubkowski

A real treat of the LABBS Big Weekend, when Linda Corcoran met up with The Collective's 'boss' Simon Lubkowski. The full interview can be [watched here](#).

Here are some highlights of Simon giving a background into the wonder that is The Collective.

Simon:

The Collective is for everyone. Our mantra is 'we never leave anyone behind', and as a result we now have over 3000 people signed up to The Collective, with around 700 people who submit tracks for each song.

We realised that Zoom only allows 100 people per meeting, but as the popularity grew that wasn't enough, so we decided to do sectional rehearsals. Thankfully, among the singers who took part were many generous people who agreed to help out running sectionals, mixing tracks, admin and more!

One of the great things about The Collective is that we have singers who haven't sung since school. You don't need to be a barbershopper, and it's wonderful that people who have always wanted to sing but have been too nervous have found a way to enjoy singing again.

There have been times when it was really, really busy. For One Voice, we had 400 Zoom rehearsals over just two weeks – but thankfully the number of volunteers increased as well, and we went up to around 60 people helping run the chorus.

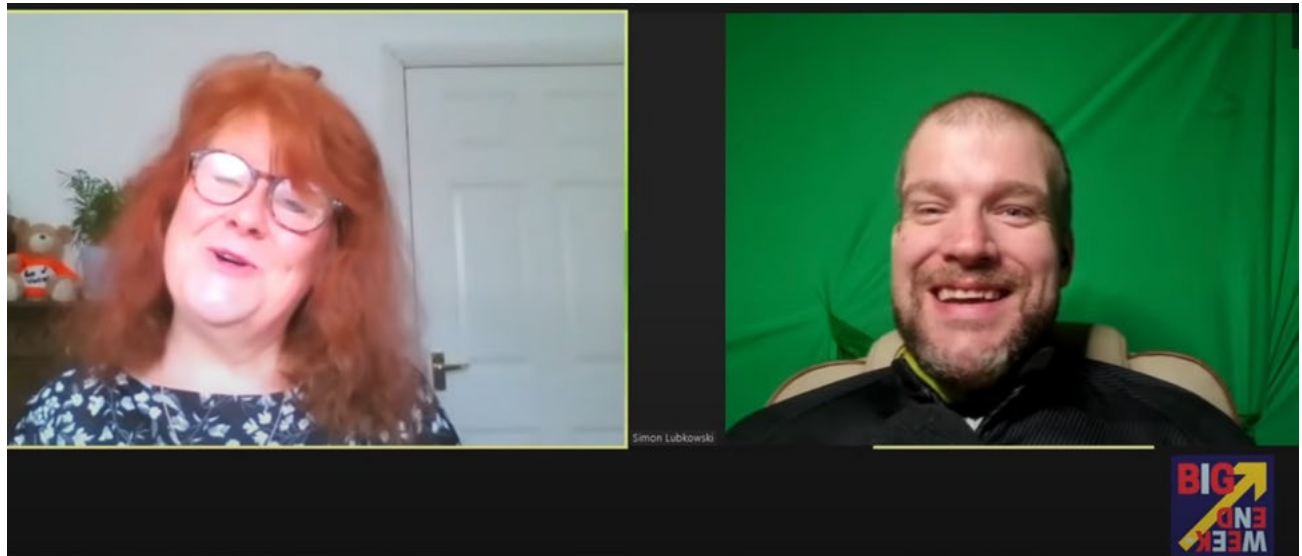
As we have gone along, we have refined processes and now it's fantastic that are able to give feedback to every singer and include every single submission in the final mix. There is no pass/fail – the feedback is encouraging and positive. If you put the time in – you are on stage!

To me, the community aspect has been really important and people have made friends across the world. There is

a whole new social scene as well including quizzes and karaoke.

Everything is free – take a look at The Collective Facebook page for details on how to join, the guide tracks and rehearsals. You don't have to attend everything. It's about being part of something when so much of life has closed down."

To find out more about The Collective, visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheCollectiveChoir>.



Closing Words From YouTube And Zoom

**"Venus Effect and We are Family
were amazing"**

**"Catching up on the ones you
wouldn't have seen"**

**"We are family – adopting as LABBS
theme tune until we can meet again."**

**"We have probably all had our low points and
when you see what people have put together –
shows we haven't given up."**

**"being able to see all the quartets
without leaving my sofa"**

**"Lovely to see people much more
close up than if you were in the hall
and they were on the stage."**

**"Seeing choruses we wouldn't
normally have seen at convention."**

**"Laura Orton was the most lovely host
– warm and emotional"**

"Overwhelmed with joy"

**"We got to know our choruses a bit better –
their personalities from the videos"**

**"Who would have thought it was possible to
get this emotional in your own home."**

**"The Saturday night show
was awesome."**

**"Lovely cooperation from all the
different international guests"**



Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers

BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The LABBS Board is looking to co-opt a new member to the Board responsible for Diversity and Inclusion from March 2021.

The LABBS Board is committed to creating a diverse association with an inclusive culture where everyone is accepted and can thrive. Following the review of the LABBS five-year strategic plan we have identified a need to co-opt a new Board member to be responsible for diversity and inclusion. This is a new position where the successful candidate will be able develop the role as time progresses. Initially the responsibilities are to:

- Consult with the Board, and with Clubs, to identify ways in which LABBS can widen its appeal to a more diverse group of members.
- Work with the Marketing & Communications Director to ensure that our external profile and marketing is inclusive.
- Identify ways in which LABBS can create a more inclusive culture.
- Collaborate with other barbershop organisations to open up our hobby to wider and more diverse members and audiences.

The above position is voluntary, as are all Board positions, although expenses incurred will be reimbursed in line with the LABBS expenses policy. We are looking for someone to sit on the Board as a Director of LABBS and as a Trustee of the Charity.

For a more detailed job description and to apply please contact Nancy Philbin chair@labbs.org.uk

Closing date for applications is 31st January 2021



... leading the way in harmony

Crystal Chords Always Find a Way

Although the cancellation of Bournemouth was heartbreaking, how lucky we were that the team at LABBS set about such an amazing replacement weekend for us with the LABBS Big Weekend. Over the course of the weekend we met in our chorus zoom room to watch different pieces of the event and in particular were delighted to see so many of our chorus represented with both Alison and Laura acting as MCs, and three of our quartets represented in the Friday submissions. The sections on inspirational quartets and a nomination for Barberlicious was wonderful and then by the time we all gathered on Zoom to watch the Crystal Chords slot as a nominated inspirational chorus we were in floods of tears.

We especially loved laughing at some of the old Crystal Chords outfits on our chorus submission with 40 years of memories and celebrations and we are very proud of all of our members who have been and who continue to be, contributors to the wider LABBS organisation. It is always the annual get together of convention that helps us enjoy the sisterhood and harmony that LABBS offers and despite not being in person, the LABBS Big Weekend 2020 was no exception. We dearly wish we could have all been together for some hugs and afterglows, but stay positive that we can do it all soon.

As a final note, away from LABBS weekend we have been embracing the autumn season and our last social event was a 'Creepy Crystals countdown night'. Of course, we all love a chance to dress up and none more than our lovely Lead section leader Gill Irwin who hosted 'dictionary corner' in very spooky style!

Alison Liddell
PRO, Crystal Chords



Uncovering Opportunities

Invisible illnesses leave LABBS members restricted by what our bodies will allow us to do. We can't offer to volunteer for anything for fear of having to let people down.

Then along came lockdown. Despite having M.E/ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, I can now do everything on offer from my bedroom. Suddenly, there are opportunities to get involved with things that I'd never been able to before.

I've loved leading sessions for The Collective, and having a bit of a chat with Rita Hurlands (legend) at the end of one led to helping with LABBSi, which led to helping in the build up and delivery of The Big Weekend, which led to a feeling of such pride in being part of an incredibly inspiring, dedicated and lovely team of people.

I never would have had the chance to see the inner-workings of LABBS, because attending any event involves a carefully-orchestrated plan of conserving energy, pacing myself, and usually still ending up confined to bed while everyone is at the

afterglow. But when you can attend meeting in your pyjamas, roll out of bed to warm up a Zoom-room, mix audio and video across the week from your couch and have people you've looked up to for years tell you how grateful they are, it rekindles a feeling of self-worth that has often been missing since my illness took hold.

This is essentially a love letter to LABBS. Dozens of new friendships have been formed on the back of the opportunities you've offered and the thought of eventually meeting up when restrictions are lifted fills me with so much joy - I feel blessed to be part of an organisation that has adapted so brilliantly to a global crisis, and allowed me to contribute. Thank you for all you've done.

Leanne Blaney
Shenanigans Quartet



All New for Harmony InSpires

New Home

We made it into our new home.... For one ensemble rehearsal on 10th October! We all worked hard on our processes to get into the hall, conducted our risk assessment and we had an amazing two hours of actually singing together. Our tech experts also set up a Zoom with two cameras so that EVERYONE could be included.



Some of us were wearing home-made singing masks but for next time we all have a 'Funky' mask with our logo! Whenever next time is!



New Award

In the summer, Harmony InSpires launched The Trustees' Award to show its appreciation of exceptional contributions made by members. We voted unanimously for the first award to be made to Claire Cookson to thank her for all her contribution to the chorus and especially for moving HI to our new membership and web platform, hosted by Making Music. The new website has made sharing of songs, teach tracks, meeting minutes etc so much easier.

New Members

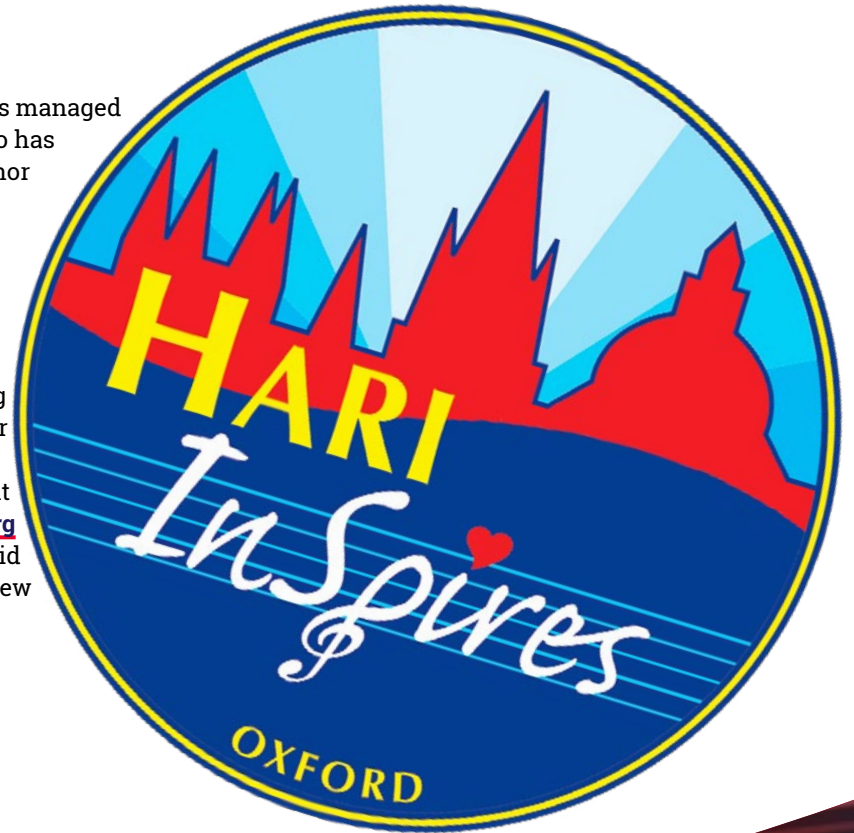
Even in these strange times our chorus has managed to grow and we have one new member who has passed her audition. Jo Birtles is now a tenor with HI, and we hope two others will soon become full members.

LABBS weekend video

We had such fun recording the audio and video for our contribution to LABBS Big Weekend and Hari, our MD, did an amazing job putting all the clips and tracks together – including the pets' chorus of animated mogs, dogs, a pig and a duck. You can see it on our website – www.harmonyinspires.org and even the LABBS LinkedIn page. Hari did such an amazing job that we now have a new version of our logo for special occasions.

It's true – Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now....

Meriel Lewis
Harmony InSpires



Second City Sound's Roving Reporter on LABBS Big Weekend

Q Did you enjoy LABBS Big Weekend?

A Oh yes! Although we would rather have been singing in person and meeting all our lovely friends we still enjoyed the experience of watching everyone virtually. We'd like to say straight away congratulations to the LABBS technical team for all their hard work in putting it together and thank you to their "special guests", Sean Devine, Deke Sharon and Simon Lubkowski.



Q How did your own virtual performance go?

A If the comments from our ex-members and friends around the UK and beyond are anything to go by, it was very well received. David Bowie is a special artist and it was exciting to have a combination of two of his songs arranged for us by the talented Jon Conway. Although it was introduced to us before lockdown the bulk of the practising was done whilst we were only able to sing on Zoom, so to have the audio recordings come out as well as they did was very special. Our tech wizard, Anna Westwood claims she is self-taught, but I think she must have had some fairy dust in her fingers when she put all the videos together. We were sick of seeing our Zoom faces so everyone enjoyed putting on their 'proper people' make up and then the alien make-up. Although some of us cheated and used an app called Snap Camera to change our appearance...

Q What memories do you think your members will have from working on the virtual performance during lockdown?

A Most people liked the idea of remaining connected with our friends, together with the excitement of giving a performance under difficult conditions. Although folks thought it was a "challenging journey into the unknown" they were proud of the final product.

Q Where do you go from here?

A Rumour has it that our tech team and MD are cooking up something else but you know how much fake news there is about. However, we do want to go full steam ahead into recruitment mode. Although we can't meet in person yet we'd love to invite people to our Zoom rehearsals so that they can see what a fun loving bunch we are. We are expecting to learn more songs introduced by our new Musical Director, Rob Barber, who has seen more of us on Zoom than he did in real life when he first joined us in January 2020. We must be doing something right because he still keeps coming back, bless him.

Sandra Moss
Secretary, Second City Sound



Screen Acting

Acting through Song

Acting for Stage

Presenting

Vlogging

Understanding the Industry



Online Acting coaching with experienced TV Actor, Alice Connor.

- ▶ iACT provides 1-1 online coaching for performers of all abilities. With a focus in Acting for Screen, Alice Connor takes a proactive and inclusive approach to learning the craft through script work and self tapes.
- ▶ iACT is a perfect tool for professional young performers who need support navigating the media industry.
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- ▶ iACT mentors new performers, those who are looking to increase in confidence, develop public speaking skills and improve vlogging/presenting skills.

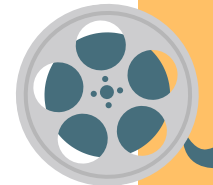
Contact

✉ hello@iact-online.com

📷 [@iactonline](https://www.instagram.com/iactonline)

🌐 www.iact-online.com

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Fascinating Rhythm Virtual Newbies



Every year Fascinating Rhythm welcomes new singers to the chorus. Usually following our Learn to Sing day in February a number of ladies come to try out rehearsals after signing up in the singing-induced endorphin high of this fabulous day. And then once they are in rehearsals any further resistance is futile. The year becomes a blur of audition songs, rehearsals, laughter, coaching, retreats, sing outs and then of course the biggie - Convention weekend!

This year there would have been at least four new members of FR joining us on the stage in Bournemouth however it was not to be. Instead they have experienced the LABBS amazing virtual convention

These ladies managed to join us for a handful of face to face rehearsals and then lockdown. Zoom rehearsals have been hard for most of us, and it would have been entirely understandable if our new members had decided to put joining FR on hold however this year's newbies are a determined bunch and have stuck with us.

So, what has kept them in the FR fold through 2020? What have been the best bits for them? Each one of them

has mentioned how welcome they have been made to feel and that they have enjoyed the support from their buddies, sections and the chorus as a whole.

Even without regular face to face rehearsals our new ladies have been thrown into a crash course in barbershop - they have enjoyed sessions with Jo our MD, and all say how much new technique they have learnt. Jo has also got them to complete a top-secret project - recording 'Happy Birthday' in harmony to serenade members on their special day. During rehearsals we have watched videos of other choruses and our newbies have been fascinated by the world of barbershop. They cannot wait to join us on the risers whenever the next convention may be.

All our new ladies have met the challenge of learning their probation songs while in lockdown. Not only have they felt a huge sense of achievement when they have completed the challenge, but they have said how much having songs to learn has helped them deal with the uncertainties, anxieties and difficulties that the pandemic has brought.

As a chorus we are honoured to have been joined by such dedicated and fun women - and we are so pleased they have kept with us through this very odd time.

And so, to Convention - although we were missing all the normal trappings it was still a weekend to remember. A huge thank you to LABBS from all of us at FR for putting together a great weekend of content and music. We have all laughed, cried and celebrated the powerful friendship that this hobby brings. We are so looking forward to Convention 2021 - our newbies are ready for Harrogate!

Hannah Richmond
PRO, Fascinating Rhythm



Life BeGins at 40 for Red Rosettes

Drum roll please! A very important announcement is about to be made. But first, a little background information.

In 1980 a group of ladies came together to sing. Fast forward 40 years and the small group has developed into a top five ladies barbershop chorus called the Red Rosettes. 2020 was going to be our ruby year – and what plans we had!

A trip to Ireland to carry off the IABS trophy for best chorus! A big 40th birthday bash in a posh hotel, all dressed in our posh frocks and tiaras!

Then... COVID-19 and lockdown. Hopes of a win in Ireland were dashed. Dreams of a big birthday bash were shattered. We were down, but we were not out. Undaunted, we made a video of “Hero” and raised over £1,000 for our chosen charity, Derian House, a hospice for children with life-limiting conditions. We also made a video of “Hallelujah” and helped to raise £7,775 for Cancer Research.

“Dreams of a big birthday bash were shattered.”



We created an amazing psychedelic LABBS Showcase and had a fabulous virtual 40th birthday bash with friends old and new.

But something was missing. Something we all need in our lives. Something as unique, special, intriguing and entertaining as the Red Rosettes themselves! And now, finally, the waiting is over!

Any guesses? YES! It's the Red Rosettes' 40th Anniversary Gin. This traditional style gin is vapour infused and distilled in the heart of the Red Rose county of Lancashire. A 40% ABV with a citrus lead, strong orange, chamomile and wild flowers and a strong finish with traditional botanicals. It works well with floral and botanical tonics but is equally delicious neat or over ice. This bespoke, unique gin is a limited edition of 150 bottles and costs £40. The specially designed label celebrates 40 years of Red Rosettes barbershop history and includes our slogan: “Life's A Song, We Sing It!”.

The gin can be purchased online from www.brindledistillery.co.uk and once it's gone, it's gone! Make sure to grab a little piece of barbershop history.

Ann Atkin,
Red Rosettes PR Team

Silver Lining Fundraising and Frolics

Our fundraising has been continuing but obviously we haven't been able to sing for an audience so ideas were limited. We wanted to raise funds for our nominated charity MDS Patient Support Group to support one of our members who has been receiving support from the organisation during and after her treatment. I usually make jams, jellies and chutneys that are sold at our annual Family and Friends Christmas event, usually with other members' lovely home-made crafts that sell really well for our funds.

"As the season continued, quince, more apples, blackberries and pears kept coming."

After my usual request for produce from our members' gardens I also put a shout out for jars and produce on the local Kenilworth Facebook page. The local radio picked the story up and came around to interview me in very socially distanced style! Very soon the jars started coming and I was really surprised at the generosity of friends, neighbours and family with produce from their gardens and allotments and so many jars (I had to find storage space!) kept coming.



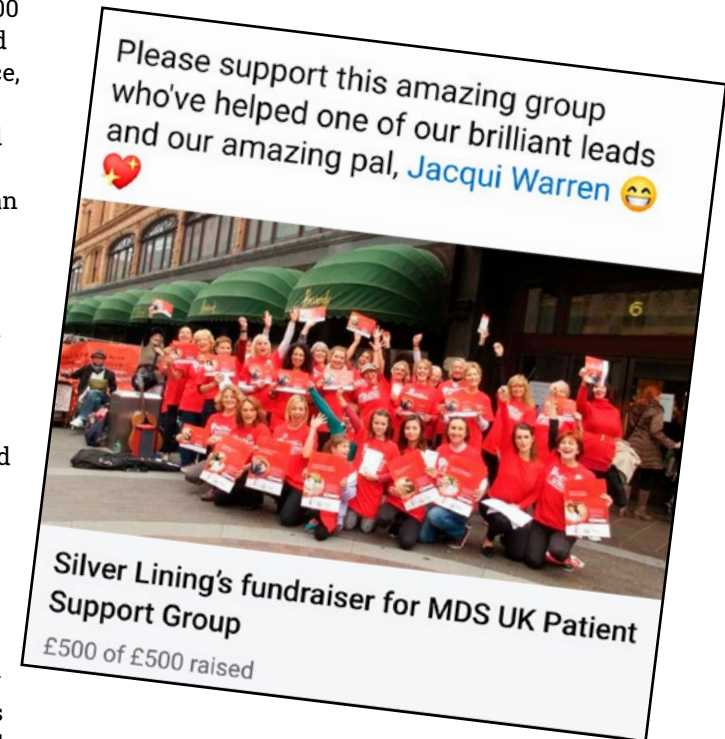
With apples, plums, rhubarb, courgettes, being left on my doorstep I soon got in the swing of it. We raised £500 with a Facebook fundraiser which included £150 raised from the produce sold. As the season continued, quince, more apples, blackberries and pears kept coming and now at the latest count another £150 has been received from the sales, this time for chorus funds. I found it therapeutic and enjoyed every minute in my kitchen, an extra bonus to a useful task – we've still got a few jars left if you're interested!

#LBW and what a fantastic weekend it was. Thank you to the LABBS Team which did an amazing job. Silver Lining had a fun time (with certain stressful moments of course) trying to get our voices back in tune for our recording of 'Change Your World'. We are really pleased with the final result and we hope you enjoyed it too. The standard and imagination behind the chorus and quartet videos over the weekend was amazing and #LABBS20 can take its place in a list of memorable conventions with pride!

We have continued to Zoom with friends as well as our weekly rehearsals interspersed with fabulous sessions from Sally McLean, Alison Thompson, Craig Kehoe and as I write we are really looking forward to an evening with Avalon!

Stay safe everyone and keep that voice going, you'll need it more next year!

Judith Medlock
PRO, Silver Lining Chorus



Lamorna Hooker – LABBS Board Youth Rep



“Singing has always been important in my life” says Lamorna, who is excited about joining the LABBS Board in January as the very first Youth member representative. Her early experiences of Barbershop singing came when she watched her mum Sarah singing tenor with Amersham A Cappella. “I always loved going to Amersham rehearsals,” she confesses, “they were so much fun, and I often joined in the warmups and helped make the tea. I used to listen

to teach tracks with mum in the car, so I learnt a lot of tenor lines back then. In fact, I still know a lot of their Christmas repertoire in tenor!”

But schoolwork, babysitting duties and then University meant it wasn't until January 2018 that Lamorna joined her first chorus, Avon Harmony in Bristol. She went on to join the LABBS Youth Chorus six months later, and a year after that Bristol Fashion became her “home”. Lamorna was appointed LABBS Youth Coordinator in November 2019, sings with the mixed chorus The Bristol Mix and is part of a youth quartet called Chance Encounters - so, she's pretty busy! COVID-19 has meant many opportunities to sing together have been lost, but Lamorna is upbeat, and can't wait to start singing with all her groups in person again. When she's not singing Lamorna loves cooking, baking and being outdoors. “But I'm at my happiest,” she says, “when I'm at a Barbershop event or walking on the Cornish clifftops.”

Jill Cook
LABBS Membership Director

Long Service Awards

Here are just some of the recent Long Service Awards - congratulations ladies!



LABBS Liaison Officer Jacquie Edwards with Doreen Lea of Arun A Cappella



Lesley Smith - Chorus Icení



Daughter Lynsey and Grandson Jamie accepting an Honorary Life Membership and 35 year LABBS long service on behalf of Pam Budd from Arun A Cappella