

Voice Box

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



Autumn 2021 £4

Returning Safely to Rehearsal



In This Edition

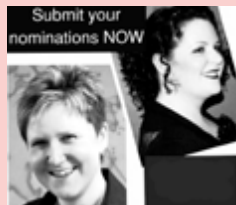
Diversity & Inclusion



Prepare for Convention



Make Submissions for Awards



Chimes Call it A Day



Ladies Association of
British Barbershop Singers

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Notes from Natalie Feddon

Hello everyone

I am so glad to be writing this piece as Choruses are beginning to get together again. It has been difficult for us all during lock down and at times, I know we have been thankful that our choruses have kept on meeting albeit via zoom.

I have, this week, been meeting with all of the world's barbershop leaders on the World Harmony Council (WHC) (via Zoom). This was a great opportunity to find out how other countries are coping with Covid. Everyone is committed to supporting their members during lockdown and have found that the best way to do this was via education. The WHC are hoping to put together a video with submissions from each Barbershop Organisation to showcase worldwide Barbershop. We will, of course, be contributing to this and I will be sure to share when this is available.

I have been amazed to see the different locations that clubs have chosen to practice in now that we are allowed to be together again, from football stadiums to gardens, barns and even on the steps of the Guildhall! Congratulations to you all for keeping together despite adversity. My own club, Velvet Harmony, have been meeting in the park and we all had tears as we got together and heard those harmonies that had been missing over zoom.

Plans are underway for our convention this year. We hope to host live events in six hubs around the UK - keep your eyes peeled on social media and our website for the details of where you can sign up and take part. This is also a great



opportunity for you to showcase your clubs and quartets at our virtual convention so please send in your videos. I look forward to seeing them.

I am looking forward to my first in person visit since I have become Chair, to see the Chordettes at an informal picnic and sing by the river Teign. I am so excited as I will be presenting some founder members with their 45-year LABBS service badges. Please do contact me if you would like me to visit your club, I would love to see you.

Natalie Feddon
LABBS Chair

Deadline for next issue

**Friday
5th November 2021**

Maximum 300 words plus two images if possible 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.

Champs Corner

Three steps to singing heaven

While Boris was planning his roadmap out of lockdown, Amersham A Cappella's committee had some tough calls of their own to make.

The big question was how to get all our singers safely back to live rehearsals, no matter where they stood on the COVID fear-o-meter.

The answer was preparation, preparation, preparation: our members were canvassed; stringent safety protocols were written; singer's masks were sewn; personal amplifiers (ideal for singing outdoors) were sourced; coloured cones for social distancing were bought; and a venue was donated by one of our members - a stable yard with a large, open barn for shelter.

Then we produced our very own three step plan back to live singing happiness.



Step one: 19th May - 23rd June

After 14 months off the risers, many had concerns about not being able to bring their A game to rehearsals straight away. So we decided to ease everyone in with two 16-singer sessions every Wednesday evening plus regular Tuesday Zoom rehearsals for those who couldn't attend.

Places were pre-booked to make sure everyone got a turn plus agreed to the protocols (including doing a lateral flow test on the day). And we were off ... to an amazing, very emotional, start.

Step two: 29th June - 13th July

Confidence was growing. So we said goodbye to our online lifeline with a fantastic 'Zoom Out' party and switched to live rehearsals for all.

Two, longer Tuesday sessions, each for 30 singers. Same venue, same safety protocols, double the fun.

Step three: 20th July - ?

All together now...still singing outside while the sun shines with options to move indoors hopefully from September. Result.

So we're not back to life before COVID. Yet. But this sure feels like heaven to us.

Hils Apicella
PRO, Amersham A Cappella



Helen Lappert's Lowdown on Lockdown

Lockdown Loathes

- "Missing out on the joy and energy that's generated by singing together."
- "Losing connection with members who hated Zoom."

Lockdown Loves

- "Increased communication with Section Leaders. Running sectionals on new songs meant meeting up with them beforehand to iron out any issues. Habit to be continued!"
- "Chatting online with members I wouldn't ordinarily have chance to connect with."
- "Popping in to other Chorus' rehearsals - and meeting up with Cottontown Chorus for our AKOM 'Still The One' Premiere Party without the 200 mile hike!"
- "The LABBS and BABS virtual conventions. I loved LABBS' impressive mix of educational events, guest speakers and the virtual videos - especially The Tartanigan's 'Skyfall'."
- "The LABBSi events - another excellent lockdown innovation."

Future Hopes

- "To appreciate the freedom we have in 'normal' times. And not to lose my long list of brilliant ideas for fun virtual rehearsals - just in case!"



Sound Central – Quartet Champs



So we've returned to in person, indoor singing, actual voices, in real life!

Although we've had a number of outdoor get-togethers this year, it's never the same as singing indoors. We were a little emotional at our first rehearsal, actually hearing our real quartet sound properly for the first time in what felt like forever. We absolutely loved it and went to town belting out a few of our favourites.

I'm not sure if this was the same for all

singers, quartets and choruses alike, but we quickly realised that vocal health, range, breath support all felt a little different. The lack of practice had taken its toll. Low notes seemed a little too low and high notes a little too high. It led us to question if we were singing in the correct pitch!

It's surprising how much of an impact not singing regularly has had. It's given

us a good incentive to get back to basics, phonation, warming up properly, breathing exercises, duetting and singing songs through on an 'E' to get the right placement and hear the chords.

The LABBS quartet coaching was an amazing opportunity for us. It gave us real focus. We thoroughly enjoyed it and really appreciate the sound advice and guidance from the LABBS judges. We were also lucky enough to hear other

quartets singing in our feedback session at the end of the day. Something we've really missed.

It's been amazing to get back to some kind of normality. We've booked a number of rehearsals over the coming months and we're keeping our fingers crossed that it'll only be a matter of time before we'll all be singing together again.

**Take care all,
Sound Central xxxx**



IN HOUSE Go Out Out!

Being in a quartet has certainly been a bonus these last few months. With restrictions lifting in May and six people allowed to meet inside, you can only imagine how excited we were to organise some get-togethers!

One Tuesday night in June, it was amazing to see England win their game in the Euros, and even more special with the addition of Sally McLean who stopped by for some coaching. She worked us hard but we loved it!

During June, we also ditched Jamulus and met in person for an evening of catching up and a little bit of singing!



June would normally be the month for LABBS prelims, so it was great to still be able to meet online for an afternoon of coaching and singing. What an afternoon, but we

certainly need to build some stamina! A special thanks to everyone that made it possible; coaches, judges, education team, Zoominators....

Sorry if we've missed anyone off! It was fab Saturday afternoon – hopefully it'll be in person next year!

As our headline says, In HOUSE went out-out! Now it's allowed, we couldn't miss an opportunity for a proper catch up. This time there was no singing involved; a meal, some drinks and some proper 'going out' clothes - perfect!

Make sure you keep up to date with all our activities on our social media accounts @INHOUSEQUARTET you also find links to our website on there.

Julie Phillips



The Bakewell Tarts and Shenanigans: Tartanigans

"Hey, wanna collab?"

That was all it took for Shenanigans to excitedly type back 'Heck, yes!' and join The Bakewell Tarts on a journey of a load of messages, a couple of Zoom meetings, many minutes of James Bond parody footage, in order to present our LABBS Showcase of Skyfall during LABBS' Big Weekend 2020.

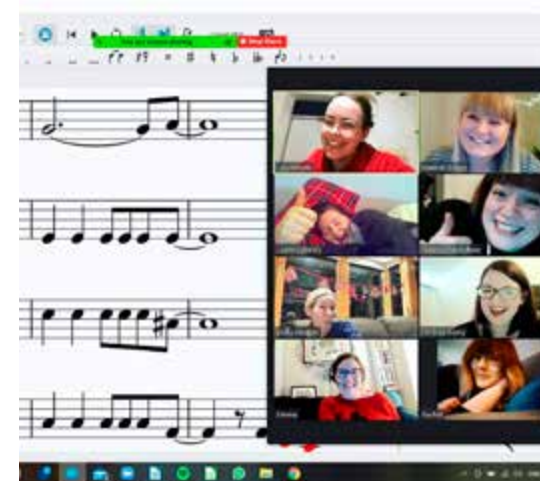
We were so pleased with the result, but we were more pleased with the way we'd got to know each other a bit better and had given each other moments of hilarity over the summer without ever even having the chance to meet up. Each quartet was obviously confined by social distancing rules too, so any face-to-face meet up remained a long way off.

And then June 2021 came!

Shenanigans took a trip across the Pennines and Rachel offered up her garden for an afternoon of BBQing, with a little bit of barbershop thrown in. It was a joy to be together again for the first time since Convention 2019, and showed that while it was the music that brought us together, it's the friendship that will keep us going.

This year, we've had a go at arranging a song together, over Zoom. We had a go at singing it live together, as well as Skyfall, and felt that familiar buzz that everyone has missed so much through the pandemic. We can't wait to share our new song and video; it's been brilliant to be creative together again, and even better to enjoy each others' real-life company.

Leanne Blaney



About Tuesday

What do you get when you mix Ruby Tuesday with About Time? Well, About Tuesday of course, plus gorgeous summer harmonies!

LABBS Youth Chorus - Into the Unknown

When the pandemic hit and we all went into lockdown back in March 2020, the LABBS Youth Chorus, like most other choruses, were forced to go online. It's been a very weird 18 months or so, but throughout that time, we have gained lots of new lovely members, some only 6 years old and some 26 years old! And now we can't wait to get back to rehearsing in person to meet all our newbies! We have had different people doing warm up exercises and leading online sectionals in breakout



rooms on Zoom, a variety of new songs, and the over 18s even managed a fab coaching session with Rob Mance, all the way from America!

The biggest thing we did during the pandemic, was our "Into the Unknown" project. We were lucky enough to have saved some money, so we went to James Whittick (a young and very talented BABS member) and asked him to arrange "Into the Unknown", from Frozen 2, specially for the LABBS Youth Chorus. I was excited; our MD, Ros, was excited; the music team was excited; and even James was excited because it's a GREAT song! In a matter of weeks, the arrangement was ready, so as Helen Warner started to record our tracks, we began to build the excitement on social media, to let people know something exciting was coming.

Using a mixture of facebook and instagram, we managed to hype up the new song enough to get nearly 100 people to take part in learning and recording the song! As we were rehearsing online (and not in person for 4+ hours at once), we



extended our age range to 5-29, and we had some absolutely fantastic people from all over the UK of all different ages join us. A lot of our new members were leads, but the lead line wasn't easy! We specifically asked James to arrange the song with each voice part having some tune as well as harmony, so everyone had to really concentrate and learn their part, which they did!

Once we had had 3 rehearsals, we decided it was time to record. I asked everyone to send me a video of them singing along to the song (with all the emotions we had practised) so we could put it together as a virtual performance. We are very lucky in the Youth Chorus to have the very talented Bethany Southworth, who put together all our audio tracks, and she even made it actually sound like us and not robots! "I loved putting together the audio for "Into the Unknown". After 16 months of Zoom rehearsals, it was such a privilege to hear everyone's lovely individual voices! Everyone's singing was brilliant, so it was such an enjoyable easy task. Special shout out to the leads for NAILING their harmony sections! I can't wait to hear all the wonderful voices together in real life."



Our fantastic video was put together by a friend of the LABBS Youth Chorus, Jaspa Stritt, a youth BABS member. The LABBS Youth Chorus would like to say a massive THANK YOU to everyone for the support you have given us over the past 18 months, and a huge WELL DONE and thank you to all the members, old and new, who have stuck with us through a difficult time. We can't wait to get back together again, hopefully in the Autumn, so keep your eyes peeled and get ready to join us soon!

Lamorna Hooker
LABBS Youth Director and Coordinator

It has been a busy start since joining the LABBS board this year as Diversity and Inclusion Director, a brand new position. Over the past few months we have made some great progress and engaged choruses in conversations around D&I. To explain the role further, Natalie interviewed me on the LABBS Facebook page.



I have collaborated with D&I teams from BABS and SA R31, having regular meetings to have a consistent approach across the organisations. The support they have given me in the new role



has been really helpful for me in providing support to LABBS members.

Currently we are working on policies to support D&I and having training to educate ourselves further. I would like to give a special thank you to US-based Halo Quartet and Mermaids UK for their insightful training.



I have also been working directly with choruses around the country that have approached me directly. My committee at Bristol Fashion had a joint meeting with the committee of Steel City Voices to share ideas on creating a culture of inclusion at a chorus level. The response from choruses towards D&I has been so motivating, it has been great to see members being engaged and wanting to grow their diversity within their choruses. I am always happy to help members on a case by case basis.

Natasha Nickson
LABBS Diversity and Inclusion Director



Want to make your chorus stand out from the crowd?

From virtual performance videos and audio editing to logo design, branding and promotional materials, Little Bird Creative will help you hit all the right notes.

To discuss how we can help you, get in touch for a no-obligation chat.

www.lb-creative.co.uk
contact@lb-creative.co.uk

Membership Matters

As the restrictions of the pandemic start to recede, it's timely to reflect on how our membership has changed over the past eighteen months. We currently have 2,142 individual members - down less than 10% since March 2020. Given how we've been unable to sing together face to face for most of that period, it's testament to the strength of our Association - and to the leadership of all our clubs - that membership and morale have held up so strongly. In fact the pandemic has reminded us what we love about our hobby and how great it feels to sing in harmony with good friends. The crisis has made us more determined to make the most of being part of such a fantastic set of talented women.

Most clubs have seen a small decline in numbers which is what we'd expect in any year - the difference is that it's been incredibly difficult to recruit new members when rehearsals have been online. Some clubs have amazingly taken on new members, and they are to be congratulated. For the rest of us now is a time to start rebuilding, followed by growth as conditions allow.

As a Board, we are committed to supporting clubs to grow and I've recently written to all club Chairs to ask what assistance would be most helpful to support local recruitment efforts as they start to be planned. If you have any ideas or thoughts on this topic please speak to your club Chair or Membership Secretary to input your views. Growth of our Association also gives us the opportunity to make progress on our strategic goal to extend the diversity of our membership. So much to look forward to!

Jill Cook
LABBS Membership Director



Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers

LABBS YOUTH CHORUS DIRECTOR WANTED

Are you an enthusiastic director, wanting to inspire young singers? LABBS Youth Chorus is looking for a new director.

The LABBS Youth Chorus gives girls from 7 to 29 the chance to develop their singing skills, build confidence and performing qualities as well as make lifelong friends. It rehearses approximately 4 times a year in venues across England and is made up of two groups - the full chorus and the 18+ competing chorus. This vacancy is to direct the full chorus

The appointed director will work with the LABBS Youth Coordinator to choose appropriate music and agree the rehearsal schedule and coaches. They will also:

- Attend all rehearsals
- Promote the LABBS Youth Chorus and help recruit new members
- Direct the LABBS Youth Chorus at LABBS Convention.

To apply, send a cover letter and video (no more than 10 minutes) of you directing to youth@labbs.org.uk

Closing date for applications is Friday 1st October, 2021

... leading the way in harmony

Question: What is the collective noun for champion quartet singers? A 'harmony' of QCs, an 'a-chord' of QCs.....other suggestions welcome!



Well, whatever you want to call them, our Quartet Champions, organised by Ali Jack (and, no, despite the rumours to the contrary, she never referred to this as 'herding cats!') were the very capable and entertaining hosts for our Quartet Cocktail Party in June. With a keynote speech from LABBS-favourite, Mo Field, Zooming in from the USA, this was an evening celebrating quartet singing and the fun and friendship that comes with this. Mo's usual mix of interesting anecdotes peppered with good advice and ideas for getting the best out of singing

together was well-received, then it was over to the QCs. Fortuity started by describing their journey to Gold and their aspirations for their future, then everyone was invited for discussions in breakout rooms about how to sing the very best bass/lead/bari/tenor in your quartet. Finishing with an open question and answer session, this was a very successful evening of education and entertainment.



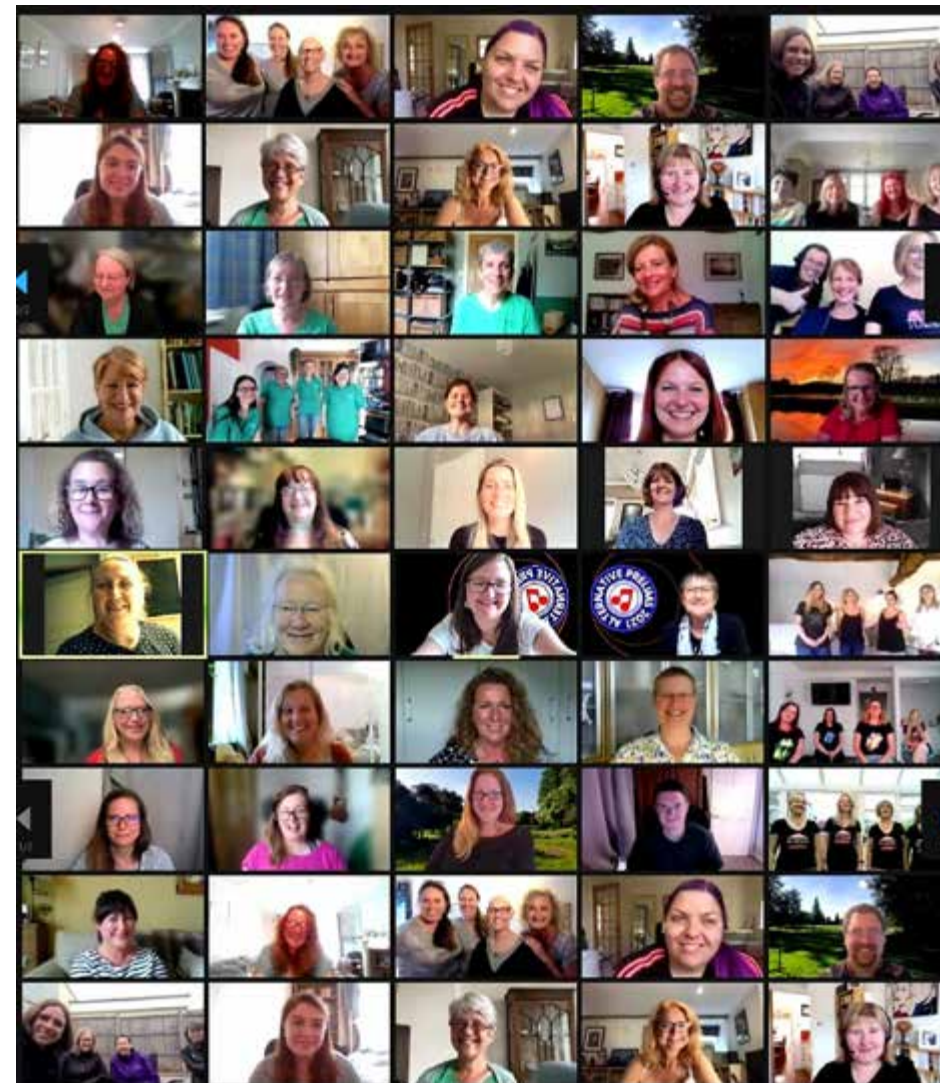
The evening event was preceded by an online Alternative Prelims Coaching. This was offered by category judges,

giving each registered quartet 30 mins of individualised coaching and discussion, focussed on the immediate needs of each quartet. 15 quartets took advantage of this offer and judges Zoomed in to a variety of scenarios with quartets either all together or in a combination of in-person and zoomed-in. All agreed that the sessions were useful and well-presented and judges were impressed with the many success stories of quartets who had managed to keep singing, learned new material and made real progress in their quartet journeys throughout the enforced separation, and we have great hopes for the quality of our next quartet competition in 2022.

I would like to finish by sending a heartfelt thank you to all the many people, too numerous to name individually, who have facilitated and supported these, and indeed, all our education events over the last 18 months - my amazing E and J Team, Judges, Educators, Quartet Champions, Directors, Technical Team, Social Media and of course, you, the Membership.

Wishing you the very best,


Alison Zdzykowski
Education Director





Volunteering - the more the merrier!

LABBS is a community based on harmony and fun and whether it's a show, an educational event or our annual Convention, the uniting factor is to ring chords in glorious harmony. A common factor for events, whether online or in-person, is the importance of our volunteers. These fabulous people who give their time, energy and skills, make every one of our events the singing fest we all need.

So, why should you volunteer for LABBS?

 **Anne-Marie:** I love volunteering and helping people! Volunteering enables you to build friendships, promote a sense of camaraderie, widen your social and singing networks and appreciate the work and effort that goes into making events a success. It is a labour of love and the rewards are amazing!

 **Leanne:** I mean, I'm still not sure how I ended up here... All I did was offer to help with Zoom during LABBSi sessions! Seeing how LABBS works, and the fact it's reliant on the efforts of a huge team of people who are consistently willing to give their time and expertise, made me feel proud to be a small cog in the machine, and happy to give more time and energy to help create special events, posts, videos and whatever else is asked for. It's a labour of love, and I fully recommend getting involved in whatever capacity you feel happy with. Like me, you won't know how much you could love it until you give it a go.

 **Dave:** LABBS is a world class organisation, supporting people on harmony journeys at different stages of their lives. There is so much to get back from giving to an organisation such as LABBS; along with tears, laughter and harmony, volunteering enables us to be right where the action is. We see and enjoy people loving their hobby and to help them is just the best feeling ever. You will experience magic moments and sounds like you've never experienced. In volunteering for LABBS, we are more than just volunteers, we are harmony makers. As a selfless team of people who get to be at the heart of the action and witness the very best of our art form - how lucky are we?

We are always looking for volunteers and the more we have, the greater the joy. Once we are performing in-person, we will be welcoming volunteers in roles such as couriers, backstage, and reception for events, but right now, here are some of the Marketing and Comms roles you could apply for:

- **Social Media**
- **Photography**
- **Videography**
- **Archive maintenance**
- **Story makers**
- **Voice Box editorial**
- **Zoominating**

For more information,
email us at
marketing@labbs.org.uk
and look out for a
virtual open event
happening soon!

LABBS21 - Unconventional Convention

As restrictions are cautiously relaxing and some clubs are beginning to explore safe ways to sing together, we are so glad we planned for our 2021 - almost Convention - to allow for opportunities to sing together for real!

Save the following dates in your diary:

- **Saturday, October 30th** - regional events - with as much in-person singing as possible!
- **Sunday, October 31st** - LABBS Online 2021

Saturday, October 30th - Regional

We want to create the best opportunities for LABBS members to get together and SING!
To make this possible, we have arranged **6 regional events** where LABBS members can meet up and sing - all taking place during October 30th. The Hub locations are shown above and listed below - details will follow.

- **Oxford** - Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Rd, Didcot OX11 7NE
- **Yorkshire/Humberside** - Bradford Grammar School, Keighley Rd, Bradford BD9 4JP
- **South East** - Oaklands School, Stakes Hill Road, Waterlooville, Hampshire PO7 7BU
- **North West** - Seashell Trust, Stanley Road, Cheadle Hulme, Heald Green, Cheshire SK8 6RQ
- **South West** - Saltash Baptist Church on Culver Road, PL12 4DR
- **East** - Linton Village College, Cambridge Rd, Linton, Cambridge CB21 4JB

Once **registration opens, on September 1st**, you can book a place at whichever location works best for you. There will be a nominal charge of £5 per person and as places will be limited, waiting lists will be operated.

SAVE THE DAY - it will be FUN!

If you aren't able to get to one of these sessions, no problem! We will be broadcasting from LABBSTV with interviews and visits to the regional hubs so you can be part of the day too!

Sunday, October 31st - LABBS21 Online

Whilst the regional events will be about reaching out, Sunday is about coming together. With this in mind, here is **what you need to do**:

- **Create your 5 minutes on the virtual stage** - we want **all clubs & quartets** to provide a video, up to 5 minutes long, which showcases your personality. To allow us to plan, we asked you to **reserve your 5- minute slot in the schedule** no later than **September 5th**. **If you haven't done this yet – we will leave this form open as long as possible**. Completed footage **MUST** be sent no later than **October 3rd**.
- **Send us pictures (with captions)** of your events to celebrate your **Long Service Award winners**
- Provide us with **pictures and a short message** to celebrate the lives of **sisters in harmony** who are no longer with us to form part of our Absent Friends feature

LET'S MAKE OUR "ALMOST" CONVENTION as much fun as LABBS BIG WEEKEND and the BEST possible celebration as we GET BACK TOGETHER IN HARMONY!



Back To The Future

Your Education and Judging team has recently been reflecting on what has been and what is to come.

It is very satisfying to look back over the period of lockdown and recall all the high quality education events which have been delivered via Zoom and just how many of the LABBS family have been able to participate and support these events. I would love to be able to give you numbers of members taking part but it has been far too many to count and from all regions including some overseas members. We could never have imagined in the dark days of lockdown, how many positive outcomes we would be celebrating – from LABBS e-online throughout Summer 2020, bringing many of our talented Judging Team into your living rooms with hints and tips on keeping your voice and performance in tip-top condition, Performance Day in January, April's introduction of our new polecat with top choruses teaching over half the membership our new song online, Director's Education focussed on getting back to singing, and finally our quartet event in June (reported elsewhere in this issue).

There has been much laughter and celebration of our community throughout, particularly allowing Club-At-Large members to get involved wherever they are. We will be looking to capture these positive effects and incorporate them into our planning as we look forward to an exciting programme of future events.

Some highlights to look forward to in 2022 will be a day of Music

Education led by our own Music Category Judging Team, a day of Directors Education, and an improved offering for quartet education, with a guest educator – we will be canvassing opinions from registered quartets for this, so make sure your voice is heard when we send out our survey! We also hope to run a series of regional festival-style events with a firm focus on education, depending on the success of our Regional Hub-based Convention this year. If, as we expect, there is a demand for members to get together for singing, learning and catching up with friends, then we will facilitate this with our excellent team of educators from the E and J and beyond.

Looking even further forward, we are already beginning to plan for our own Harmony College in 2023, so watch out for further details of all these events and how you can get involved.

Keep well, keep singing, keep learning.....wishing you all the very best.

Alison Zdzykowski
Education Director



Finance Update

LABBS Voices in Harmony Foundation and Grants

LABBS uses the Voices in Harmony Foundation to manage donations and to provide grants for people to develop their skills. Both LABBS Chorus and LABBS registered Quartet grants are available in 2021 with a grant of up to £100. The grants are to be used for education/coaching purposes. All claims must be made using the claim form (available on the LABBS website) and must be submitted along with supporting paperwork. All claims must be received by **15th December 2021**.

Learn to Sing Course grants are also available to LABBS choruses for running recruitment events such as learn to sing courses or their equivalent. LABBS choruses can apply to the LABBS Finance Director for a grant of up to £200 towards

Submit your nominations NOW



extra expenses incurred. Please note that only one grant application can be submitted in any financial year (January-December). All applications must be made using the application

form (available on the LABBS website) and must be submitted along with supporting paperwork and received by **5th December 2021**.

In addition to the above grants, it is also time to nominate the person you feel deserves the Katy Phillips Young Barbershopper of the Year Award. Full details of the award and nomination form can be found on the LABBS website. And for quartets there is The Jen Mills Award, this allows the selected quartet to commission a new barbershop arrangement from a UK arranger, full details are on the LABBS website. The closing date for both these awards is **25th September 2021**.

If you have any questions or queries about any of the grants or awards, send me an email (financedirector@labbs.org.uk).

Q&A with Sue Ranson

I am a Londoner and have been involved with music in one way or another since I was seven when I learnt violin, recorder and harmonica at school and started piano lessons at 2s 6d a time from the lady down the road. I can't play the harmonica now so don't ask me! I also sang in church choirs and also in a Gilbert and Sullivan society. Next time you see me at the bar at Convention, ask me about the time I was seen by a bus queue in West Norwood dressed in green gauze and fairy wings!

After 30 years growing up in London, my husband and I spent 30 years in Cornwall, where I was involved with a United Benefice choir and a Cornish male voice choir. I like to think I was successful but was thrown when one singer told me that after five years he had just realised that it was quite a good idea to watch the conductor!

When I arrived in the north and retired, I was looking for any opportunity to sing where I wouldn't get roped into any organising, playing the piano or directing. This is when I found Cheshire Chord Company and so my involvement with barbershop began.



I still sing with CCC and have been their chair through these very odd pandemic times. As my tenure is about to end, I applied to be Vice-chair of LABBS. So, I completely failed at not taking on anything extra and concentrating on singing! I guess I'm just an organising sort of person and it is good to give back to organisations that have been good to you. I would always advocate offering help to your chorus or LABBS because working together is a sure-fire way of making friends and building even more supportive relationships. That has certainly been my experience on the board so far.

I have been asked about significant barbershop moments, good and bad.

My barbershop highlight has to be the fantastic coaching and praise that CCC had from the American judges at Holland Harmony in 2019. This event also provides my worst barbershop moment - having an uncontrollable coughing fit nearly all through a performance, culminating in nearly falling off the risers. It was, apart from my contribution, a good performance and it gets replayed quite a lot, but all I can see is me choking and stumbling!

My favourite barbershop memories stem from CCC's trip to Russia where we sang in some fantastic St Petersburg venues to really appreciative audiences. We discovered that if they like you in Russia, they start with a slow hand clap and get faster and faster. The atmosphere at every show was electric and apart from that we had some other interesting experiences, like using a ladies' toilet which was in a converted bus. The very severe supervisor sat in the driving seat and dourly handed you the prescribed ration of toilet tissue on entry.



I have been asked if I have a motto or philosophy to pass on. I don't think I have anything really formulated, but I try to help and support others where I can, to see things done decently and in order in any group I am involved with, and I definitely like to look on the bright side of life and see the funny side wherever I can. I don't take myself too seriously and I hope others don't either!

Susan Ranson,
LABBS Vice Chair

Anne-Marie

I'm Anne-Marie Borneuf, from Oldham, Lancashire and I'm volunteer for the LABBS Marketing and Communications Team.

I was very musical as a kid growing up, playing the piano and viola in my school chamber groups and orchestras as well as singing alto in the primary and secondary school choirs. At 18, I trained to be a Nurse and ended up working in Emergency Care for 10 years before moving into Nursing Education where I have been teaching nurses for the last 20 years at a local University.

I was introduced to Barbershop in 2007 when I attended Crystal Chords rehearsal in Manchester, who were going on Britain's Got Talent in 2008 singing Fame. I passed my audition quite quickly, was identified as a Bass, and haven't looked back since! I also sing Bass with Barberlicious, a female LABBS registered Quartet and sang Baritone in a Mixed Quartet, Man Treble.

Something nobody knows about me: that I can count to 10 in Ukrainian. My mother is Ukrainian.

Advice to my pre-lockdown self: Don't work too hard, life is too short.

Proudest singing moment: Winning LABBS, SABS, & IABS Bronze and Silver medals with Crystal Chords as well as Silver Medals with Barberlicious!

Proudest non-singing moments: I have SO many proud non-singing moments, from being a nurse, a Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games volunteer, a London 2012 Gamesmaker to doing "one year no beer" in 2019 and giving up smoking 10 years ago.



Dave

I'm Dave Kitchenham (Kitch) from Marple, in Cheshire and I volunteer for the LABBS Marketing & Comms team, dabbling in various areas, including Social Media, Videography & Events Production.

For my "day job", I work for a UK equipment hire company as Head of Digital & Marketing including publication, web support and inbound enquiries. The skills used there and my interest in everything technical has given me super skills that I use to support many paid and voluntary Barbershop activities. These include creating websites for many barbershop groups, created videos for The Collective, LABBS and Cottontown Chorus and in addition, I help BHS with graphic design, most recently, for BHS Harmony University 2021.

I value friendship and try to be the best friend I can be – that's important to me

Proudest Singing Moment: I'm relatively new to Barbershop, but in a packed eight years with Cottontown Chorus, I have three chorus gold and one silver medal. I've also competed in Las Vegas internationals, twice – not a bad haul! My track record as a quarteter has been less stellar – I hope to change that in future.

Proudest non singing moment: This has to be my children. Each day, they startle me with their personalities, resilience and humanity. They obviously take after my gorgeous wife.

Advice to pre lockdown self: Get out more - lockdown can kill you! **Something nobody knows:** Apart from my family, barbershop and tech, my passion is coffee & walnut cake and I only eat raspberry yoghurt.

Philosophy in Life: I take great pride in LABBS and aim to do all I can to make it the best it can be. This has led to my philosophy for life - if you can't find someone to do something, learn to do it yourself!



Leanne

I'm Leanne Blaney, from Preston and I'm the LABBS Social Media Lead.

I loved singing as a child, making up Spice Girls and Backstreet Boys routines with friends and singing in school productions. As a teacher, I sang in my first school's chamber choir before moving to Preston and being introduced to barbershop, which has brought seven years of awesomeness so far, including trying out quartetting, which I never thought I'd do!

Advice to my prelockdown self: take all the online opportunities that come your way, and prepare yourself for dozens of new friendships with people you won't meet in real-life until at least 18 months later...

Proudest singing moment: finishing Shenanigans' first appearance on prelims stage after feeling so weak and full of nervous energy, but knowing we'd done our best. I loved being up there with my best friends.

Proudest non-singing moments: being told by students the difference I've made to them. I have the best job in the world.

My philosophy in life: Be brave, find happiness and count your blessings.



Long Service Awards 2021

It's a source a great pride each year when we see how many members are eligible for Long Service Awards. 2021 is no different – in fact there are a total of 60 members receiving Long Service Awards this year – that's double the number in 2020. This year is also special as for the first time we have no less than ten members receiving 45 year service pins. These members have been with our Association since its origins back in 1976, and have contributed so much to their clubs and to LABBS over that time.

Long Service certificates and pins were sent out to Membership secretaries and Club at Large members in January this year and I know that many of you have been celebrating the awards on-line or more recently in person. Please keep posting the photos! At convention weekend at the end of October we will be recognising all our Long Service Atward members this year just as we did last year. I can't wait!



Congrats to our fabulous MD, Heidi, who's received her pin and certificate celebrating 25 years with Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers. Thank you for all you do for us Heidi - we're incredibly lucky to have you! Here's to the next 25!

GraceNotes Acapella

A number of our members have been presented with Long Service Awards during 2021. Pam Ambrose (40 years), Teresa Phillips (35 years), Jo Wiseman (30 years), Emma Mc Manus, our MD, (30 years) and Patsy Gregory (25 years) all received their awards from Red Rosettes Chair, Sandra Hale. In Barbershop years they have been singing for a total of 165 years - that's a lot of tags! The event was celebrated with tea and cakes and of course, a few songs.

Red Rosettes



‘Chimes’ to Call it a Day

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of Pennine Chimes. In normal times this would be a time to celebrate our Ruby Anniversary. However, instead of raising a glass to the future of our wonderful chorus we have, after many hours of deliberation, decided it is time to hang up the pitch pipe and retire. Recent months have been filled with difficulties for many and we faced our share, both personally and as a chorus, sadly, in the end, these became overwhelming and left us no real option but to disband.

Over the years we have had joyful times as members of LABBS and have made wonderful friendships. Some of the best times have been spent competing at Convention where we won the small chorus trophy multiple times and achieved a bronze medal in the early 1990s. We will always cherish the memories of standing on stage behind the curtain and hearing the audience sing “On Ilkley Moor Bar t’At.”

Pennine Chimes have always prided themselves as being a friendly and fun chorus and we are truly blessed to have some of our founder members still sing with us. We have also had the great privilege of being directed by some very knowledgeable and talented MDs. The Musical Directorship became a family affair passing through three generations, beginning with Cath Morton, a previous Chair of LABBS, Kim Webb, a quartet gold medal winner and highly respected coach, and last, but not least, Beth Connolly who first attended a rehearsal at 10 days old and who has barbershop running through her veins.

Although we will no longer perform and compete as Pennine Chimes, many of our members have decided to pursue their love of barbershop as members of ‘CAL’ so no doubt you will see us at future events still singing and making wonderful memories.

In Harmony
Pennine Chimes



Steel City Voices are proud to announce the launch of our first ever EP, Steel City Voices: ONE!

This EP features three songs recorded remotely during the past year which we feel represent us as a chorus. The first track, ‘I’ll Be There for You’, made famous by the sitcom Friends, sums up the friendship and support that we have together as a chorus. The second track, ‘Can’t Help Falling in Love’ is a beautiful song and we think it describes our feelings towards not only our families but our pets and plants too! During the past year we have created music videos to both of these tracks which can be found on our YouTube channel.

The final track ‘Hot Knife’ is a full circle of our life as a chorus. Hot Knife is the first song we ever learned, when Steel City Voices was just eight friends meeting in a church hall. We performed it at our first ever singout and at our last singout before lockdown. Our EP features the most singers we have ever had, including the virtual chorus members who have joined us during lockdown.

Steel City Voices celebrate our third birthday as a chorus on 31st July and we felt it was a perfect time to release our EP. Steel City Voices: ONE is available to stream on Spotify, Deezer, Tidal and Apple Music and features beautiful original cover art by our own bass singer Laura Burston. We hope you love listening to it as much as we loved creating it.

STEEL · CITY · VOICES



Michelle Kelly (Chair) and Rachel Finnigan (PRO)



Celebration of Barbershop
in
BRISTOL

Save the Date – 27th
November 2021

Details coming soon @





GEM Knitters

During lockdown, so many people discovered or rediscovered skills and hobbies. It was no different for GEM Connection. One member, looking for distraction beyond the readily available online singing, decided to keep herself busy my knitting items for the local premature baby units.

The rest of GEM were so impressed, they decided to join in and we are now busy knitting multicoloured wool squares which will combine to create a harmonious blanket to raffle at Christmas as a fundraiser to fund our return to singing. Hopefully the sound of needles will soon be replaced by the smooth GEM sound.



A selection of what was created



The Glad Game - a Story of Hope



The Glad Game is a play written and performed by my daughter, **Phoebe Frances Brown**. It is on at the **Nottingham Playhouse** on **Friday 24th 7.30pm** and **Saturday 25th September, 2pm** and **8pm**.

This production is a truly exceptional event. It has already been rescheduled twice, due to the pandemic and considering Phoebe's circumstances I am immensely proud of her positivity and determination to finally perform it.

In November 2018 Phoebe was diagnosed with an incurable tumour in the area of her brain that controls speech, language and memory. The Glad Game is Phoebe's account of finding herself in the darkest of times, being able to focus on the gladness rather than the sadness and realising

who and what you love can help you move forward. Phoebe has always loved acting from childhood impressions of Dolly Parton and acting in school plays to grown up work at the National Theatre, the Donmar Warehouse and New York Theatre Workshop. Acting is everything to her.

The devastating news of her condition shocked all of us as a family, but a major constant and source of support has been my GEM connections family. The love of singing and performing and their heartfelt understanding has kept me strong through some very dark and difficult times. I would like to thank them all, publicly for their love. Thank you also, to many of them for buying tickets. You really are GEMS xx.

Gail Brown
GEM & Proud Mum

Unusual Rehearsal Spaces

During such challenging times, small group rehearsals have continued in gardens. In Suzanne's we had competition, not just from the wild birds, but also from the resident fowl collections, when one of her peacocks decided to join in loudly to some of our more vocal expressions!

As the Covid restrictions lessened, more of us can meet. Liz (our previous Chair) offered her field for rehearsals and on the evening of a glorious summer day, the first large group met, and sang as the sun set. It was very emotional. Our first outdoor training day was also on a very hot day and Chesca directed one group from a paddling pool to help keep cool!

More recently, we have had the benefit of a local football ground for rehearsals. This was arranged by Jill Warren as her husband is a lifelong supporter of Nuneaton Borough Football Club. Both practice venues run concurrently but we hope to be able to meet as one group soon.



Wedding Belles



Pauline, a former Belle, requested the talents of the Belles Flower Arranging group for a wedding dress exhibition in Wolvey Church. The dresses ranged from 1869 to 2019, all loaned from villagers, many married at Wolvey Church and included three generations of one family. Following a successful event Pauline said "The Belles FA excelled themselves. The flower arrangements were sold as part of

our Silent Auction, raising a fabulous £235! From Sue our Chair: "We had a lovely letter from the vicar at Wolvey church thanking our flower arrangers for their work at the wedding dress display as part of the summer fair. The fair raised a total of £3925.58 so was very successful and it's lovely to have been a part of this success."

Rachel gets a First

Rachel Sherlock is one of our newest members and has now completed her Open University degree in BSc Psychology with Honours. She got a First! This incredible result has been achieved during intense personal and work commitments. She has an amazing story to tell about the challenges she has overcome to achieve this. We are very proud of her.

Eileen Askew
PRO The Belles of Three Spires



Spinnaker's fabulous fundraising

Over the past Spinnaker year we have been fundraising for an extremely worthy local charity. Off The Record (OTR) (SE Hants) strives to help young people needing support managing emotional wellbeing issues, including anxiety, family and relationships, anger, low self-esteem & mood, and more.

OTR was nominated by Chorus member, Liz Waddon who said, "I think that teens always look like they are coping but they aren't. There will be a wave of teens needing emotional support post lockdowns. There's a gap in looking out for teens and young adults compared to children or the elderly."



Excellence Award winning Spinnakerettes 2016-2021 (photos T.Daniel)



Spinnaker full Chorus reunion rehearsal at the Guildhall Square, Portsmouth (photo Ron Hobden)

public, at Guildhall Square, Portsmouth. Approximately 50 members met on the steps & despite initial nerves, vocal cobwebs were quickly dispersed as the performance thrill kicked in to the delight of passers by. Portsmouth News sent a reporter, photographer & videographer to cover the momentous event & our story appeared in the paper the following day.

Five Years of Excellence

Five years ago Spinnaker's Chair Jill Cook introduced a wonderful award for members in recognition of contribution to the Chorus. Jill explains, "When I became Chair of Spinnaker it was clear that so many members contributed to our success, making a real difference to the Chorus. I wanted to recognise these contributions in a meaningful way. From that thought, the quarterly Spinnaker Excellence awards were born."

Spinnakerettes nominate members whom they feel are deserving of recognition for whatever reason and those with the most votes, receive the award. Since its introduction in 2016, more than 30 Excellence Awards have been presented.

Tracy Daniel
PRO Spinnaker



Elspeth Smith presents £1000 cheque to OTR's Kate Glasby (CEO-SE Hants) & Sarah Smith (Finance Manager) (photo T.Daniel)

Even without in-person rehearsals and events during this time, with determination & enthusiasm, Spinnaker have been able to continue fundraising, with a number of fun, online Zoom socials, including Bingo, quizzes, auctions, and raffles. Together with personal donations from members, we have raised the staggering total of £1000.

We presented our rather 'large cheque' to OTR representatives Kate Glasby (CEO) & Sarah Smith (Finance Manager), both pictured here with Elspeth Smith (Spinnaker's Membership Sec).

Reunion Rehearsal

Spinnaker's first post lockdown, whole Chorus rehearsal was delivered in style, in

Distance Today, Together Tomorrow!

For those of you that are regular readers of our social media posts, you may have spotted our regular hashtag - #distancetodaytogethertomorrow. How nice it is to now be able to say tomorrow has come!

Weekly rehearsals for Cheshire Chord Company have continued throughout the pandemic and we continue to live stream rehearsals now, as we take small steps out of restrictions. Back in May, whilst we were still rehearsing virtually, the power of Zoom enabled us to have a joint rehearsal with the amazing White Rosettes and a special coaching session with Rob Mance. Two fun filled and educational evenings; sharing music, new skills and making new friends. May was also a special month for us as

we launched our second lockdown video at our Saturday Night Almost Live 2. If you haven't see our video of That's Life, make sure you pop over to our website to view it now!

Back in June we were nearing the end of our full Zoom rehearsals, but this one particular Thursday night was The Skyline Sisters final online meeting and we were lucky to be able to share it with them. The lovely ladies from Rotterdam joined us for a joint evening sharing what we love to do best!

Which brings us to July – after a year and a half apart it felt so good to be able to sing four-part harmony again! Our super-efficient committees have worked their socks off to make

singing together again a possibility, and alongside this, looking for a new rehearsal venue, it's certainly been a busy couple of months! We can't wait to see many of you soon and maybe we'll be able to sing together in the not-too-distant future!

www.cheshirechord.co.uk



Keeping Going with the Jabbey Belles

What a tough year and a half this has been!

Apart from all the other things, not singing together, or even seeing each other, has been a real struggle. Even now, with our outdoor rehearsals in full flow, things are not 'normal' - but does this get the Jabbey Belles down? It does not! The Belles basically run on cake. And if the cake can't be shared in real life, then what better way than to hijack the chorus Whatsapp group with endless pictures of our baking! We certainly have some star bakers in the chorus. Here is a small sample of the gorgeousness:-



Suzybloo's pies.
'What kind of pie?'



Geraldine's delicious
cookies



Sueperb's caravan
breakfasts



Helen's cheese scones

As if cake was not enough, during lockdown we've welcomed two new members - Charlotte and Maya - and it has been a pleasure to actually meet them in person at long last! This enforced separation has made us appreciate the friendship and support we share. The many songs that we learnt during lockdown turned out really well – no one was cheating. I don't suppose that we're all going to stop posting pictures of our showstoppers, but it is fabulous to be singing together again - not just running on cake.

Susan Taylor
PRO (J)abbey Belles Chorus

Tattie Tunes

After not meeting for over a year, Scotland's Albacappella was finally able to meet up and sing in July. Finding somewhere with an option for cover and a lot of space was no problem for our intrepid Ada Renwick and we were delighted to be welcomed to TLC Potatoes in Aberdeenshire, one of the largest potato farming companies in the UK.

Owner Colin Blackhall kindly allowed us to use his yard and the audience of thousands of potato plants growing in the huge polytunnels were no doubt delighted by the evening's entertainment. As well as plant-life, the ladies sang out in glorious harmony to the cows in the surrounding fields and the birds flying overhead sang in unison.

Chair Liz McRobbie, expressed the chorus's deepest thanks for the new summer rehearsal space, "Colin's kindness means we are able to meet in person and start to rehearse again. Although we have thrived during lockdown, there is nothing to beat the magic of singing together."

Albacappella's determination to continue to sing has resulted in many achievements during the last year, culminating in an entry to the non-competitive Aberdeen Music Festival which took place in early June. Each member of the chorus learned and recorded their harmony part and separately made a video of themselves performing 'True Colours', made famous

by Cyndi Lauper. Albacappella's version of 'Skye Boat Song' was also presented.

Liz said: "The judge's feedback was just fantastic, and it was a fabulous evening where we were able to share our singing and our success together."

Yvette Rayner
Albacappella



Over the Zoom and Far Away

Over the last few months, The White Rosettes have been emerging from the Zoom, filled with excitement and anticipation. We started small, with Sally leading the way in small garden sessions, before venturing into a marquee for our summer rehearsals as guidance allowed. I don't think

anyone is too disappointed to see the end of Zoom rehearsals in sight. It's been amazing listening to live four-part harmony in-person again and seeing so many other choruses doing the same.

We're also really excited to be thinking about a chorus retreat this autumn and hosting our local convention hub in October – what a treat to be planning things again! Preparations are well underway, and we can't wait to create a day for all choruses to come together and enjoy. But, throughout all this excitement, of course it's important to recognise that member's journeys back to "normality" are all different and we must take these steps together. So, Sally keeps reminding us of one important part of this journey: "no one gets left behind."

Holly Parker
PRO and Vice Chair
The White Rosettes



Welwyn Harmony is getting back into the swing of things now legal restrictions are over.

Live outdoor rehearsals have restarted with a full chorus in the grounds of the lovely Mill Green Museum, of which one of our Baritones is the Curator! How fantastic to hear that full sound again.

Goodbye Zoom!

Although it wasn't all bad, our singing seems more accurate, perhaps as a result of listening to ourselves on Zoom and the new songs we have learned in lockdown sound surprisingly good. We ran a Love to Sing course on Zoom in the Spring, a new challenge with a radically new format which went extremely

well; we're delighted that some of the attendees have since joined us. To echo the spirit of the times, we chose Fleetwood Mac's 'Don't Stop' for its upbeat, forward-looking message and

intensive rehearsing! When we arrived at the hall there was a full audience obviously desperate for some live entertainment. It was the first time they had been able to meet since March 2020, and it was very emotional for us as well as them.

There's a great sense of people wanting to get out and enjoy life again. Local festivals are springing up all

around us, and we are delighted to have been asked to sing at 6 events in August and September. It is just wonderful for our chorus to be able to build up our performance skills again while entertaining live audiences.

Sarah Stevens
Welwyn Harmony



celebrated the end of the course with a video on YouTube, our best yet.

We did not plan to start performing just yet but our diary is filling up fast! The first event was for a local WI group just two days after lockdown ended. Booked months ago, we really hadn't expected it to go ahead. Four experienced singers formed a scratch quartet and did some

Harmony InSpires

Our latest online venture was a Love to Sing course in June – 51 people signed up, 22 stayed until week three and eight have continued to sing with us since the course ended. We all learned Lean on Me from scratch and that will go straight into our repertoire for upcoming appearances at Abingdon's HealthFest in September and our Christmas Concert.

Diary of a Love to Sing guest at Harmony Inspires - by a newly joined Lead

Week 1 An advert in the local newsletter caught my eye about a three-week singing course with Harmony InSpires and, after some deliberation, I decided to sign up. Feeling surprisingly nervous on the first night, my fears soon disappeared with the warm welcome I received from the friendly group on Zoom. The evening went very quickly and not only did we learn a song but also a number of useful skills for singing. I am certainly looking forward to next week's session and will even do a little homework too.

Week 2 We went over the previous week's work, voice warm ups and singing, but with a few extra challenges added in, e.g. trying out a four-part round and we were even shown a diagram of the throat to help us understand its anatomy. We discussed the story behind the song we are learning "Lean On Me" - which feels most appropriate for the times but also sums up the group's ethos very well. I can't wait to join next week's session.

Week 3 Success! After singing last night, a certificate dropped into my inbox this morning congratulating me on completing the course. This was most unexpected but certainly a confidence booster. What a pleasant surprise at the end of an interesting and engaging course and perhaps the start of a new adventure.

Other Comments

"Goosebumps"
"I want to be in your gang"
"So lovely"
"Can't wait to join"

Stop Press – four new members have now passed their audition and since 21st July we have been rehearsing in our new hall at Marcham.

Susan Taylor
PRO (J)abbey Belles Chorus



Saying Goodbye to Zoom!

Finally, it looks as though choral singers will be able to come together once again in full unison! After 16 months of Zoom rehearsals and singing solo in various home bedrooms, lounges and offices, the novelty has pretty much worn off. We're very, very excited to be starting to get back to things in person and are busy planning for the future. Excitingly, with the gradual relaxation of restrictions over the last couple of months, we've been able to practice our renewed vocal health face to face (It goes without saying that we've done this within the guidelines and with full risk assessments in place). Things started very small with some of our in-house quartets meeting outside and layered up with scarves, hats

and jumpers to keep the unseasonable, inclement weather out. As the months passed, we progressed to small, outdoor sectional rehearsals. Finally, we are able to meet as a large group with many of the chorus singing in person. That has been absolutely glorious. Some of us were emotional, others ecstatic and one or two just took it all in their stride and pretty much picked up where we left off. Our MD Craig, was just delighted that his arms still worked and when hearing our choral sound declared, "I am no longer worried" that we'd all lost the ability to sing well!

A few comments from the Chorus after our first meeting at the local Keep Everyone Active football stadium -

"Nothing can beat having you girls stood around me having fun and sounding amazing xx"

"It felt like we had all been asleep for 15 months and had just woken up and carried on. Fabulous. You made an old woman very happy."

Next stop: Back to Indoor Rehearsals – Watch This Space!

Janis Smith
PRO Bristol Fashion

"Just felt seamless, like we'd never been away. Fliss, Craig, committee et al have been amazing in keeping everything going. I am pretty much in awe of the amazing people in our chorus. Bestest chorus anywhere" "Golden nugget for me was seeing everyone. After a brutal 15 months in work just having my BF family around me, singing was amazing".



For those Crystals who only judge a normal life when it has some 'live' barbershop in it, it has been a satisfying summer as we started to take some cautious but optimistic measures to bring the chorus back together in person. Like so many, we are working to ensure we are all safe and spaced out and we have been very lucky to

have the use of football stands in Cheadle which we are alternating with hybrid face to face and Zoom sessions at our usual rehearsal venue. As you may expect from the weather in Stockport, the outside

to get back together and start to hear the chords ring. Sometimes perhaps we are 'louder than beautiful' but that is the joy in our hearts as we rake through our memory for old repertoire! Many of the chorus have continued to be involved in front line roles over this time, including volunteering for vaccine delivery or coordination in the local area. It's a very specific sort of pandemic excitement when you realise a barbershopper is delivering your vaccination to you but this is exactly what happened to ex LABBS Chair Alison Liddell when she went to a drop in for her second vaccination and had it delivered by ex LABBS secretary Caroline Poole! We have recently welcomed a new member to the chorus and are looking forward to opening the doors to others who are looking for new post Covid hobbies as we get back into the swing of things fully. The regional day in October will be a fantastic opportunity

to see some old friends too – we can't wait!

Alison Liddell
Crystal Chords



rehearsals have been "challenging", even in the 'summer' but it has been fantastic

Family Harmony

With a return to rehearsals, we've been thrilled to gain a new member as Lily has passed the first stage of the assessment process in just three weeks. It's a noteworthy occasion as Lily is our first member to have made the leap from Junior Fascinating Rhythm (JFR) to the main chorus, joining her mum Sarah in the Baritone section. Sarah enthused "It's brilliant because Lily's a better singer than me and will help me learn. Plus, she knows how to download the teach tracks to her phone, so I'm hoping she'll do mine too!"

Wendy, our JFR MD, quipped "I sang with Lily during her first assessment piece, and she sounds amazing! We've always encouraged the Junior FR girls to try out for Fascinating Rhythm – Lily is our first member to do it! Lily is excited to have joined as she now gets to learn her favourite FR repertoire piece, the gorgeous Pachelbel Canon and finally having her turn on the convention stage. "I attended Convention first when I was nine years old and have

been every year since. I watched all the quartets and scored them. I loved it!" she says. "I'm looking forward to competing with Fascinating Rhythm and seeing what happens backstage!"

MD Jo approves thoroughly and stated "What an absolute joy to have Lily joining us; she is an incredibly talented young lady. I joined my first female chorus at the same age and

instantly gained 40 new 'mother figures' – we aim to ensure that Lily has great fun with us whilst learning a whole host of singing and life skills. It also, of course, brings down the average age of Fascinating Rhythm, so a total win-win!" Here's to harmony!

Erica Smith
SM Lead Fascinating Rhythm



The Red Rosettes have continued to hold weekly Zoom rehearsals throughout these challenging times. To provide a little variety, which is the spice of life, we enjoyed a relaxing session of self massage to help with the anxiety which many people have experienced.

We also enjoyed a fabulous evening of entertainment with a Burlesque dancer called Cherry Bombe who leads a Burlesque troupe called the Blonde Bombshells. What a fascinating evening - nothing like a shoulder shimmy to perk you up!

We are delighted to finally be back singing together. We are singing in the stands of the Leyland Football club - risers with seats - perfect for some of us getting our riser legs back in shape. How wonderful it is to see everyone again and to share the joy of singing.

Over the Summer, we said goodbye to Sandra Mangan who has returned to her roots in Merseyside. Good luck in your new life Sandra, you are greatly missed but our weekly Zoom Quizzes are keeping us in touch.

Ann Atkin
The Red Rosettes



It is always sad to say goodbye to friends, but we should not forget to celebrate the time we have had with them and the happy memories that will live on. Let's be glad that we have shared our hobby with some great friends.

Sue Ranson

Gladys Pyle – The Queen of Spinnaker 1930-2021

Spinnaker Chorus are mourning the loss of Gladys Pyle, a founder member and their greatest supporter.

Gladys was an original member of Purbrook Harmony Chorus that formed in 1970 and became the first Sweet Adelines Chorus in the UK. She took to barbershop singing with great enthusiasm and loved to perform and entertain. Her debut performance was in 1973 at the Guildhall, Portsmouth. Gladys attended the first British Barbershop Association convention in Brighton in 1975 when Purbrook Harmony won joint first prize. She went on to perform and compete around the UK and in the USA.

In 2004 Spinnaker Chorus was formed and Gladys was a founding member. She continued to sing and compete into her 80s, before becoming an Honorary

Member and Chair of the Spinnaker Tea Company.

Gladys was a free spirit who loved to party and was generous to a fault. Her jam making skills were legendary and she always brought laughter and fun to any chorus get-together. Gladys rarely missed a Spinnaker rehearsal and joined the chorus on sing-outs and on trips to convention, bringing home-made Spinnaker banners, her enormous smile and her amazing energy with her. Gladys loved to dress up and to wear tiaras and soon became known as the Queen of Spinnaker. She was a true one-off and will be much missed as a great friend with a heart of gold, wicked sense of humour and a personality that lit up every occasion.

Jill Cook
Spinnaker Chair



Sharyn Rutterford Assistant MD, Rhapsody Chorus

Rhapsody's wonderful and inspiring Assistant MD passed away peacefully at home in Peterborough on July 6th 2021.

An accomplished musician from her schooldays, Sharyn discovered barbershop on first joining Peterborough's Classic Harmony Chorus. This led to a decades-long passion for the craft and lifelong friendships. Sharyn became a founder member of Rhapsody Chorus in 2008. She, along with other like-minded singers, was determined to form a committed and competitive quality chorus. Sharyn also loved quartet singing and formed 'Simply4' with other Rhapsody members. They competed, often with great success, in festivals and conventions both home and abroad. More recently she sang in a mixed quartet and took on an additional Assistant MD role at the mixed voice group 'Black Cat Harmony'. With her amazing energy and drive, Sharyn fitted singing around a busy life

as a mother of two and working full time as an accountant; her husband Danny being a constant rock to enable family life to flourish.

The pandemic simply brought out Sharyn's unprecedented commitment to Rhapsody, keeping Rhapsody together on zoom and initiating lockdown recording projects to keep up motivation. Last Christmas, Sharyn spent an entire day visiting each member to deliver a festive song along with a surprise doorstep 'drop' of bubbly and chocolates to enjoy at their Zoom Christmas Party. Then, immediately after Christmas, came the devastating cancer diagnosis that so soon cut short her life after just 46 years. Rhapsody and the wider barbershop community will all miss the glorious quality of Sharyn's voice, her talent as a musician and her friendship.

Sian Dalrymple
Rhapsody Chorus



Pam Weeds

Norwich Harmony are enormously sad to have lost Pam Weeds this summer. She joined NH in 2013, having been recently widowed, and always said that Chorus saved her after her loss. Pam became an exceptionally valued member of the chorus, meeting and looking after new members, working on choreo, dress committee and organising a range of social events for the chorus's 40th anniversary celebrations.



In recognition of her hard work, she was adopted onto the Committee as a 'revered other'. These are some of the thoughts from chorus members.

"Pam may have been slight in stature, but she was large in presence. She didn't just sit on the edges, she got involved with the organisation, and volunteered for things when they needed doing."

"As head of our Dress Committee she loved the

challenge of getting us all looking amazing in our chorus outfits; she was always clear thinking and practical, with a good eye for style, and the red jackets she so painstakingly sourced for us were much envied at Harmony College."

"She seemed to have boundless energy and her commitment to the chorus was impressive."

"She did so much we couldn't list it all. In her quiet way, she was a huge asset to Norwich Harmony. She was also a huge supporter of the East Anglian Children's Hospice charity, and organised several fundraisers."

Ruth Vellacott
Norwich Harmony



Penny Janet Chisholm

Penny was LABBS PRO for eight years from 1989 to 1997. I am sure many of you will have memories of her dashing around at Convention weekends, in particular, taking photographs of choruses and quartets and producing the weekend's daily newsletters (now known as "Convention Express") and for her driving around the country visiting clubs. She will also be remembered for her untiring enthusiasm in trying to get LABBS "out there" to the media – not always an easy task – and

for her attendance at Council Meetings and her work in forging links to the USA barbershop world, in particular with the World Harmony Corporation and The Gas House Gang.

Penny was also responsible for editing our quarterly newsletter which was then called "Sing Out" and she won a competition to rename it in 1999 – and "Voice Box" was born!

Apart from her work on the then Executive Committee (now "The Board" of course) Penny was also in three choruses during her long history with LABBS: Merrow Chimes, Shades of Harmony (who later joined with Harbour Lights to form the present chorus Cascade) and finally Guildford Harmony. She was always a committed and hard-working member and enormous fun to be around.

Although Penny had not sung for some years because of her bad health she will be remembered by many for the enthusiasm and joie de vivre that she brought to everything she did.

I am sure you will want to join me in sending love and best wishes to her son Alasdair, her daughter Judith and her many friends. In memory of a lovely lady!

Jacqui Edwards
Ex-LABBS Chair and Ex-Guildford Harmony



Introducing THE SONGBIRDS @Bristol Fashion Chorus



Back in 2018, our lovely Bass, Debbie Penfold, had an inspirational idea to create a scheme called SONGBIRDS, to promote and encourage quartet singing in the chorus. SONGBIRD quartets contain any members of Bristol Fashion who would like to have a go at quartet singing without the pressure of competing or even performing for anyone else.

She checked her thoughts with LABBS E&J Director, Alison Zdyzowski and LABBS Judge, Debi Cox about the copyright issues that may arise, and was greatly encouraged to go ahead with the scheme with the following guidelines.

So, SONGBIRDS was launched, named after the first available arrangement of SONGBIRD – Christine McVie, arranged by Linda Corcoran (with a donation to the LABBS Katy Phillips fund)

There are just a few conditions:

- A SONGBIRD quartet can be formed by any **CURRENT** members of Bristol Fashion Chorus, at any time, for any length of time.
- Members are encouraged to try singing a different voice part to what they sing in the main chorus, to broaden their experience and understanding of the roles different voice parts play in any arrangement.
- They can choose to borrow and learn a song (or two!) from the library of music and teach tracks. Debbie has been building the library up over the past couple of years and aims to add at least one new song plus teach tracks to the repertoire each year.
- The songs will typically be performed privately (or not at all – there's no pressure) and it **MUST** be performed under the quartet name of THE SONGBIRDS.
- SONGBIRDS quartets and SONGBIRDS music cannot be used in competition of any kind.
- As the repertoire is currently rather limited, quartets may have access to any of the arrangements for a maximum of four months in order to make them available to others who may be waiting to give it a try.
- If any SONGBIRDS quartet line up chooses to form a permanent/registered/competing quartets then the SONGBIRD library will no longer be available to them for use.

UPDATE FOR 2021 - no less than 23 of our chorus members have created 9 SONGBIRDS quartets. All of the singers are awarded their SONGBIRDS "wings" at our annual awards night.

We all enjoy the freedom of this fabulous scheme either when we form a SONGBIRD quartet or support our friends in the chorus when they decide to 'have a go'. It was also a great way to keep singing through lockdown as it worked really well when we were able to meet again in small groups.

**Janis Smith
PRO August 2021**

