

# READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB



FOUNDED 1974  
www.rbhc.org.uk

# TAG RAG AND NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2006



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
ANDY PEARCE**

Photo by Murray Downing

## DENIS WRIGHT

Denis' photograph was missing from the new-member gallery last month because I couldn't put my hand on a pic. Please welcome a new baritone:



## UNIFORMS

With Convention commitments looming you are requested to check your uniforms for completeness and cleanliness. Please note that Heather is happy to replace or restore lost/loose buttons and other minor repairs if you only care to ask. Remember also to check that you still fit into the garb. Heather will try to kit you out with a realistic size, again, if you care to ask. Don't be shy or coy about it, do it sooner rather than later. Ed.

# READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

A LOOK AHEAD TO

**MAY 2006**

| SUNDAY  | MONDAY | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY            | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY  |
|---|--------|--|-----------|---------------------|---|---|
| <b>May<br/>2006</b>   | 1      | 2<br><b>Rehearsal</b>                                | 3         | 4                   | 5   | 6   |
| 7<br><b>Proposed<br/>Extra<br/>Rehearsal</b>                  | 8      | 9<br><b>Rehearsal</b><br>TAG RAG<br>COPY<br>DEADLINE | 10        | 11                  | 12<br><b>Daytimers+<br/>Fawley Court<br/>Henley</b>           | 13  |
| 14<br><b>Extra Rehearsal<br/>alternative date</b>             | 15     | 16<br><b>Rehearsal</b><br>TAG RAG<br>DISTRIBUTION    | 17        | 18                  | 19<br><b>BABS<br/>Convention<br/>Harrogate<br/>Day 1 of 3</b> | 20<br><b>BABS<br/>Convention<br/>Harrogate<br/>Day 2 of 3</b> |
| 21<br><b>BABS<br/>Convention<br/>Harrogate<br/>Day 3 of 3</b> | 22     | 23<br><b>Rehearsal</b>                               | 24        | 25                  | 26  | 27  |
| 28  | 29     | 30<br><b>Rehearsal</b>                               | 31        | <b>May<br/>2006</b> |   |   |

Calendars showing the remaining days of April 2006 and the month of June 2006  
are at the back of TAG RAG

**MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY** \* Addition/Update to last month's TAG RAG

|      |            |           |         |                  |   |
|------|------------|-----------|---------|------------------|---|
|      | MAY        | 12        | Fri     | Daytimers+       | Fawley Court Henley - Craft Experience  |
|      | MAY        | 19/21     | Fri-Sun | Full Chorus      | BABS Convention Harrogate   |
|      | JUL        | 1         | Sat     | Full Chorus      | Singout at Wimborne Hants   |
|      | JUL        | 11        | Tue     | Daytimers        | Stoke Poges Club 2pm sing   |
| *    | JUL        | 11        | Tue     |                  | Club Fun Evening  |
|      | JUL        | 23        | Sun     | Full Chorus      | Highclere Hall Singout  |
|      | SEP        | 15        | Fri     | 35-man           | Hungerford Town Hall. 2 x 30 min spots.   |
| *    | SEP        | 17        | Sun     | Daytimers        | Goring Village Hall Hall. 1.45 Sing.  |
|      | <i>OCT</i> | <i>10</i> |         | <i>Daytimers</i> | <i>Hungerford Town Hall (tbc)</i>   |
|      | NOV        | 18        | Sat     | Full Chorus      | Charity Show a la Dreweatte & Neatte  |
|      | DEC        | we/3rd    |         | Full Chorus      | Overseas trip - possibly Budapest.  |
|      | DEC        | 10        | Sat     | Full Chorus      | Christmas Show Desborough Suite TBC   |
|      | DEC        | 12        | Tue     | Daytimers        | Pangbourne WI 2.30 sing   |
|      | DEC        | 16        | Sat     | Full Chorus      | Desborough Show Maidenhead  |
| 2007 |            |           |         |                  |   |
| *    | MAR        | 2-4       | Fri-Sun | Full Chorus      | Chorus Away Weekend Marsham Court Hotel<br>Bournemouth (**** Note revised date****) |
|      | MAY        | 25-27     | Fri-Sun |                  | BABS Convention Scarborough   |
|      | JUN        | 9         | Sat     | Full Chorus      | Show Reading Town Hall 60th Anniversary of<br>Düsseldorf twinning.                  |

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NEXT COPY DEADLINE:

**9TH MAY FOR 16TH DISTRIBUTION**



### **PETER'S POINTS**

We are currently endeavouring to do a lot of things concurrently. From now until after Convention there will be three main thrusts to the Club evenings.

- “Early bird” sessions starting at 7:00pm led by Peter Dawson when the LtS “graduates” and new members will progressively learn the repertoire. Existing members are encouraged to attend these sessions to help those who are in the same vocal section (and to seize the opportunity to confirm you know the correct notes!)
- Chorus members not attending Convention (including the LtS team) will work on the repertoire and possibly some new songs with Alan Hill, Brian Callaghan and others.
- Convention attendee activities are self evident. It is important everyone in the Club knows the Convention package, but the Convention

attendees need time to rehearse together so the balance of sound and activity “on stage” is apparent to those directing.

What we are doing is ambitious for a Club that only meets one night a week. To achieve all this successfully does necessitate parallel sessions. After Convention we will refocus and bring everyone together to start new songs and initiatives such as the music course. Your commitment, hard work and patience are much appreciated.

Thank you to David Colver for getting a new 'Rogues Gallery' of Club member photographs. See Heather if you want to view David's new presentation. Also thank you to Don Jeffery for originating this idea and doing it so conscientiously over the years.

In harmony  
**PETER COOKSON**

Chairman

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### **EDITORIAL**

Copy contributions this month are a bit thin but the compensation is my visit to the BABS AGM. I've taken the liberty of reproducing the BABS Chairman's annual report that ideally would have been in circulation prior to the meeting so that a collective view could be put forward. Thankfully there were no contentious issues on the agenda this time. On the contrary Ed Deacon who accompanied me was very impressed with what we experienced. The BABS executive is doing a fine job to manage the national aspects of our Barbershop fraternity and we should be eternally grateful for their diligence. I noted on the trip that Worcester University now has full status. In my days of organising Harmony College it was known as a University College; I was told that it's all to do with the amount of research work they do.

It is sad for me to lose one of my advertisers. Don Jeffery advised me last week that I can now withdraw his artwork from Tag Rag. Don's Briafield ad has been a regular feature since October 1995. Do you remember those days? Those were the days when Reading had the 01734 STD code. Thank you for your continued support Don and we wish you a very happy and relaxed retirement full of Barbershop! I'll remove the copy next month.

The arrangements for next year's Chorus Away Weekend have moved on since my last report. Our honorary chairman was sharp enough to notice that the date I had pencilled into the hotel's diary coincided with Mother's Day. Luckily I've been able to move it one week earlier to the weekend of 2-4

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March. I'm expecting to sign a contract committing us to this date in the coming weeks.

Our preparations for Convention are going on at an increasing pace. Let us all remember that this is the time of the year when anxiety levels rise and we can all become a bit fractious. This is mainly due to everyone having a slightly different understanding of what the plan of action really is. Let's all recognise this and make the necessary adjustments before any of the issues are blown out of proportion. It'll all be right on the night! Get as close as you can to the nub of the plan and check frequently that your interpretation fits comfortably with our masters. This package is one of the more interesting and challenging ones that we have ever been involved with. We have two exceptional songs and an exceptional presentation package. Let's raise our game to accommodate them.

I am in the process of creating the teaching materials for the next BABS Harmony College. Normally this would entail creating the traditional cassette tape but on this occasion I've been requested to do it all on CD. This would have been outside the scope of the analogue equipment that I've been using in the past but the new computer and digital sound interface has changed all of that. The task involves four songs and I've been requested to include an introductory track so that my mellifluous tones can still be heard! I have now successfully created a pilot CD that has provided me with a great learning experience that I know will help to update our own Club practices. Of particular interest is the use of an MP3 player that I've purchased from Richer Sounds in Reading for £20 that does the job extremely well. Not only does it provide a neat player that does away with the comparatively cumbersome cassette machine it will also do voice recording. I'm even thinking that it may be possible to create and share bespoke learning materials on rehearsal nights. Watch the space. What is more, the functionality of the little machine is ideal for the teach tape learning process - easy looping on a song or part of a song.

### GRAHAM STARKIE

Editor

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### SELECTED WEEKLY NOTICES

#### From PETER COOKSON: (21 Mar)

"Ann McTavish Memorial Fund. I am delighted to say Hannah and I successfully completed the Bath Half Marathon on Sunday (with times of 1hr 47 min 48 sec and 1hr 50 min 26 sec respectively). As of today we have raised over £5,100 from this run for Marie Curie Cancer Care and the final total we think will be a bit higher. This response has been way

beyond our expectations. We are so pleased to be able to give this support to such a worthy cause. Thank you so much for your contributions.

#### SPASHOLT SINGOUT (28 Mar)

For Caravan Club International. Friday 31st March 2006. TVC is under the direction of Mr Phillip Ward. MC Meyrick Wyard. There are two spots of up to 30 mins each with a short interval (mainly for our benefit).

#### FIRST HALF

(TVC in greens.)

**Sound Celebration (D)**

**Lover Come Back To Me (G)**

**Do You Hear The People Sing (Ab)**

**Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence (Em)**

COMMUNITY SONG (Optional) led by MC

ROCKAHOLIX – 3 songs

TVC

**Swing Low Sweet Chariot (F)**

**Sunset Poem/Troyte's Chant (Soloist**

Geraint) (G)

**Make 'Em Laugh (D)**

#### SECOND HALF

(TVC in coloured shirts.)

**Wonderful Day Medley (F')**

*THE AMERICAN DREAM (Concept: The history of the USA is inextricably linked with song. Take a ride with the TVC along the rocky road from the early beginnings to the songs of today)*

**Battle Hymn Of The Republic** solo by Alan Hill (*The Birth of America -civil war*)

**Ghost Riders In The Sky (Cm)** (*Conquest of the Wild Wild West*)

MAGIC MEYRICK (*Vaudeville would never have been the same without a magician ....*)

**Hello Mary Lou (Bm)**(*Can those cowboys dance*)

**The Birth Of The Blues (G)** (*Out of Gospel comes the Blues*)

A Barbershop Quartet *Demonstration by* ROCKAHOLIX – *imagine a Barbers shop in Chicago ...*).

**Everybody Step/Alexander's Ragtime**

**Band Medley (Eb)** (*Hey Guys the band is coming down the street*)

#### BARBERETTES SUCCEED IN IRELAND (28 Mar)

Daph Powell phoned me yesterday to advise that the Barberettes won the Barbershop class at Coleraine International Music Festival. In second placed were Crystal Chords (Ladies) from Manchester and the Red Rose Chorus from Preston were third. Our hearty congratulations to a magnificent effort.

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## CLOCKS MOVE FORWARD - Again?!

(4 Apr)

We hope that by now you have moved all the clocks forward in your house by the hour to bring yourself onto British Summer Time. Now there's another adjustment to be made. You should assume that rehearsals start at 7pm on Tuesday nights now until after Convention.

Presentation rehearsals are being planned for everyone in this Convention run-up period. Moves, Costume and Props will be under scrutiny. And, if you are on top of all of that you can take onboard the singing expertise that will be shared in the parallel sessions.

If you are not taking part in Convention that's no excuse for not turning up early. Apart from the fact you'll need to be part of the team that will deliver these songs in the future you'll need to know how you fit it to the big picture. You'll also be a valuable asset in helping others master the skills.

Please put the revised time of 7pm in your diary to remind you, if you can make it 15 minutes earlier to join the riser crew - all the better. Thank you.

## SPASHOLT SINGOUT (4 Apr)

Phillip (Ward) says "Many thanks to all those who supported this singout last Friday. I really enjoyed myself and I think you did as well. Our enjoyment was only exceeded by that of the audience judging by the number of CDs that Heather sold. The organiser was really pleased by how royally we entertained his group and was very impressed at the range of talented individuals we had in our midst. Thanks once again to you all".

## FRANK BUTTERFIELD (4 Apr)

From Harry Ambler BABSCentral Communications & Public Relations Manager

This is to all who knew, or knew of **Frank (Badgie) Butterfield**. Frank passed away at the age of 85, last Saturday. He was a member of The Big County Chorus, and although not singing, kept close ties with them. He was instrumental in the founding of barbershop in the Leeds and Bradford area and will be sadly missed.

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## BARBERSHOP BABES

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO APRIL'S NONET

**Brian Campbell**  
**Gary Evans**  
**Peter Groves**  
**Les Hearn**  
**Richard Leathem**  
**Brian Milbank**  
**Andy Pearce**  
**Bob Ridley**  
**Sid Seward**

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## BABS AGM REPORT BY GRAHAM STARKIE

Meeting held on 26 March 21006 at Worcester University.

Ed Deacon and I took our Chairman's apologies for non-attendance to what proved a most informative and well-run meeting. The BABS Chairman Stuart Lines kept the council's attention closely focussed on the agenda. Much of the meeting's business is reported in the Chairman's Report that is reproduced elsewhere in Tag Rag so I'll just report the things that caught my attention.

## THE OLD SONGS

The meeting started shortly after 11am with a rendition of The Old Songs directed by Pete Powell. That was followed by a short silence for us to remember the passing of Eric Beer a much-loved barbershopper. Official apologies were received from the Director of Education and Music Services Mike Lofthouse and a handful of Club representatives.

The early part of the agenda moved on swiftly. The minutes of the last meeting were approved and it was agreed that there was nothing to be dealt with in Matters Arising that wouldn't be covered elsewhere.

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### REPORTS

Moving rapidly on to the Chairman's report that had been circulated to Clubs prior to the meeting Stuart asked if anyone had any questions. The pregnant pause prompted Stuart to move on to the Directors' reports, the first of which was Stuart's responsibility to read on behalf of Mike Lofthouse. Of significant interest was the amount of support that BABS now gives through the award of scholarships. Of the nine awards to members to attend the Directors' College in January four were sponsored by the Steve Hall fund and five from Keep Harmony Alive fund. Good progress was also reported on the growth and support of the BABS Youth Chorus. It had now grown to thirty members from the seventeen at last year's Harmony College and they were doing very well under their own leadership. We'll be able to see the results at Convention in the Friday night show and mic warming for the chorus contest if that's practical. On the Guild of Judges front, closer ties were being established with LABBS. At the recent Judging Seminar where three Barbershop Harmony Society judges attended, all groups worked to common standards. Mike was mentioned in dispatches for his work with Harmony Store. It provides Barbershoppers with a valuable source of materials and does it at a small profit.

### MARKETING

Laurie Whittle then presented his Marketing Report. The Learn to Sing activity was Laurie's banner headline. Our efforts in Reading had clearly struck an impressive chord with the BABS organisation as measured by the number of references that were made and the looks for confirmatory nods on many of the points. Ed and I felt really proud of our efforts. It was interesting to note that Clubs were being requested to ensure that the rehearsal venue postal code was on their web sites to ease accessibility in these days of in-car satellite navigation systems. Also to ensure that Club email contact addresses are kept up to date. In particular they should consider using the Club web site address instead of a member's personal address. Laurie reported that he will be giving a presentation at the Autumn Council meeting of the BABS Member lifestyle Profiling activity he has been conducting. Of significant interest was the creation of a publicly accessible web site for barbershop music <[www.babsmusic.co.uk](http://www.babsmusic.co.uk)>. This address didn't work the last time I tried it; I'll keep watching the space. A BABS gift voucher scheme is also being devised with the intention of making them available for this coming Christmas. I expect you be able to use them to fund most if not all BABS services. A recruiting leaflet with a very professional appearance was being distributed at the meeting. I came home with a hundred copies that have been given to Lawrence McNulty.

### CONVENTIONS

David Plater then took the floor to talk about Conventions. He provided a quick review of the last Brighton four-day venture. He cited many positives that will be carried forward to Harrogate this year. Of the two problems, sound in the auditorium and bar staffing, he reported significant progress with the Guild of Judges in that they now are prepared to accept amplified sound of a performance. This is a major breakthrough because trying to get these modern sound systems to selectively bypass a judges ears is not a technical problem we have been too successful with. Bar staffing for barbershop events has always been a problem and I can't see it ever improving. Perhaps the answer is to demand members become teetotal! Harrogate will have the same features as Brighton but over three days instead of the four. Yes, all of that plus the additional activities of Woodshedding, a Master Class by the Ambassadors of Harmony and a ladies scratch chorus under the leadership of Sally McLean (CD White Rosettes) and David Wright's wife Sandy. The Ambassadors of Harmony have a chorus of 135 coming in a party of 210! They will provide the whole of the Saturday night show with their top flight quartet Vocal Spectrum. The Harrogate centre auditorium has 1900 seat and 1800 registration have been received by BABS already. A plan is in hand to accommodate overspill from the main auditorium into Hall D with a closed circuit television link. It was suggested from the floor that choruses that were in the Sunday show could return their tickets to be resold to members of the public if necessary. The idea is to be assessed. Of significant interest to us is the idea of awarding medals to the second and third placed choruses. Samples of the medals were distributed for examination, they are enamel BABS badges suspended under a bar that reads Second Placed and Third Placed if I remember correctly. The perennial question of whether this changed the concept of First, Second and Third places to Gold, Silver and Bronze was asked from the floor. After a little discussion to clarify the question it was decided that it didn't. Of interest to us is that retrospective purchase of medals is going to be allowed with an expected cost of less than £3 each. This revenue would go straight into Harmony Foundation.

### SCARBOROUGH SPA COMPLEX

Plans are well on schedule for 2007 in the Spa Complex in Scarborough. This venue only has 1710 seat but is situated adjacent to a lovely theatre that can take the overspill. A three day event is being planned. Accommodation in Scarborough is being arranged through Scarborough's own Accommodation Bureau and not the National Venues Agency as in the past. We may even be able

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to book though the BABS web site. A general discussion took place about the difficulties in finding a venue to meet our needs. Venues to accommodate 1500-2500 are few and far between. David reported that the quartet Realtime the BHS quartet champions from 2005 have been booked. In answer to a question from the floor David Plater replied that the single pricing structure for conventions is not set in stone and will be kept under review. A provisional booking for 2008 has been made with the Harrogate Conference Centre.

### LEARN TO SING

Mick Kett was very bullish in his Membership Development report. Once again we were able to preen our feathers with the number of references to our LtS activity. He enthused about the work that had been done by BABS to elevate the status of the activity by bolstering its credibility by using BABS charitable status to advantage. 'Grant Assisted by Harmony Foundation' and a new logo is hoped to give a seal of approval. It appears that almost anything that a Club tries out under the LtS banner has success that excites! Long may it last. The idea that BABS should have a professional team of presenters and a 'hustings' type bus to tour the country got a sceptic reception. We appear to have had one of the biggest audiences for our efforts with LtS but the smallest takeup of new members. Lincoln who did their first LtS course in a desperate state with just 11 members are now enjoying the fruits of their labour after their second with 45 members! It is important to realise that Lincoln's position in the 'league' is significantly different than ours.

### TAX BREAK

Because of the approaching lunch break the chairman jumped to the Harmony Foundation report by Colin Bennet to fill the time. We were advised that Harmony Foundation was now a trade name with most of its funding coming from Gift Aid. Income from this source jumped to £17k from last year's £13k. And the Clubs were thanked for their diligence in getting members to subscribe if they were taxpayers. Thirteen Clubs were reported to have 100% of their members contributing and Reading was one of them. Awards from the Foundation this year went towards Directors' College, BABS Harmony College, BHS (The 'Society') Harmony College and to the BABS Youth Chorus.

The meeting broke for lunch at this juncture with a rendition of My Wild Irish Rose.

### FINANCIAL

After lunch Paul Williams presented the financial reports. It is interesting to note that over the years

the accounting methods have become increasingly difficult to understand simply because of the jargon of the financial world and apportionments of moneys. This position appears to be exacerbated by the fact we are now a charity. However notwithstanding that the finances of the Association appears to be in good shape and with due diligence in the coming years we'll achieve the reserve levels that the Charity Commissioners expect. It was suggested that the timing of the AGM be moved to April to give extra time for the financial reports to be prepared. I wonder if that's the order of magnitude of the complexity - three+ months to prepare reports on a twelve month period. I wish I understood these things a bit better to take a more considered view! Paul Williams was duly elected unanimously into the role of Director of finance, the job he's been seconded into doing for almost the last year. He came over as a very capable candidate. The meeting then elected to go for status quo in the election of the auditors.

### CHILD PROTECTION

We then had a very informative presentation by Stuart Newbury of the Kingsbridge Club on the work he'd undertaken to make a recommendation to the Council about how we should develop a Child Protection Policy. Stuart is a retired Detective Superintendent of the Devon Constabulary. In a nutshell he said it would be a folly to 'turn a blind eye' and not get involved with a policy. We have a duty of care to young people when they want to join in our singing and we must be seen to be addressing the issue. My note is unclear about exactly what is considered a 'young person' but we adopted the right policy in our Learn to Sing activity by getting anyone under 18 to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Stuart recommended that we get the NSPCC to advise and create a policy for the Association, one that all Clubs can adopt. He mentioned a few sources of his information and recommended the English Cricket Board web site as a good starting point. We'll watch the space.

### LEARN TO SING AGAIN

There was a proposal by the Lincoln Club on the agenda to recognise the current living founder members of the Association but it had been withdrawn so the business quickly moved to the Lincoln's Club approach to running a Learn to Sing course. They have now run two 10 week courses. Males attendees only. No mention of Barbershop in advertising material. Their Chorus and LtS students kept in separate rooms. There were no big surprises. The enthusiasm of the presenter for the process was exceptional. They addressed the uniform problem by buying up the entire stock of a particular necktie from Tesco.

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The meeting closed at 1540 with the singing of Let's Get Together Again and Keep The Whole World Singing. Ed and I agreed that it had been a very enjoyable and informative meeting and that we should be grateful for the dedication of our volunteer officers.

### GRAHAM STARKIE

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THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF BARBERSHOP SINGERS

### BABS CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2005

Dear Fellow Members

It gives me great pleasure to present my report on the activities of our Association over the past year. In his report for 2004 Wilf Pattison described it as a very good year for the Association. I am pleased to say that this trend has continued.

During 2005, total membership increased from 1786 to 1841, a net gain of 55 for the year. The overall increase in membership since the millennium has been due, in part, to the introduction of new clubs. We welcomed 3 new clubs, Ocean Harmony, Sussex Harmony and Byfield, which means we have now had 7 new clubs who have joined since the millennium. Another recruitment initiative was the £25 vouchers issued for each of the 237 new members recruited between January 2004 and March 2005.

The major recruitment initiative undertaken over the past 2 years has been the introduction of the Learn to Sing courses. We are delighted to say that almost 50% of clubs have now run the course and these have proved to be a very effective recruitment tool. £100 grants are available to clubs who run a Learn to Sing course and a number of clubs have benefited from this. Whilst recruitment is important, retention is also vital and in the past year, we have presented 25 members with 30 year pins and 42 members with 25 year pins. Your chairman was delighted to make these presentations to many of the members on stage immediately following the chorus contest in Brighton, so everyone had an opportunity to recognise these long serving members. They have made a significant contribution to the Association and we should be grateful for their efforts over so many years.

A membership website was introduced to facilitate sharing information on recruitment and retention issues. We are very grateful to Neil Watkins for the magnificent job he did in setting it up and providing ongoing site management. This is a valuable resource for any club wishing to seek ideas on increasing its membership.

Our Music and Education Services team, under Mike Lofthouse, has had another busy year. The 5th Director's College (DCV) at Bablake School, Coventry was well attended by over 60 Chorus Directors from BABS, LABBS, Sweet Adelines and from IABS and DABS. The visiting educator was Colin Touchin a local (to Coventry) who has extensive experience both in choral work and in brass band music. He brought many new ideas and contributed to the overall very high standard of the College Faculty, once again ably led by Rhiannon Owens Hall. Despite a break in and the theft of a lot of BABS equipment, we were able to continue for the weekend to provide a wide variety of coaching for the delegates. A new feature of this College was the use of a College song – Old St Louis. The delegates formed a chorus on the Saturday evening and after a superb warm-up by Mike Taylor, sang the song under the guidance of Linda Corcoran. The session along with the presentations by Chris Davidson and Colin Touchin was videoed and a DVD produced and sent to all delegates.

Subsequent to the College, Colin Touchin was invited to be a permanent member of the Faculty and has been co-opted onto the group running the Certification scheme for chorus directors.

On the Sunday Grand Central Chorus and the Sounds of Three Spires along with the quartet Retro provided 'choruses' for the trainee directors to work on. BABS is grateful to them for their willingness to give up their weekend to support the development of musical directors, so vital to the Association.

Also in January, the Harpenden one day workshop provided top value education to the 140 people attracted to the event.

Bablake School featured again in March with the Guild of Judges seminar at which Mike Taylor, Derek Davies and Andy Milner qualified to become full members.

Also during March the well-established educational and social gathering that has become Harmony Junction was held in Pitlochry. It was another successful event for the Scottish clubs, but also well attended by southern visitors. 2004 quartet

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champions Prime Time provided excellent support of all events and the Junction chorus was again lifted to a high standard of performance, through the coaching expertise provided by Mike Taylor and Jon Conway.

The main educational event of the year was the 27th Harmony College, held at Worcester over the August Bank Holiday weekend. A record number of students and Faculty (close to 300) were in attendance at which we were pleased to welcome back the Society educator Bill Rashleigh. The college had a couple of new features – a very successful Youth Chorus under the leadership of Timm Barkworth. The chorus was made up of 17 under 25's and Timm was ably assisted by Rob Barber, Duncan Whinyates and Andy Foster. The chorus met again in November and with several new members continues to go from strength to strength.

Rhiannon ran a Coach the Coaches stream which was very popular and we hope will lead to the creation of more valuable resources in the future. We are indebted to Ken Hulme, the College Faculty and the West Midlands club for their dedication in organising and undertaking all of the tasks necessary to hold this event.

Our preparations for 2006 competition began in October, at Bablake School, Coventry, with the combined event of the Quartet Preliminary Competition and the Guild of Judges Autumn Seminar. The competitors were encouraged by the good attendance and enthusiastic support of the audience. Lessons were again learned about improving stage set-up and lighting and this should stand us in good stead for the 2006 event.

The Education website [www.BABS-education.info](http://www.BABS-education.info) was launched to bring together all the strands in the Music Services Directorate. A fully functional bulletin board was installed under the education website.

Our new initiative of an arranging contest attracted 14 arrangements submitted by 7 arrangers and was won by Craig Russell of the Anvil Chorus for his composition and arranging of "My Sunny Day" which is being reviewed for publication and use at the 2006 Harmony College

During the year, the Board was pleased to be supported by David Wright as Administration Director & Company Secretary. Much of the work in this area is unseen by the general membership, but as a company and registered charity, it is essential we comply with our legal requirements. David has worked hard to ensure all our reports are made at the appropriate time.

In addition to the routine work, David has been responsible for managing Harmony Foundation, dealing with enquiries for grants and scholarships, preparing briefing papers for the Board and enabling the trustees to make appropriate decisions. This is a painstaking job, which has been handled with David's usually efficiency. In addition, he has been working on child protection and Health and Safety policies, work which is ongoing to ensure clubs are made aware of their respective obligations.

For most of the year, our finances have been in the hands of the Finance Director, Gerry Beever, However, because of personal pressures, he offered his resignation in the autumn and the Board co-opted Paul Williams of the Coventry club into that position, pending his confirmation by Council. We are grateful to both Gerry and Paul for their work and for the effective way in which the transition took place.

Despite the loss of the planned venue (Bournemouth) for the annual convention our Special Events Director, Brian Sperry, pulled out all the stops and managed to secure the Brighton International Centre. If that wasn't enough, we then took on the European chorus and quartet competitions. Quite a challenge for our 2 new convention managers (David Plater & Derek Parmenter) who took the helm of a hugely dedicated team of people who give up their weekend for your pleasure.

Starting out with this empty barn of a place they created a near perfect setting for what was one of the most enjoyable and hard fought set of competitions seen in our Association for some time. A range of new events were introduced and the whole weekend was jam-packed full of things to see and do. We were pleased to welcome David Wright, the acclaimed barbershop arranger and assistant director of the Ambassadors of Harmony chorus who together with the superb 2004 International Collegiate Quartet Champions, Vocal Spectrum, gave us much to think about as they talked and sang their way through the weekend.

The European and National chorus competition had 35 entries that stretched the energies, resources and facilities to the limit, but as usual everyone involved responded to the challenge. The Cambridge Chord Company retained their European chorus champion status closely followed by The Cotton Town Chorus with The Grand Central Chorus taking the third spot. In the BABS contest, the Cotton Town Chorus excelled to take the Crawley Cup and their first ever national championship, followed by The Grand Central Chorus with The Thames Valley Chorus

## READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

third. On the quartet front Absolut from Sweden took the honours in the European competition with The Works coming in a very close second and Pitch Invasion third. The Works became our new Gold Medal quartet champions with Pitch Invasion taking Silver and By Appointment, Bronze.

The 2005 Senior Quartet championship was awarded to Mid Life Crisis who then went on to represent the Association at the International Seniors Quartet Championships in Sacramento, USA at the beginning of 2006.

With a number of new events this European Convention achieved all expectations of being a weekend of singing, friendship, singing, fun and singing. At its conclusion your Executive is pleased to report that Convention 2005 experienced a significant improvement in attendance (helped in no small way by our European brothers in harmony) although we did not fare quite so well on the financial front turning in a negative financial return. Plans for the 2006 convention are well in hand and we are looking forward to seeing and hearing the 2005 International Chorus Champions the Ambassadors of Harmony (over 130 singers from that chorus have already signed up to visit our shores. If you haven't registered yet I would recommend that you do so very soon).

Our Convention was quickly followed by the Society Convention in Salt Lake City, which your chairman was able to attend. As our representatives, Prime Time won many friends for their performance both in contest and the World Harmony Jamboree. Thanks for flying the flag on our behalf. During the convention, your chairman attended the World Harmony Council meeting and BABS again secured a grant of \$2,500 towards education for chorus directors.

The Marketing and Communications department, led by Laurie Whittle, has continued to give the Association very valuable support throughout the whole year.

Laurie has produced many publications for us during the year, including the Convention programme, Convention Express, plus various leaflets and brochures, to promote the association. His department also provides valuable support to the other directorates, including work on Harmony Foundation, Harmony Store, Membership Development and the marketing for Convention. In addition, he works very closely with Mike Lofthouse to promote the educational aspects of the association including the production of a promotional leaflet for the School Music Teachers Conference and advertising within magazines like

The Music Teacher and The Singer. He has also updated the membership profiling and he will outline this at the AGM

Harmony Express, under the editorship of Paul Sherry, is now a high quality magazine, which gives increased status to the Association. Many clubs have used the example shown by Taunton, to use Harmony Express to support the Learn to Sing programme. Clubs taking advantage include Greater Manchester, Thames Valley, Chesham and Southern Union. This is a FREE service, so if you want to take advantage then contact Laurie.

Harry Ambler is another great asset to the Association, providing valuable contacts with the outside world, as well as being an effective means of distributing information to all clubs in a timely manner both through the club e-mail system and post.

There have been some board changes during the year. I have already referred to the handover from Gerry Beever to Paul Williams. In addition, Brian Sperry did not offer himself for re-election as Special Events Director at the autumn Council meeting. Brian has been on the Board for many years, initially as Membership Development Director and more recently as Special Events. He has devoted a tremendous amount of time to our activities and we wish him, and Jeanie, well in the future. However, he has not vanished as he has taken on the role of registration manager for Harrogate 2006! In his place, David Plater, one the 2005 convention managers, has stepped in and I am sure he will provide new initiatives for us in the future.

David Wright made it known some time ago that he did not wish to continue beyond the end of 2005 as Administration Director. He has been a wonderful member of the Board, not only keeping us on the right path, but entertaining us with his dry sense of humour. We will miss him. However, in his place Colin Bennett takes post from the beginning of 2006 and he too will provide the right direction in the coming years.

To each of these retiring directors, the Board wishes to place on record its appreciation of their hard work.

At the autumn Council meeting, we were delighted that Bill Harvey was elected as Vice Chairman, assuming the role of Chairman from January 2007. Bill is well known among the Scottish clubs, as well as being a valuable member of the convention team. I am sure he will be a great asset to us all in the coming years.

## READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

In addition to attendance at Spring & Autumn Council meetings, your Executive has met for six Executive Committee meetings, including a two day planning weekend in the autumn.

My thanks to all members of the Executive for their hard work and support for me and the Association during this period of office. All your directors put much time and effort into our Association and we should all be grateful for the dedication they show to spreading the barbershop word.

Stuart Lines  
BABS Chairman  
March 2006

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### ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Hello Playmates! I finished up last month's epistle by saying "Spring is here and this NW wind won't last forever." But - blow me down - it's doing its best. It is perishing cold out in my garden this morning so I'm quite glad to have this opportunity to stay indoors where it is warmer. Still - there are plenty of signs that Spring has arrived; all the daffs and primroses are out and the blackthorn bushes are in full flower in the hedgerows - about a month later than usual - and I have had to get my mower out for the first time this year.

"What the heck has all this waffle got to do with Associate Membership?" I hear you cry and you are dead right of course so let me say what a joy and a pleasure it was to see DAVE and MARY HEIGHWAY at our singout at Sparsholt College for the Caravan Club. They happened to read my note in last month's AM News about two hours before we were due to kick-off at 7.30 so they dropped everything and came to see us. Thank you both DAVE and MARY; it was great to see you both after such a long time and it's good to learn that you had such a wonderful holiday "down under". This must have helped in your continuing recovery from that horrific accident you were involved in.

Thanks again for your support and I hope you both enjoyed our humble offerings. Good sing at the pub afterwards, wasn't it?

And now it's "thank you" time for subs and first off it's you MIKE ABBOTT in every sense because you are top of my list, alphabetically, of AMs and HMs. And what a busy boy you are for the Barbershop movement. I was especially pleased to read about this new Youth Chorus in the Harmony Express, Mike, and I do hope it grows to attract more young lads and wean them off this muck they call music these days. Many thanks for your letter and cheque Mike and also for your good wishes concerning Harrogate. I shall not be there this time as I am a bit too long in the tooth to undertake long journeys and overnight stays. I shall be thinking about you all though.

And lastly this time I have to thank you TONY PATMAN for your letter and cheque which arrived just too late for inclusion in last month's TAGRAG. Still- better late than never, eh Tony? I'm glad you caught the lads on the ANT & DEC Christmas show. Not exactly Barbershop as the musical arrangement and the choreography were all their doing and it involved some jolly hard work for the forty-odd lads who took part. I think they all enjoyed it though and we got some excellent local publicity both for that and our 'Learn To Sing' efforts. I'm sure all the lads will be pleased to see you at Harrogate, Tony. I shall not be there myself this time as I've explained in my notes to Mike Abbott. I note that your move from York to Scarborough (both lovely towns) is imminent, Tony, so please don't forget to let me have your new address when you are settled. I love Yorkshire and have spent many happy holidays in my caravanning days, so I quite envy you and Ruth. Good luck to you both.

And I think that is about all I can find for you this time, folks, so I must brave the elements and go out and do some gardening. I have about ten dozen plug plants which arrived in the post this morning which all have to pricked out into pots so that will keep me occupied for quite a while.

T.T.F.N.  
**RON COLLIS**  
**F.O.T.C.**

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# READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS' LETTERS

7 April 2006

Dear Ron,  
Once again I forgot to beat you to it and get my Associate Member subscription in the post before you had cause to write to me! Please find enclosed my cheque for the next year.

As in previous years I enjoy keeping tabs on what is happening at Reading by reading Tag Rag.

Graham Starkie will be able to tell you that I had a great time at Directors' College in my role as additional videographer to add to the sterling work of Pete and Beth Powell. My other pet project in that context is the National Barbershop Youth Chorus, whose progress I am logging, since I first filmed them at Harmony College, with attendance at their Walsall rehearsal and I will have done the same at our own rehearsal venue in Chesham by the time you receive this. It is unfortunate that you won't be able to witness their first BABS outing when they will perform on the Friday night show and make warm for the Chorus Competition. You will, no doubt, hear all about their performances from your chorus colleagues after the Convention weekend.

Our second session of free singing lessons has proved a success in providing us with a much needed influx of basses and, overall, a small increase in recruits based on last year's course.

I will take the opportunity of this letter to wish all the guys performing as Thames Valley Chorus at Harrogate the best of luck, especially the first timers.

All the best to you and your wife.

Yours in Harmony

Mike Abbott

P. S. The lead in my quartet is 82 and going strong both vocally and physically.

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22nd March, 2006

Dear Ron,  
Thank you for your reminder about our Associate Membership of RBHC. Please find enclosed our cheque.

Ruth and I continue to enjoy reading about TVC's experiences, and made sure that we caught the Christmas television appearance. Didn't you all look lovely (especially Denis)? Silly, in the best possible tradition, and hugely enjoyable! It would be good if

it led to some more television coverage of what Barbershop can be, and perhaps even some that allowed us to show our true musical potential.

The "Learn To Sing" programme certainly seems to have been a stunning success. Soon you'll have as many on the risers as the VM. It is, as you said in your letter, a tribute to the planning and organisation which were behind it and in this respect in particular is something which some other clubs would do well to learn from.

It was good to see Figaro in action at the Prelim. last year, and Ruth and I are looking forward very much to seeing you all at Harrogate in May. By then, hopefully, we will have completed moving to Scarborough; yes, York is a great place to live, but too expensive at the moment and we need a bigger house. Weekend at the seaside, anyone?

In harmony,  
Tony Patman

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## HISTORICAL NOTES

### **5 Years Ago April 2001**

6<sup>th</sup> Daytimers at Woodcliffe Hall, Wargrave

7<sup>th</sup> Rockaholix (Roger Wilkinson, Alan Hill, Chris Oliver, Brian Callaghan) were at a private party for TVC member Les Hearn at Calcot Golf Club.

9<sup>th</sup> Daytimers at Winton House, Windsor

23<sup>rd</sup> Daytimers at Edmunds Court, Bracknell

Rod Clark took over from Bill Giles as Club Treasurer

### **10 Years Ago April 1996**

Rod Adams is reported as doing his first Mangling job for the chorus in this month.

12<sup>th</sup> Full Chorus Bournemouth BIC Singout for over 1000 Rotary International conference

## READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

delegates. We started the singout by entering the hall singing 'There's A Meeting Here Tonight' following Roger Wilkinson banging a big bass drum!

**18<sup>th</sup>** Extra rehearsal at St John's Ambulance Centre Woodley.

**20<sup>th</sup>** Singout for Nirvana Health Club at Sindlesham.

**26<sup>th</sup>** Extra Rehearsal at Wargrave Piggott School

**27<sup>th</sup>** Barn Dance Social Evening at Windsor Barracks

**28<sup>th</sup>** Extra rehearsal at Coronation Hall Woodley Note BABS Convention was 3-6 May!

Mike McKeown reported that a new clutch had been fitted to the van at 'Mr Clutch' in the Oxford Road Reading. He appends a note saying the clutch will need adjusting at the following mileages 39076, 41576, 44576 and 50576.

### 15 Years Ago April 1991

**10<sup>th</sup>** Full Chorus Waldorf Hotel, London Metal Bashers & Movers dinner of the Motor & Allied Trades Benevolent Fund. In the audience were Willie Rushton and Barry Took.

**13<sup>th</sup>** Full Chorus Victoria Rooms, Town Hall, Reading  
Gerry Holland's (I was going to put his age but thought better of it) birthday party with Barbershoppers from all over the country as guests. TVC were well looked after with free drinks after their performance.

### 20 Years Ago April 1986

**5/6<sup>th</sup>** The Barberettes was top chorus out of 20 at the LABBS prelims at Aston University, Birmingham.

**11<sup>th</sup>** Full Chorus Hexagon Reading for Sue Ryder Home, Nettlebed  
Top of the bill was Roy Castle and, as the Chorus preceded him on stage, we were allowed to stay on while he performed.

**12<sup>th</sup>** Full Chorus Henley

**26<sup>th</sup>** Full Chorus Sainsbury Choir of the Year auditions  
BBC Maida Vale Studios, London. We were not selected to go further.

The Roker Peers of Harmony was the only BABS chorus to survive the auditions. Apple County Chorus (Taunton) & The White Rosettes (Leeds) represented LABBS. They were all eliminated in the second round.

### 25 Years Ago April 1981

**10/12<sup>th</sup>** BABS Convention Skegness  
The Chorus did not compete in the contest won by the Great Western Chorus.

In the quartet contest, won by Regency Pride, our own quartet Partners In Time (Dick Coles, Pete Powell, Ian Douglas, Dave Heighway) was a creditable 4<sup>th</sup>.

Yesterdays Dreamers with Tony Searle was 5<sup>th</sup>.  
Downtown Strollers with Dick Knight was 10<sup>th</sup>.  
15 quartets competed.

The visiting American quartet was California Fever.

Regards

**HAYDN ADAMS**

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### SUPPORTERS

I hope everyone has had a good Easter despite the cool weather. We have recently returned from a stay in Devon visiting my sister and Graham's brother. Whilst there we visited Cothele, a National Trust property. They had had to postpone their 'Daffodil Week' a whole month due to the seasonal delays we are experiencing! So although it was the beginning of April we were lucky enough catch sight of their host of daffodils which was very special. The house and gardens are well worth a visit if you are ever in that area.

It was great to see an excerpt from the Ant & Dec show on Jonathon Ross show recently. I am looking forward to seeing "the contest package" which is being put together and seeing everyone at Convention. It's frightening how time flies.

Luv 'n' hugs as always,

**IRENE**

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# READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

## INTERNET SCAMS & FIDDLES

I came across the following two useful bits of information in my Retired Staff magazine recently. The first one caught my eye because of the Thames Valley connection. I referred the last 'fiddle' I received to which I got a courteous reply. It made me feel good if nothing else!

**Scams** - Despite constant warnings from the Police, Trading Standards, Department of Trade and Industry and other organisations, dishonest tricksters continue to come up with plausible schemes designed to catch you off your guard and to con you to part with your money. A website that offers some very useful points and advice on fraud is: [www.met.police.uk/fraudalert](http://www.met.police.uk/fraudalert).

**"E-mail Fiddles** - Usually appeals from overseas, typically Africa, from wealthy individuals seeking assistance to set up bank accounts so they can transfer money from their country. In return for your help you will receive a financial reward. **DON'T DO ANYTHING** other than forward copies of these fiddles to the TVP Fraud Squad at: [Pravina.Makwana@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Pravina.Makwana@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk).

### Editorial Note:

The Barbershoppers Internet Directory has been removed this month to make space for more important information. It'll be back again next month space permitting. Thank you.

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Thanks to Haydn Adams, Ron Collis, David Colver, Peter Cookson Murray Downing, Heather Mills and Irene for supplying copy.

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**TAG RAG** is published by the Reading Barbershop Harmony Club for the benefit of Members, Associates and anyone else who is fortunate or otherwise to come into contact with us. The opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily the official Club view.

**Advertisement** lineage will be accepted and printed free of charge in TAG RAG (subject to editorial discretion). Display advertising is available in exchange for a donation to club funds as agreed

between the sponsor and the editor before the publication date. Please note that advertisements will be carried for two months only and then will be dropped (at the editor's discretion) unless requested otherwise.

**Objectives of the RBHC** - To encourage the singing and enjoyment of Barbershop Harmony in both Chorus and Quartet form. It is a non profit making organisation and shall support such worthy charitable causes as the Executive Committee think fit. (paraphrase of Club rule number 2)

**Contacts** - The Club's Thames Valley Chorus rehearse on every Tuesday (with few exceptions) at the Piggott School Wargrave near Twyford Reading from 7.45pm until 10.30pm. All visitors are welcome. See website [www.rbhc.org.uk](http://www.rbhc.org.uk) for directions.

**SECURITY NOTICE** *The best place to park your car at the Piggott School is in the main car park at the side of the school; this area is under constant surveillance by four CCTV cameras. The camera over the front door only looks at the main entrance to record movements coming off the road.*

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## READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

RBHC's

# 50 CLUB

**Are you part of the  
action?**

Why not join in the Club's monthly draws to win you some pocket money and provide a regular income to Club funds.

Shares are £2 each  
payable by Standing Order.

**Contact Mike McKeown next Tuesday (or  
0118 988 2530) to join.**

BRIAFIELD

KENNELS



CATTERY

After many years of support to Tag Rag Don Jeffery advises me that his Kennels activity is closing down and he and Jackie are looking forward to their retirement.

**RETIRING**

Thank you Don for your support of Tag Rag throughout the years



DO YOU need your kitchen or bathroom refitted, or some tailor-made shelves to improve your living room? Call

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Get your home protected with a 'wire-less' security system. Speak to Scotty now for details.  
Any sort of household jobs, large or small undertaken. I'm fit, fast and flexible, experienced in carpentry, tiling, plumbing, brickwork, etc. and thoroughly reliable  
References available.

Regular listening to recorded material improves your awareness of the barbershop style and will help you to work-smarter with your singing.

## Barbershop Recordings Resource Library

Save yourself the cost (and trouble) of getting your own recordings by borrowing other members through Andy Wheeler's Lending Library Service. Look for the Library List on the notice board for current titles.

Borrowing requests should be made either by email or a personal note that should include name of item required and a reply address. Speak to Andy on Rehearsal night or at [andy.wheeler@sportscentre.org.uk](mailto:andy.wheeler@sportscentre.org.uk). Andy will coordinate the loan and put the lender in touch with the borrower to complete the deal.

A charge of £1 per item loaned per week is payable to Andy. The money will go into Club funds and Andy will review the need to purchase recorded material on behalf of the library.

# READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

A LOOK AHEAD TO

**APRIL 2006**

| SUNDAY                     | MONDAY                     | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY    | SATURDAY  |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>16</b><br>Easter Sunday | <b>17</b><br>Easter Monday | <b>18</b><br><b>Rehearsal</b><br>TAG RAG<br>DISTRIBUTION | <b>19</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>22</b> |
| <b>23</b>                  | <b>24</b>                  | <b>25</b><br><b>Rehearsal</b>                            | <b>26</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>28</b> | <b>29</b> |
| <b>30</b>                  | <b>April<br/>2006</b>      |  |           |           |           |           |

May 2006 Calendar is on page 2

A LOOK AHEAD TO

**JUNE 2006**

| SUNDAY              | MONDAY    | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY    | SATURDAY            |
|---------------------|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|
| <b>May<br/>2006</b> |           |  |           | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>            |
| <b>4</b>            | <b>5</b>  | <b>6</b><br><b>Rehearsal</b>                                 | <b>7</b>  | <b>8</b>  | <b>9</b>  | <b>10</b>           |
| <b>11</b>           | <b>12</b> | <b>13</b><br><b>Rehearsal</b><br>TAG RAG<br>COPY<br>DEADLINE | <b>14</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>17</b>           |
| <b>18</b>           | <b>19</b> | <b>20</b><br><b>Rehearsal</b><br>TAG RAG<br>DISTRIBUTION     | <b>21</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>24</b>           |
| <b>25</b>           | <b>26</b> | <b>27</b><br><b>Rehearsal</b>                                | <b>28</b> | <b>29</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>May<br/>2006</b> |