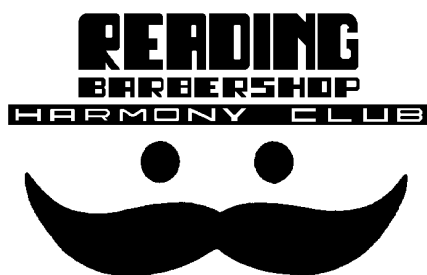


READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB



FOUNDED 1974
www.rbhc.org.uk

TAG RAG AND NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2006

Supporting the Air
Ambulance at the
Ferrari Funday
Highclere Castle
Newbury
23rd July 2006

*"A magnificent day
in every way."*



READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

A LOOK AHEAD TO

SEPTEMBER 2006

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
September 2006					1	2
3	4	5 Rehearsal	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 Rehearsal TAG RAGCOPY DEADLINE	13	14	15 Daytimers Diabetic Society Broad Street Reading	16
17 Daytimers Goring Village Hall. 1.45 Sing	18	19 Rehearsal Vocal coach Mike Taylor to visit. TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 Rehearsal	27	28	29	30

Calendars showing the remaining days of August 2006 and the month of October 2006
are at the back of TAG RAG

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

	SEP	15	Fri	Daytimers	Diabetic Society promotion Broad Street Reading (behind M&S) speak to Barry Howard for detail.
	SEP	17	Sun	Daytimers	Goring Village Hall. 1.45 Sing.
	OCT	10		Daytimers	Hungerford Town Hall (tbc)
*	OCT	14/15	Sat/Sun		BABS Quartet Prelims at Bablake School Coventry
*	OCT	29	Sun	Full Chorus	Extra Sunday rehearsal to Top 'n' Tail CD recordings
*	Nov	2	Thu	Daytimers	Silk Mill Home Twyford - Note - evening sing
	NOV	24	Fri	Full Chorus	Cancer charity Show a la Dreweatte & Neatte - New date & Venue) - St George's Hall Wash Common.
	DEC	9	Sat	Full Chorus	Desborough Show Maidenhead
	DEC	12	Tue	Daytimers	Pangbourne WI 2.30 sing
2007	MAR	2-4	Fri-Sun	Full Chorus	Chorus Away Weekend Marsham Court Hotel Bournemouth
	MAY	15	Tues	Daytimers	Maidenhead Blind Club 2.30 sing
	MAY	25-27	Fri-Sun		BABS Convention Scarborough
	JUN	9	Sat	Full Chorus	Show Reading Town Hall 60th Anniversary of Düsseldorf twinning.
	NOV	9-11	Sat	Full Chorus	Potential Warsaw trip.

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

TAG RAG AUGUST 2006 CONTENTS LIST

Page	
2	A LOOK AHEAD TO SEPTEMBER 2006
2	MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
3	PETER'S POINTS COOKSON
3	EDITORIAL STARKIE
5	CLUB EGM PEARCE
5	BOY 2006 COLLIS
5	CHORUS PROFESSIONALISM PEARCE
5	HOOKED ON A CAPPELLA MCKEOWNS
6	FERRARI FUN-DAY SUN-DAY THATCHER
6	SELECTED WEEKLY NOTICES
7	A DAY IN THE LIFE - PART 1 OF 2 BEER
10	ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP NEWS COLLIS
11	ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP LETTERS
12	HISTORICAL NOTES FOR HAYDN ADAMS
12	SUPPORTERS IRENE STARKIE
13	BARBERSHOP BABES
16	DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

NEXT COPY DEADLINE:

12TH SEPTEMBER FOR 19TH DISTRIBUTION



PETER'S POINTS

I attended a Performance Team meeting earlier this month when the objectives for the Club over the next year and beyond were discussed. This assessment followed the Tuesday when the Club reviewed and commented on our 2006 Convention performance.

Julian Charman (as Performance Team Leader) will be communicating to the Club in the near future the detailed output and actions which evolved at this meeting. Here I would like to emphasise some of the key principles which were established:

- Quality We want to concentrate on improving the quality of our singing in everything we do (warm up, tag singing, sing outs, Convention, everything). Conveying the emotion in a song is also a prerequisite and needs practice. Choreography will only be used where appropriate and should be simple and achievable

- Discipline. As part of raising our game we need to be more disciplined on the risers. Those of you who saw Ambassadors of Harmony in Harrogate this year will have noticed how they automatically prepared to sing every time the Director turned to face them. It was instinctive. We want to develop these good habits. You will now see a more rigorous approach being adopted in rehearsals. Please play your part and behave accordingly
- New material. To maintain interest (for us and our audiences!) we need to refresh the repertoire continuously. We now plan to learn at least 6 new songs a year. This will require commitment and work from everyone in the Club. We will need to do our homework and not rely on learning the notes on Tuesdays.

These are some of the basic messages which evolved from the discussion. I believe the outcome embraced views expressed by Club members at the Convention review evening and separately to members of the Performance Team and Executive. The policies set down will form the platform for our activities for the foreseeable future.

In the forthcoming weeks we all need to demonstrate a willingness to achieve these targets. Immediately we can show discipline in the recording sessions currently being done for the Christmas CD.

Reading Barbershop Harmony Club has consistently been one of the top performing choruses in BABS. Together let's keep it there!

In harmony
PETER COOKSON

Chairman

EDITORIAL

Copy from members is getting scarce these days. I will have to start getting round to individual members to encourage them to put their 'talk' down on paper. Thank you to my regular contributors Haydn Adams, Ron Collis, Peter Cookson and Irene for keeping me afloat. This month's issue however is bolstered by a massive tome from our erstwhile baritone Bruce Beer with a dissertation about earning his fourth Chorus Gold Medal with the Vocal Majority. He reports that their majority however is reducing. It is nice to see VMs superiority being challenged by an up and coming young whippersnapper chorus. Enjoy Bruce's story written in his inimitable style. Perhaps he'll tell us the actual title of the upbeat they sang next month.

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

I hope you've been watching BBC1's Saturday night 'How Do You Solve A Problem Like Maria' with the ten young hopefuls competing for the lead in Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest recreation on the London stage. What an opportunity it is for these girls to be groomed almost 24hrs a day by professional vocal and acting coaches. Each girl has great talent just to get so far from the two thousand entrants. There are lots of ideas that could translate into our Barbershop in the snippets that we see with the girls in their coaching sessions. I wish we could get the vocal coach (Zoe) to do some work with our members. I admire all the contestants. How they can approach performing a song in a sing-off to stave off being cast aside for one more week shows real character. And that is just one step short of the more daunting task of singing 'So Long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, Goodbye' (or whatever the title is). Anyone who can come through that ordeal as well as the two girls we've seen so far deserves a golden opportunity to have a career on the stage.

This month the chorus members have supported a change to the digital age by agreeing to move to mp3 players to replace our teach tape system that was based on cassettes. After last week's rehearsal I returned home with orders for fifteen mp3 players. I had previously done my homework and found that Tesco were selling a very appropriate machine for just under £20 that was ideal for the task. I also checked with the Reading store and found that they had "loads". My intention was to get the players on the Wednesday and start work adding the teaching tracks. The purchase was delayed however because I received an early morning email requesting another one. So I held off that day to see if any more orders would come through. As it happened one did, so on Thursday I phoned Tesco in Reading to advise them that I would be going and requested that they get the appropriate number out of the storeroom.

I now realise that this was not the thing to do. I was made aware of the company policy that no more than three players were allowed to be purchased by any one customer! No amount of reasoning changed the situation so I agreed that I would take Irene and do repeated visits to a checkout. The good news was that there were over twenty machines in stock. I got to thinking I was just being taken for a ride so I decided to phone Tesco HQ. I got a very sympathetic ear and the young man said leave it with him and he'd phone me back in fifteen minutes. Three hours later I decided to chase the call up only to find another young man who stangely enough knew all about my situation and sympathised with the problem but said that three per customer was the policy and I would have to make multiple visits to the tills. The reason given was simple - that Tesco is not a wholesale store.

Late in the afternoon Irene and I set off for Tesco. The young lady that I'd talked to previously was not at the Customer Service desk so we went to the display stand to find four players on display. That was three for me and one for Irene, so I tackled the

lady assistant in that area. I carefully explained the situation that we wanted two players to make Irene's one into three and we were going to return until we had bought seventeen - in threes. Off she went but stopped nearby to enlighten a young man stacking the shelves and although I couldn't hear what was being said he was shaking his head. I could see it wasn't good news. The lady returned to us and pronounced that unfortunately there were no more players in stock! She went to the computer terminal to prove it by showing us the stock entry of 45! She quickly added that the computer obviously hadn't been updated to reflect the current situation.

Both Irene and I believed that we had been beaten and were making our way to the checkout when I decided that I needed to speak to the manager. My request was duly honoured. Amazingly this girl knew much detail of my situation and she painstakingly explained the company policy to me again and I reassured her that although I didn't understand it I would abide by it but I couldn't accept all the duff information I was getting about stock levels. There was something in her story about foreign languages that I didn't understand. Irene thinks that it may have been my poor diction in the first place and someone down-the-line interpreted 'chorus songs' as 'course' and hadn't heard the word 'songs'.

It was a frosty start when the manger advised that if I bought 17 then 16 other customers would have to go without! The fact that I was buying for 17 'other customers' was of no consequence. However later she conceded and warmed to the purchase saying that they were getting to the end of the promotion and stocks were high. She also said that if she could find the machines she would sell them to me and promptly disappeared only to reappear minutes later with fourteen to add to the three I already had. Success at last! Irene took the one she had back to the display stand.

I'm glad that all this stuff with the manager took place at the Customer Service desk because we would have completely paralyzed a checkout for thirty minutes or so. You have no idea how long it takes to remove seventeen security tags off the packaging. I find it surprising that a multi-national retail company the size of Tesco could have such a whacky policy, particularly when their cavalier attitude to competitors and suppliers is so widely reported. Let's hope that all our members take to using their mp3 players easily and we can say goodbye to cassettes forever. That could be the last time I'll volunteer to do a bulk purchase without checking ALL the facts first.

GRAHAM STARKIE

Editor

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

CLUB EGM

Can I remind you that the EGM will be held on Tuesday the 5th September, the time has not been set yet but it is likely to be in the middle of rehearsal. The purpose is to vote in the Executive committee for next year.

Chairman - **vacant**
Administration - Andy Pearce
Finance - Alex Russell
Music and Performance - Julian Charman
Marketing - Lawrence McNulty
Membership - Barry Howard
Musical Events - **vacant**

If you have nominations for the vacant positions then please let me have them.

We will also be offering the audited accounts for 2004/2005 for acceptance by the Chorus.

ANDY PEARCE

Director of Administration



B.O.T.Y. 2006

Once again I am prompted by Andy's reminders about General Meetings to do a bit of reminding myself - that job is to promote and organise this year's BOTY election.

All the old hands will know what I am talking about but we do have several new chums (and very welcome they are too) who may need a bit of clarification.

BOTY stands for "Barbershopper of the Year" and every year at our A.G.M. in October we elect the member who, in the opinion of the majority of us, has done most to further the interests of this Club during the previous twelve months. For example our lovely C.D. Rhiannon is the current BOTY.

This requires a great deal of thought for there are so many wonderful people who work their butts off for the benefit of us all - so I'm giving you plenty of notice to start you thinking. In due course we shall issue nomination forms to everyone so you can nominate who **you** think should receive this prestigious honour for 2006.

So thinking caps on chaps!

RON C
F.O.T.C.

CHORUS PROFESSIONALISM

I wholeheartedly support Peter and Rhi in wanting to have the Chorus move up a level of commitment.

I feel that some of the longer standing members of the Chorus feel that when quiet is called for it's not meant to apply to them; they should be setting an example to the newer members. Coming in late is another example of not showing commitment. I know that some genuinely can't get to the rehearsal as they travel a long way, but some are retired and still arrive after 7.45, I question their commitment.

We need to appreciate that when Rhi is with us the evening is costing the club around £230, that's just over a £1 a minute, so when you want to have a chat or hold up the proceedings think about the cost.

We are in an enviable position in BABS in that we have this fantastic CD, Rhi. Rhi can get us to sing in a manner that keeps us in the top five, but if we give her more commitment then that will ease the load that she feels is on her shoulders.

Now I am no angel and I am guilty of some of the above, but I intend to support Rhi and Peter in their desire to get the Chorus to be more professional.

ANDY PEARCE

HOOKED ON A CAPPELLA

Signature would be delighted to see as many of our TVC friends and partners at its show. If assistance is needed, Mike and Gabi McKeown are happy to help - just ask Mike at rehearsal evening or give us a call on 0118 988 2530.

See full advertisement on page 14

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB



FERRARI FUN-DAY SUN-DAY

Despite the too-hot weather and the fact that it was a Sunday, there was a goodly turnout for the Ferrari Fun Day in the beautiful surroundings of Highclere Castle. We even had the added bonus of being directed by Rhi -- the first time, if memory serves, that she has conducted a full singout al fresco. There was a decent sized audience, too, fortunately provided with seating, and boosted by family members and supporters. They all seemed to enjoy our two spots. One lady was heard to remark that the chorus performed a better set of songs in the second half. Hello?

We were preceded by a concert band and a puppet show and followed by a group of Indian dancers accompanied by some deafening drumming. Fortunately they didn't warm up during the TVC performance, so we only had to compete with the occasional thunderous roar from one of the many magnificent Ferraris dotted about the area. They were there as part of a fund-raising event organised by the Chiltern Air Ambulance Service. You could have a ride round the castle grounds in one of these splendid machines for £15. More than 200 such rides had been booked by lunchtime, so the organisers must have been delighted with the total raised on the day.

Not all of us enjoy singing in the open air, especially when it's hot, but it was worth the sunburn to know we made an effective and entertaining contribution to a very deserving cause. Heather even sold three CDs!

COLIN THATCHER

SELECTED WEEKLY NOTICES

RBHC EGM and AGM (1st Aug)

Andy Pearce, RBHC Hon Sec says: "The Club EGM will take place on Tuesday the 5th of September and the AGM will take place on Tuesday the 3rd of October.

Can I remind you that Peter Cookson is standing down and we are looking for a replacement Chairman. Rod is also standing down and we are going to split his role into: Events Manager; Chorus Mangler; Sing Out Secretary. We are looking for volunteers to fill these places.

We pride ourselves in singing for a good and well organised club. If these positions are not filled then we will have to recognise that we may not be as good in the future as we were."

BABS HARMONY COLLEGE (8th Aug)

I can now update the Club's attendance at the College to be Messrs: Peter Cookson, Jim Downing, Simon Laight, Colin Thatcher, Peter Groves, Rhiannon and myself. Late Breaking News - Also Chris Schrier.

If you were thinking about going I'm afraid the booking office is closed. A waiting list is being compiled in the unlikely event someone has to pull out.

MP3 PLAYERS - What are they?(8th Aug)

Just think of them as a device that will play teaching tracks without any moving parts. The cheapest device has enough storage space for at least 32 song tracks. Teaching tracks can be put on and taken off the player with the minimum of fuss on a rehearsal night or using the internet if you have a computer connection. My recommendation is a TECHNIKA MP-106 from Tesco; buy one for £20 - the most difficult bit is getting it out of its blister pack. They have 'loads' and are open 24hrs a day!

Using mp3 players moves us into the digital era. It is very much like the advent of the movie in the film industry. In the same way as a cine-projector did its thing the mp3 player plays back digital snapshots of music. A CD player does the same thing, the difference is that a song on a CD would take up about 10 times as much storage space as the smaller amount of data in an mp3 file.

HIGHCLERE (8th Aug)

I learned from Peter Adamson that the Air Ambulance cleared £22,700.00 at the Ferrari Fun Day. He was most pleased with the result and advised that he had been requested to pass on our contact information to someone connected with the Newbury Show. They were showing an interest in us. Watch the space.

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB



A DAY IN THE LIFE

Are you sitting comfortably with something alcoholic in one hand and a box of tissues in the other? This is an X rated tale due to the potential for nightmares, adult language, adult content, nudity, and swinging emotions. It is the tale of July 7th 2006. A hush comes over the readership, brows are wiped, and young children are shooed out of the room. The scene is set!

Imagine me in bed at 6.45am in Indianapolis- this is the nightmare part of the story!! Imagine the alarm clock going off at this ridiculous time of day – this leads immediate to the adult language part of the story. Imagine my gorgeous bride of over 35 years getting out of bed to go and curl her hair or something similar that that women do at stupid-o-clock (mind you it is good that she now has hair to curl!!). This is the adult content and dare I say it, nudity, part of the tale. Finally, imagine me getting out of bed to ablute and dress up in my VM walkout gear – we are back to the nightmare.

Why am I taking up space with this apparent drivel I hear you shout – well this is the tale of the emotional roller-coaster called International Chorus Competition day!!!

Where was I, oh yes, abluted and dressed – a gentle meander downstairs in the HQ hotel, to a room full of other similarly attired gentlemen, most with their better halves, plus a plethora of guests from the higher echelons of the barbershop world. Somewhere in the region of 250 – 300 I believe, all scrambling to get some food inside us to sustain us through the traumatic next few hours. Following nosh, there are many motivational speeches from inside the VM hierarchy and from honored guests, all extolling us to do our best and carry on the VM

tradition. Stirring stuff – gets the adrenaline starting to pump - even at that time of day.

Then the other halves get up and in my case, started to hug another person across the table!!!! What is going on I asked myself, this is no time to start doing that sort of thing, it could affect my concentration, all of which I need for the thrills and spills of the competition to come. My (up till then) favorite wife then goes off and hugs someone else, on a different table this time!!! All is explained when she comes back, gives me a hug, and passes a very swish looking gold pocket watch into my hot & sweaty hands. It seems that the other 2 guys were unaccompanied, so she was representing the VM wives, and presented them with their watch. All VMers were given one and we all carried them on stage with us as a token of our VMW support. The day was looking up I thought, from a pretty bad start of waking up at that ridiculous time.

Anyway, there I am motivated, adrenaline pumping, and ready to beat any opposition. Eh haw bring ‘em on!! So we say a fond farewell to our loved ones and wives, and join the pipeline. All of you who went to Anaheim will know what this is all about. Gentle rehearsal, makeup in shifts (row by row), motivational direction from our leader big Jim, change into competition togs, bit more rehearsal, get on a bus to go to the convention center, and walking from the bus to the photograph room holding-point. From leaving the warm up room in the hotel, until preparing for the photo, we walked in almost complete silence, focusing on what we had to do, and letting our colleagues do the same by not disturbing their preparation. We were mentally running through the competition songs, imagining the greeting of the audience, transition to the mood of the first song, the emotion to convey, the half time applause, the setting of the mood for the up tune, and the final cheerio to the audience after we finish. I am getting goose-bumps again just thinking about it. I must admit that the people we passed seemed to be duly impressed and even awed by over 140 guys, often in single or at most, double file, looking totally focused. It impressed me so it must have impressed others!

Anyway, photographs, a few ribald remarks about the trophy (we have our photo taken both with and without the trophy) – many light hearted comments were made when we had the second set of photos taken sans trophy!

Anyway, back into serious mode again, to file out of the room and lo and behold, who do I see there but Cottontown from BABS waiting to go into the photograph room after us. In fact they also followed

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

us on stage in the competition – maybe not something I would fancy doing.

So, a gentle, focused and thoughtful stroll to the holding area at the side of the stage, listening to the competitor before us – they sounded good. Then the short trek onto the risers, sensing the anticipation, smelling the noise, and hearing the sweat of the crowd, the slightly weak feeling in the knees with anticipation, then our peak of concentration, the pitch pipe is blown while curtain is still closed, Chuck, our pres. guy sets us up to welcome the audience, curtain goes up, and we're off!!!!

A huge wall of sound from the audience, violent waving and noise from our wives, Jim turns, we set up the initial emotion we want to convey, in this case happiness because we are a barbershop group singing “the old songs”, yes that is right, the self same song we all sing at the drop of a hat, a pole cat song. Audience gasps, fancy the VM singing an old Barbershop chestnut like that, then heaven forefend we transition into “shine on me”. Audience is now definitely having an attack of the vapours!! Then we reach the climax and slip over into a long diminuendo throughout the tag, dying away into reverential silence in honour of the old quartets of years gone by. Tears in my eyes because the vision I had for that song was of my father singing with his quartet, the Amerie four, which in part was responsible for me being where I was – oh I hope he was watching this.

Then thunderous applause, standing O, some puzzled and unbelieving looks (and that was just from the judges!!), then into the excitement of the up-tune. All high-energy stuff, never been anything like it in the annals of convention history. Hurling 3 young members up into the void, then almost finishing the song before they come back down (I exaggerate!). One unplanned problem, the stage has a set of fold-back speakers, but not on the ground where they usually are, no, right above our heads! This meant that we could easily have lost 3 of our youngest (and lightest) members by throwing them up into solid metal speakers. Now maybe I should mention that apart from hurling said youngsters into the air, there was also an 8 bar section in the middle of the song where we did not sing a note! Never been done before – what is barbershop coming to I hear you ask. What we did was to produce rhythm noises while the front row did hip hop dancing – everyone pass their smelling salts to Ron Collis – he will definitely be having a funny turn!! (by the way, my subs are on their way to you Ron!!).

So, where was I, oh yes, we finish the set in a spray of sweat and energy, audience hurls itself to its collective feet, thunderous applause, curtain comes

down, and we silently congratulate each other after a performance that I don't think we could have improved upon.

A quick whiz back to the wives for a resounding forecast that we “had it in the bag, super performance, unbeatable” etc. etc. Now at every other convention, my wife SWMBO, God bless her, has let me know after we sang that it was going to be a very close thing indeed, and that we may even have lost! So when she shows that amount of enthusiasm, I am feeling quietly confident that I should get gold medal number 4. I begin to relax and enjoy the other performances, little knowing what was to come. Dear reader you may want to go and get some smelling salts and keep them close to hand, you and I will both need them!

This year the competition is not only on a Friday, but is split into 2 sessions. We were number 7 in the morning (first) session, less that halfway through, so we had something like 8 choruses left in the morning, a break for lunch, then another 15 or so to go in the afternoon, with what we considered our main threats being in the second session.

So, too excited to eat, back in to the afternoon session. One of our greatest threats comes & goes – general opinion is that it was a great performance, but not a significant threat to us. Breathing gets a bit easier, I feel more comfortable and relaxed, then the Westminster chorus comes on (from California not London). These guys have an age limit of about 10 years old (another minor exaggeration, but not much), so are all young, enthusiastic, and have stacks of energy. I naively thought to myself that any group of youngsters that had only been competing for 3 years or so, should not be able to threaten the VM – how wrong could I be!! They came on all youth and exuberance, and did an awesome performance, I mean scary! Their up-tune had some very effective moves, done with great precision and not a single creaking knee anywhere!! Now this definitely shook the Beer calm, you can reach for your smelling salts now – I am!

So, we had about 25 hours to live through (OK I exaggerate again, but that is what it felt like) before we would have the result, and there was much sucking teeth, shaking heads, and a general air of concern within the VM ranks.

One highlight of the waiting period was “the fish routine” by Midwest Vocal Express from Greendale. It had the audience rocking in the aisles – you have to see it to appreciate it, so if you buy the chorus competition DVD, you will not only see me in glorious Technicolor (back to nightmares again) but also the fish set- buying the DVD would be

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

worth it just for that. They came fifth so won a very well deserved bronze medal. Some, if not many, thought they should have come higher.

Anyway, back to the smelling salts. The crowd hushed, the chairman of judges came to the podium, and nerves were jangling loudly all over the place. Fifth place, the fish – much applause and merriment. Some of the fish who were sitting near me went wild, you'd have thought they had just found Nemo or something. Everyone was very glad for them. Hushed silence again

Several shades of grey hair later, the fourth place medalist – Northbrook – up until recently the perennial silver medalists, a tense expectation fills the air – 3rd place chorus – Baz & his merry men – well done Baz. Now the unbearable silence, everyone all of a twitch, second place silver medalists – pause – by 17 points – pause – Westminster!! I can breathe again, I haven't let my country down, and as the only Brit in the VM, I can hold my head up when I meet British BBSoppers, and significantly, I feel I haven't let TVC down. Someone pick me up off the floor please. So in the end the waiting and the tension was worth it. We skip merrily back to the hotel, having been told where and when to meet for our medal presentations. As a matter of interest, we found out that one presentation judge had scored our up-tune at 99, another one at 98!!!

A couple of snorts later, SWMBO and I meet the rest of a very happy and relieved band of VMers at the appointed hour. There is a call for all those winning their second gold medal – up they come to collect their medal from their relevant section leader. Then those with 3 medals, then the call for four medallers, up I go, get a medal and a hug from Jason January, and bear my winnings back to show she who supported me during the run up to competition. Then 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 medallers. Then came the presentation of first gold medals to all our “Rookies” – a very emotional moment I remember well. They now lose the term “Rookie” and leave it to current new members who did not compete, and those to come during the next 3 years. I was told we had well over 20 rookies on the risers for convention – I think that is a heck of an achievement for them and they fully deserve their first gong.

Then the group of stalwarts who have won all 11 gold medals. Both Jim and Greg Clancy are in this group, with 3 or 4 others – I was too elated to count, but there was much applause and recognition of their achievement – well over 30 solid years of commitment to the VM – that is impressive.

OK, back to earth, a time and place to meet for our next rehearsal – for our acceptance performance and presentation of trophies – this is to be followed by some minor competition - the quartet finals or something like that. Our interest here is of course MaxQ, with Greg Clancy and Jeff Oxley.

So, in the space of little under 12 hours, we had been through more motivational speeches than you could throw a stick at, the adrenaline high of being on stage waiting for the curtain to go up, the charge of energy required to get through a tough competition set as well as we could have hoped, the self satisfied feeling of confidence that we were on the road to victory, the appalling realization that Westminster were making a real contest of it, the never ending wait for the results, the incredible tension waiting for the announcement of the silver medalists, and the release of tension when the final result was announced, and having my fourth gold medal thrust into my hot & sweaty hand.

Next day we rehearse for the evening, then meet at the appointed hours for makeup, changing, transport to the venue, and our little show as 2006 champions of the world. After the second song, we get the much coveted trophies (for the 11th time), sing 3 songs including our competition up-tune, and file off very happy bunnies to watch the quartet finals.

In my score card I had MaxQ 2nd in the first round, winners in the second round, so on balance, pretty darned close. I did think they would really need to pull something special out of the bag to win. They did and they didn't – they did pull a spectacular performance out of the bag, but it wasn't quite enough to grasp the gold – they never quite recovered from the first round. However, having said that, to be 6 points behind in a total of a possible 9,000 is just totally insignificant. One third of a point per judge over a total of 6 songs is words defeat me. If I had won 2 silver medals (I am sure KVCC could have done it if we tried) I would be spitting feathers if I missed the gold by that amount, but my total admiration to them – they accepted the result with total good grace. Next year guys!!

So back to the hotel for a celebration drinkypoos, when we met up with Stuart Sides from “The Works”. “Hi Martin” I shouted, which did not go all that well with Stuart, – so what if I did mix them up, I am getting old. Anyway we had a good chat with all except Brian (Lead) and Martin (bass) who had apparently wandered off somewhere. And so to bed, as Zebedee might say (for you older persons out there).

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

Now you might think that that was enough excitement for a while but no!! Hold onto your seats. We get up at ridiculous o'clock again on Sunday morning to get to Indy airport to get back to Dallas by about 11.00. Our next door neighbour meets us and whisks us back home, then 3 hours later, after SWMBO's repacking, we were whisked back to the airport to catch a plane to Gatwick, thence to Malaga. We had arranged to have a big Beer family bash in our timeshare near Marbella – 16 of us met from New Zealand (son and family), USA (my daughter and us), and the UK (mother, sister, in laws, niece, other halves etc.). How much excitement can a body take I ask. Well, as well as all my family meeting my 3 grand-children including my new Kiwi grand-daughter who is an absolute treasure of course, we arranged for her to be Christened in a local church while we were there with all the family. Suffice it to say we all had a wonderful time, and we arrived back in Dallas well past midnight 2 weeks after we left, to be met by our neighbour again, to our great surprise and gratitude.

That is the main story of the competition weekend, and a little bit about the family get together in Spain, let me take you into a dream sequence and go back in time to a point in time before the events above.

Pip pip for now I'll continue next month.

BRUCE (BEER)



ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Already nearly through Summer and what a mixed bag of weather we have had haven't we? Sweltering hot one day and a week later out come the winter woollies again. Still they do say that it is our changeable climate that makes us "Brits" such lovely people. At least all the folk I am about to reply to are lovely people and I love 'em all. So here we go, in alphabetical order as always, I'm starting

with you SIMON ADAMS. Very many thanks for your lovely newsy letter, Si., and of course that little cheque to keep us in touch. As you know, as you had the foresight to send a copy to Irene, your letter appeared in last month's Tag Rag, but I had already submitted my copy to Graham. We were delighted to learn how well the BWC are doing in 'Choir of the Year' contest on Radio 3, Si., and we wish you every success in the next rounds. Please keep in touch and let us know how things progress won't you? Thanks again for all the news. I'm glad you are still enjoying caravanning; Stella and I often reminisce about all the places we have visited and stayed in during our 30-odd years as members of the Caravan Club. All the very best to you and Marilyn.

Next to an old pal and still the only member of this Club who has a GOLD Quartet Champion's medal; and that can only be you NICK CARTER. Thank you for your letter and cheque Nick, and your remarks and memories of dear old CHARLES HOUGH. We were all sad to lose him as you will have gathered if you read all the tributes to him in July's Tag Rag. Many thanks for staying with us; it would be great to see you again one Tuesday. In the meantime Nick I hope you and Jen are well and still enjoying life. My best wishes to you both.

A short sharp note from another old pal but none the less appreciated for that because we know what a busy boy you are CHRIS DAVIDSON. Many thanks for staying with us Chris and of course your cheque for another year. Do come and see us if you are ever "down our way" (cue for a song) on a Tuesday, but until then my thanks and best wishes.

And a nice long letter and cheque, of course, from a very special guy in my life and that is you PHIL HADFIELD. Very many thanks for both, Phil, but I am just a little bit disappointed that despite my continuing efforts I still haven't yet persuaded you to come back and sing with us again. However I can quite understand that your main interest in life (apart from the lovely Pat of course) is GOLF and this must take up a lot of your time and keep you fit of course. I love to watch it on the telly but I do sometimes wish we had someone to beat those bloomin' foreigners. I do hope you and Pat are both fit and well and I send my love and best wishes to you both.

And finally another shortish letter this time from you DAVE MELTON but many thanks none the less for both letter and cheque and for staying with us, Dave. I am so sorry I didn't get a chance to have a word with you when you visited us recently. My driver, who kindly gives me a lift every week, had to leave early after notices and by then you had a

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

crowd of well-wishers round you and I just had to go. I'll make up for it on your next visit Dave, so make it soon. All the best to you in the meantime.

And that my lovelies jut about winds it up for this month. Makes a change from last month when I had very little for you.

T.T.F.N.

RON COLLIS

F.O.T.C.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS' LETTERS

26.7.2006

Dear Ron,

Please find enclosed a cheque for my A.M. subs.

I read with sadness the news that our good friend Charles Hough had passed away.

Soon memories came flooding back of the most wonderful moments that I had enjoyed in the company of Charles, a man who brought so much laughter and happiness to so many people. "God Bless You Charles".

All the best,

Nick Carter

24 July '06

Dear Ron,

Thanks for your letter of news and my reminder to pay up or face the consequences.

Delighted to have the opportunity of staying in touch with the troops.

Best wishes

Chris Davidson

8th August 2006

Dear Ron,

It was lovely to hear from you. Yours is the one demand for money that I enjoy receiving! Please find enclosed a cheque as requested. I'm sorry that I never seem to remember without a reminder.

I can understand how you find the hot muggy weather uncomfortable but it is nice to be able to sit outside on a pleasant evening. There are so few occasions in the year when you can do this. Still August looks to be more comfortable for us than the record July we've just had.

I see that the chorus is still progressing and trust you are all still enjoying the wonderful hobby. We keep informed through Tag Rag, which we read avidly each month, and bumping into chorus members around town now that I'm retired.

Retired seems to be a comparative word. I keep being approached to do some work for my previous employer and customer! I'm enjoying it because there are none of the usual hassles associated with full time employment. It's very much part time and I must confess that the money is always useful, especially as we're about to become grandparents for the first time soon.

I'm still heavily involved with my golf and will become even more so next year with the Berkshire Captains' Golf Society.

Thanks for your kind words about my tonsils. I still don't feel the urge to return to the fold but Pat and I often think about coming along to see the chorus. We just never seem to find the time to do it; life is so busy. I now understand the phrase "I don't know how I ever found the time to work". Pat retires at the end of October and this should allow us to do more of the things we keep promising ourselves.

Love and best wishes to you and Stella and I wish the chorus every success over the coming year.

Best wishes,

Phil (Hadfield)

24 July 2006

Dear Ron,

Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in paying my AM subs. The older I get, the faster time seems to go by. I do like to keep in touch with events at the Club and I promise I will call in again one day.

Give my regards to all my old friends.

Yours sincerely,

Dave Melton

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB



at the Kenton Theatre, Henley helping to raise £400 for Jimmy Saville's Stoke Mandeville appeal.

Regards
HAYDN ADAMS



HISTORICAL NOTES

5 Years Ago August 2001

5th Small Chorus at the Guildhall, Guildford.

7th Rockaholix (Roger Wilkinson, Alan Hill, Chris Oliver, Brian Callaghan) recorded some tracks for a CD with Graham Snow at his studios in Chessington.

10 Years Ago August 1996

8th Side By Side (Roger Wilkinson, Ken Smyth, Chris Oliver, Rod Adams) were at the Goring Golf Club.

24th Association of British Choral Directors Annual Convention at Oxford. TVC demonstrated the 'mechanics' of barbershop singing as well as performing on the staircase of Christ College where they were joined by the Yip School Choir from Hong Kong. TVC with 40+ on the risers also appeared on the evening show at the Oxford Town Hall that included a mix of choral groups from jazz to classics.

30th At BABS Harmony College thirteen members of RBHC attended including the following members of the faculty: Graham Starkie who was responsible for putting it together, Tony Searle - BABS Director of Musical Services, Graham Lawrence, Geoff Sassé, the quartet Side By Side (Roger Wilkinson, Ken Smyth, Chris Oliver, Rod Adams) went through the quartet-coaching stream.

15 & 20 Years Ago August 1991 & 1986

Only rehearsal activities in these months due to the holiday period.

25 Years Ago August 1981

Partners In Time (Dick Coles, Pete Powell, Ian Douglas, Dave Heighway) appeared for two nights

SUPPORTERS

I am now exhausted having just read the latest Bruce article, not from having read it but from the sheer effort that goes into VM's preparation for International. As always, Bruce, your article was fascinating, and you certainly deserved your break with all the Beer family in Marbella. It is so good to hear that Judith is well and you are obviously enjoying yourselves.

The Ferrari Fun day was a big success. It was beautiful weather with intermittent cloud for shade. Although when the T.V.C. were singing the sun shone on them incessantly with the result that those not wearing hats had somewhat red faces for a few days. The Chorus sang well and was appreciated by the audience. The whole event was very well organised with lots to see and do for all ages. It was nice to see so many partners and families there. Unfortunately Thomas the Tank was not there as originally advertised, but Fynn (our grandson) was fascinated by the Concert band as well as the Muppet theatre, and had a great time. Needless to say he fell asleep on the way home.

Fred and Jackie Goudy 'phoned a couple of weeks ago. They are both very well as is Tarryn and enjoying their new home. They send their regards to everyone.

Many congratulations to Derek and Jean Hird on the occasion of their Golden wedding.

Dick Coles was out at the pub when we phoned so he must be getting better.

Luv 'n' hugs as always,

IRENE

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB



Thanks to Bruce Beer, Ron Collis, Peter Cookson
Andy Pearce, Colin Thatcher and Irene for supplying
copy.

Editor

Graham Starkie
29 Kibblewhite Crescent
Twyford
READING RG10 9AX
ENGLAND
Tel/Ans/Fax 0118 934 5214
Email starkie@btinternet.com
20 August 2006

BARBERSHOP BABES

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO
AUGUST'S QUARTET**

**MIKE AYRES
SEAN O'SHEA
BARRY WILLS
PHILIP WILSON**

Copy deadlines:

12th September for 19th distribution
10th October for 17th distribution
14th November for 21st distribution
12th December for 19th distribution

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.

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."

"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.

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.

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 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.*

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

CLUB EXECUTIVE

Peter Cookson 01635 528316
Chairman peter_j_cookson@btopenworld.com

Barry Howard 0118 942 8400
Membership bjhanddjh@aol.com

Julian Charman 01491 872300
Music jjcharman@aol.com

Andy Pearce 0118 973 2364
Administration andrew.pearce33@btinternet.com

Lawrence McNulty 0118 978 7161
Marketing & PRO lawrence@mcnultyfamily.co.uk

Alex Russell 01635 40855
Finance 6 Bartlemy Road, Newbury
RG14 6JX

Rod Adams 0118 934 4515
Musical Events Rod.Adams@wham-bam.net

Other Roles:
Rhiannon Owens-Hall 01352 780825
Chorus Director rhiannonhall@babs-education.info

Ken Mills 0118 978 0031
Treasurer heatherken@waitrose.com

FATHER OF THE CHORUS and
Associate Member Coordinator
Ron Collis 10 Langley Hill Close Tilehurst
READING RG3 4EJ
Tel 0118 941 6081

Hooked on A Cappella

An evening of electrifying four-
part harmony singing, featuring:

• **Signature:** LABBS – Ladies
Association of British Barbershop Singers -
2005 silver medal chorus

• **Enigma:** LABBS 2005
quartet champions

• **Finesse:** LABBS 2005
international quartet champions

• **Evolution, Vox
Concordia
&**

Vyners Swing Band

**Saturday, 9th September 2006, 7:45 -
10:30 pm**

**Compass Theatre & Arts Centre, Glebe
Avenue, Ickenham,
UB10 8PD**

Tickets: £8, concessions £5

For tickets and any other enquiries please
contact Doreen on 07968 449242

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.**

**Pay & Play Golf at its very best on
two beautiful 9 hole courses.**



**The Straight Mile
Wokingham Berks**

Affordable green fees and a warm, friendly welcome. Open Monday to Sunday plus Bank Holidays. Handicap membership available. Par 3 course ideal for novice golfers. Wednesday and Friday Roll Up at 8am.

Breakfast, lunches and snacks available daily.
Fully licensed bar.

Telephone 01344 869259 for more details or
book a Tee Time.

www.billingbeargolf.co.uk



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

**MAURICE SCOTT
on 0118 934 1965**

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. 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

AUGUST 2006

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
13	14	15 Rehearsal TAG RAGCOPY DEADLINE	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 Rehearsal TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	23	24	25 BABS Harmony College	26 BABS Harmony College
27 BABS Harmony College	28	29 Rehearsal	30	31	August 2006	

September 2006 Calendar is on page 2

A LOOK AHEAD TO

OCTOBER 2006

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 Rehearsal	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 Rehearsal Daytimers Hungerford Town Hall TBC TAG RAGCOPY DEADLINE	11	12	13	14 BABS Quartet Contest day1
15 BABS Quartet Contest day2	16	17 Rehearsal TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Rehearsal	25	26	27	28
29 Extra Sunday rehearsal to Top 'n' Tail CD recordings	30	31 Rehearsal Vocal coach Mike Taylor to visit.	October 2006			