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THE RAG AND NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2007



Aidan Brand, Peter Dawson, Richard Leathem and Denis Swift singing Sunset Poem at Alzheimer's Singout 12 April 2007

Photo by Bryn Curtis



Chairman of BABS Bill Harvey, Chairman of RBHC John Price and Vice Chairman of BABS Alan Goldsmith at the BABS AGM

Photo by Graham Starkie

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

A LOOK AHEAD TO

MAY 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Rehearsal	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 Rehearsal TAG RAG COPY DEADLINE	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 Rehearsal maidenhead Blind Club. for Daytimers Mark Grindall TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	16	17	18 Singout Fawley Craft Fair Day 1 of 2	19 Singout Fawley Craft Fair Day 2 of 2
20	21	22 Rehearsal	23	24	25 BABS Convention Scarborough Day 1 of 3	26 BABS Convention Scarborough Day 2 of 3
27 BABS Convention Scarborough Day 3 of 3	28	29 Rehearsal	30	31	May 2007	

Calendars showing the remaining days of April 2007 and the month of June 2007
are at the back of TAG RAG

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

2007

	MAY	15	Tues	Daytimers	Maidenhead Blind Club 2.30 sing
	MAY	15	Tues	Rehearsal	Mark Grindall at rehearsal
*	MAY	18/19	Fri/Sat	Chorus	Fawley Craft Fair
	MAY	25-27	Fri-Sun		BABS Convention Scarborough
	JUN	9	Sat	Full Chorus	Show Reading Town Hall 60th Anniversary of Düsseldorf twinning.
	JUN	13	Wed	Daytimers	Bray Disabled Club at 2pm
	JUN	28	Thu	Daytimers	Kennet Court Woosehill Wokingham at 2.30pm
	JUL	4	Wed	Daytimers	Notrees Nursing Home Kintbury
	AUG	25-27	Fri-Sun		BABS 29th Harmony College Worcester
	OCT	27	Sat (aft)	Full Chorus	Emma Taylor's wedding singout - Hambledon nr Henley.
	NOV	9-11	Sat	Full Chorus	Warsaw trip.
	NOV	13	Tues	Daytimers	Tuesday Club, Hungerford Town Hall to sing at 2pm
	NOV	29	Thu	Daytimers	Kennet Court Woosehill Wokingham at 2.30pm
	DEC	12	Wed	Daytimers	Christchurch Court, Reading 2.30 sing
	DEC	19	Wed	Daytimers	Weirside Court, Orts Rd, Reading

2008

	FEB	Feb 29- Mar 2	Fri-Sun	Full chorus	Away Weekend Marsham Court Hotel Bournemouth (Provisional booking)
*	MAY	23-25	Fri-Sun	Full Chorus	BABS Annual Convention The Centaur Building Cheltenham Racecourse

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NEXT COPY DEADLINE:

8TH MAY FOR 15TH DISTRIBUTION



CHAIRMAN'S SPOT

First the good news that we've found both a Warsaw trip coordinator and a coordinator for the Cheltenham Racecourse Convention in 2008. My thanks to Graham Starkie and Phillip Ward respectively.

On 31st March I went to Worcester with Graham to the BABS Annual General Meeting. Graham is going to give you a brief on the proceedings, but here are a few items that caught my attention:

Our new chairman, Bill Harvey, spoke about a proposal to form a new club, not linked to any particular geographical location, to enable men who don't have a conveniently local club to join up and be counted as full BABS members. He also stated that he would like to visit every club during his period of office – I hope we can arrange to see him

in Reading. Mike Brewer, OBE has agreed to become a patron of BABS, giving advice and acting as advocate for the association in the wider music community.

There are a number of initiatives under way to increase membership, with a target of at least four more clubs by 2009. However, the Association loses about 200 members each year, so a one-day conference will be held in the autumn to discuss retention techniques and strategies, and the possibility of developing a regional support system is to be investigated.

Of interest to our quartets is their position regarding the Making Music insurance. Cover follows the money: if quartet singout fees are paid into the club, you are covered, but if you keep the money, you're not. However, it was pointed out that Making Music gives enhanced benefits for registered quartets. Note that the BABS quartet registration fee will increase from £10 to £20 next year, but this will include insurance cover. The upper age limit on club cover, which caused concern to some of our members, may be raised next year.

Learn to Sing courses are very popular, and clubs can get free advertising for their courses on the new BABS LTS web site. Delegates were reminded that £100 grants and leaflets are also available. A one-day course will be held at Scarborough Convention on the Sunday with a view to kick-starting a new club in the town, and it is hoped that similar events will be held at future conventions.

The Youth Chorus goes from strength to strength, and will be visiting St. Petersburg in Autumn 2008. It was confirmed that Cambridge Chord Company and Pitch Invasion will be competing in Denver.

In 2008, Convention will be held at the Centaur Building, Cheltenham Racecourse, on the bank holiday weekend 23rd to 25th May. Once again, there will be cheaper rates for early bookings. If you book at Convention next month, the full adult package will cost you £45.00, but thereafter the rate increases to £55.00 until 30th November, and then again to £65.00. Day registrations will be available for £25, with Sunday afternoon show tickets costing £8 and Sunday evening show tickets, £15.

A transport problem has arisen at Scarborough: the Health and Safety Executive has demanded extensive maintenance of the cliff lifts. This started on 1st April and will not be completed in time for Convention, so shuttle buses will be laid on. Hopefully this will not interfere with our enjoyment of the event.

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BABS are now trying to book Convention venues well in advance, and Cheltenham and Harrogate are confirmed for 2009 and 2010 respectively. The European Championships are due in 2009, and Sweden is expected to host the event.

Alan Goldsmith, the only candidate, was elected as Vice Chairman.

Yesterday (14th April), the Performance Team attended the first seminar with Mark Grindall, to learn how we can effectively support his work and maintain the learning and improvement process with the chorus over the coming months. Do not be under the impression that his recent visits are just an attempt to boost our performance at Convention. As Mark pointed out - many times - there are no quick fixes. This work will continue for a long time, and we must be prepared to be in for the long haul. Every audience we sing to deserves our very best. As Mark graphically demonstrated yesterday, we can take nothing for granted. Old habits die hard, and everybody, from the newest member to those who have been singing barbershop for twenty years and more, must be prepared to do their bit for the sake of the Chorus. This may entail members of the performance team getting "up close and personal" to try to diagnose problems and help you to achieve your best. Please take this analysis and advice in the positive and helpful spirit that is intended. We know we can produce spectacular results when we all pull together.

In Harmony
JOHN PRICE

EDITORIAL

There's plenty to read in this month's issue. Thank you to all the contributors. Bob Ridley has forwarded a large amount of Associate Member copy. Thank you Bob for keeping this valuable link open in Ron's absence.

I am a regular reader of The Singer a two monthly publication from Rhinegold Publishing. There is much to commend its reading because suprisingly it makes what could be 'stuffy' reading very accessible. I always look forward to the comments of the editor Antonia Couling. In the April/May issue I thought her 'Top Line' had particular resonance with our experience. She extolled the virtues of the value Away-days. I quote: It may sound like a cushy option, with the focus seemingly more on the location than the 'content', but results show time and time again that the combination of beautiful surroundings, pleasant artistic company and a shared aim of striving for increased vocal perfection will bring a singer on in leaps and

bounds. In the editors case she was talking with knowledge of Italian, Norwegian and Portugese venues but I'm sure Bournemouth still fits the bill. She goes on to reflect: But what a shame it is that we feel the need to lift ourselves out of the daily grind and drop ourselves into such isolated idylls for this to happen. Singing is not only becoming rarer in our schools - despite 'apparent' government plans to the contrary - but also in our day-to-day. Even amateur choir practice can become just part of a scary weekly timetable of 'things to do'.

It was the directness of these last few words here that I thought was touching a reality that I didn't want to hear. She went on to say 'Our pace of life is increasingly speeding up and what should be a relaxed method of release may be in danger of ending up something we just about squeeze in.' Antonia goes on and becomes very philosophical. I'll let you follow that up yourself if you're interested.

John Price and I attended the BABS AGM recently and I have to say that we were both impressed with the professionalism with which the BABS Board now approach the job. It is hard to believe that all the members are volunteers and that they are doing it purely for the love of it for the benefit of you and me. Take a opportunity to read the notes I've written to judge for yourself.

Our thanks must go to Denis Swift not just for being a sport joining in with the comics that use him as a foil for a joke but for arranging that singout last Thursday with the Alzheimer's Society in Maidenhead. I have difficulty remembering when it was that I last sung out with a chorus of that size in an evening. I wish it could happen more often. It would relieve the Performance Team of the impossible job of using Tuesday rehearsal nights to keep on top of the repertoire so that we can get the song learning and performance improvement plan into top-gear. Thanks Denis.

You will have read in the Chairman's bit that I've volunteered to take on the responsibility of leading the team to get us to Warsaw in November. As has been reported in Notices the interest is significant. I've now had the opportunity to see the itinerary and it looks most exciting. I'll be bringing you all up to speed on what is expected to happen as soon as I can. Rod Adams is dealing with the flights and Chris Schrier and I will move all other things along. The Performance Team has been tasked to choose the songs we'll sing in the contest. We'll have fifteen minutes to get on stage, sing four songs and get off again. The songs have to be one sacral, one Folk or traditional, one by a 20th century composer and a freely chosen one. Watch the space.

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My PEEK IN THE PAST this month is an article written by Jim Carter from his sickbed in Battle Hospital in 1978. His writings will give you an appreciation of the man to whom the BABS Small Chorus award is dedicated. The Small Chorus Award or Jim Carter Trophy is highly prized and is one that consistently goes to a lower placed chorus. There have been more mistakes in presenting this award than any other mainly because the criteria that no chorus should get it more than once was forgotten for a number of years. It gets awarded to the chorus with the lowest score when the ranking is multiplied by the number of men on stage. Read on about Jim.

GRAHAM STARKIE

Editor



BARBERSHOP BABES

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO
APRIL'S DECTET**

**BRIAN CAMPBELL
DEREK CHISHOLM
GARY EVANS
PETER GROVES
LES HEARN
RICHARD LEATHAM
BRIAN MILBANK
ANDREW PEARCE
BOB RIDLEY
SID SEWARD**

THANKS

I would like to express my thanks to the guys who turned up to the singout for the Alzheimer's Society last Thursday. All reports are that it went very well and I was very proud of your singing.

PHILLIP WARD

QUARTET CORNER

TAKE FOUR

FRIDAY 13TH IS NOT ALWAYS UNLUCKY

Firstly we had a singing engagement – our first for a while. It was at a fundraising dinner for St Andrew's Church at Sonning. The local MP, Theresa May, was amongst the audience but we didn't get a chance to have a look at her shoes. We did two spots, one after the main course and then after the dessert and coffee. It all aided their digestion... we hope?

The audience seemed to enjoy our endeavours, which was just as well, as Graham was known by most of them.

One interesting and unusual event happened, in that we were asked if a profoundly deaf member of the audience could sit by the stage. By placing her hands on the stage, she could feel the vibrations of our singing. She had a smile on her face so we must assume that they were "good vibrations".

After the event we went to the local pub in the village, and upon entering in our "stage gear" we were quizzed by the landlord who offered us free beer in exchange for a couple of songs. No contest! We ended up singing about five or six numbers over the period we were in the pub, and they seemed to go down extremely well, as did the beer. A number of people asking us about our style of singing; even some of the younger drinkers quizzed us.

It was a very full and enjoyable evening. Friday 13th was a good day for Take Four!

MERVYN CLARK

on behalf of Take Four.

ROCKAHOLIX – "NEW TALENT" ?

(confessions of a super star in the making)

The show is a BBC talent show to fill up the daytime schedule, I saw a couple of these last year, and the quartet decided that we were no worse than the majority of entrants (which included acrobats, collectors, dancers, jugglers, magicians, martial arts, singers, speakers & lots more).

The format of the show is that whatever your talent, you were required to entertain an audience of 100 for a period of 3 minutes, each audience member had a "sod off button" to press when they had heard or seen enough, and as soon as half had pressed, your act was terminated. Financial inducements

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were £100 for each completed minute, and those getting to 3 minutes without termination went through to a semi final, and thence a final. We were invited to an audition last month, and as Chris was still on holiday, our trusty 1st reserve Jim Downing stood forward to assist (all will recall his artistic mastery of the surfboard in Maidenhead). On arrival we had the inevitable forms to provide an entire life history, and waive any rights to our own material whomsoever and whatsoever or howsoever (I'm sure Richard would understand it), milled around with all sorts of other acts including a heavy rock band, and were eventually given our own studio, with a mirrored wall, a full drum kit and lots of bottled water. We decided not to use the drums, but took up the option of some microphones, and were then left for over an hour to warm up and rehearse. Eventually the audition team of about 9 people rolled in, and we were arranged in front of a large sign declaring us to be "new talent" and photographed, they then did a quick audio and camera check, and we were invited to begin our set.

We decided on our new Beach Boys Medley, mainly because it was one that Jim knew, having performed at the TVC Christmas show, and the only one that would stretch to 3 minutes. I don't know what they were expecting, or what they had already been through in the other 5 studios before us, but their countenance was one of complete indifference to us, with a touch of 'god what have we got now'. (my opinion only).

It was therefore a great feeling for us soon after starting the song to see the change in them, from indifference to surprise to smiling and foot tapping. The comments after were great. One of them was already working on our billing and thought the singing grandads would be 'super' we said that Rockaholix would be good too!

We came out having spent 2 hours plus travelling to sing 3 minutes (a bit like convention really), but feeling confident we had given them something a little different. We have now heard that they want us back to take part in the show, and we are to go to the Teddington Studios on Monday 23 April to record the show, and to see if we can get any further.

Cliffhanger ending = what will happen to our heroes in the next instalment, will they sink never to be seen again, or

cheers
BRIAN CALLAGHAN

Just a quick update - Due to the fact that Roger will not be able to appear on the show, we have decided with Roger's blessing to continue with

another substitute. Dick Coles has come out of retirement to tackle the task for us, and has to learn 2 of our longer arrangements, with only 2 rehearsals (as Alan is on holiday until the day before the show). The second song is needed in case we go through to the next round, both of which are to be filmed on the same evening.

This particular show is now to be recorded on Wednesday 25 April (BBC change) at Teddington, and tickets can be applied for if anyone is interested.
Brian

SELECTED WEEKLY NOTICES

DAISY'S DREAM (20th Mar)

Due to an oversight the following letter dated 7th March 2007 didn't find its way into the March Tag Rag. Oops - a mistake!

Dear Mr Starkie,
Thank you very much for the donations totalling £545 which we have received from the Reading Barbershop Harmony Club. We can assure you that the money will be put to good use in helping to fund the cost of the services we provide for bereaved children and their families in Berkshire.

There is continuing demand for our service. Last year we provided help for 522 children through support in the home or in school, through telephone support and advice for families and through residential weekends and follow up events. This year we are hoping to run some group sessions for families with specific needs. None of this would be possible without the financial support we receive from many kind people in the community.

With our thanks and best wishes.
Yours sincerely
Mrs Sarah Long Finance Assistant

FOUR-ALARM FIRE? (27th Mar)

I took my mp3 player with me on a short break to Devon last week. I left the music score behind because experience tells me that it only gets creased, dirty and maybe torn but I really regretted that decision. Neither Irene or I could understand the words of that line "Then you came and caused a spark that's a ????? on fire now". Eventually we agreed that it was 'full-on fire', putting it down to an 'Americanism'. We were both surprised at the reality; "four-alarm" is ok when it's written down but I can only conclude our ears let us down when listening to the teaching track. I hope we can do better when we sing it. According to Google a four-alarm fire is a particularly big one and is announced by four rings followed by another four.

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TWINNING SHOW UPDATE (27th Mar)

From Peter Cookson – “My grateful thanks for the response to Graham’s letter of last week appealing for additional hosts for the visitors from Düsseldorf. We now have more than enough capacity to accommodate our guests. We are waiting for the final numbers to be confirmed in early April when we will then match guests and hosts.

I am pleased to announce Andrew Peach of BBC Radio Berkshire will be our MC for the show in the evening. We are anticipating his involvement will help ticket sales where we have had an encouraging start with over 75 tickets now sold.”

Remember that the **Tickets** for this show are available from the Box Office, Reading Town Hall Phone 0118 960 6060. It is also possible to book online at the website <www.readingarts.com>. Tickets will **not** be available at Tuesday rehearsals as they are printed as you purchase them.

FRONT ROW (3rd Apr)

Alex Russell says, “The Front Row made up of former Front Row members with the addition of a few ‘volunteers’. viz. Boyd, Bradley, Pearce, McKeown, Price, Deacon, Wyard, Porter, Starkie, Swift, Cookson, Milbank and Wheeler. Hopefully none of these will wish to withdraw. There is room for one or two more members and if you’d like to give it a go speak to me.”

MAKING MUSIC AND

BBC - "PLAY IT AGAIN"(3rd Apr)

Dear Making Music member.

We have been working closely with the BBC to develop "Play it Again", a new project which provides new opportunities for Making Music members. You may have seen the television programme last Sunday on BBC1, in which comedienne Jo Brand learnt to play the organ from scratch, culminating in a performance at the Albert Hall. The main purpose of the series is to encourage participation in music making, and so the BBC are also running a number of events all around the UK to give members of the public the opportunity to come along and begin (or renew) their musical journeys.

Please see website <www.bbc.co.uk/playitagain> for more details of the events, and about the whole project.

There are large areas of the UK for which there are no local Play it Again events. If you are based in one of these, you may wish to run your own event, such as an Open Rehearsal or Come-and-Sing day. If so, please let us know, and we will arrange for details to be placed onto the BBC's website. You may also wish to use the Play it Again branding, to raise the profile of your event.

For those groups where an event is already taking place nearby, we have already supplied the BBC with details of most local music groups, and these will shortly be added to the website and to information packs given out to participants. However, you may wish to attend on behalf of your group, to hand out publicity material, and encourage members of the public to join. If so, you will need to arrive at the event approximately 1 hour before it starts. Please note that space is limited at these events, so you must first contact Carolyn Jarvis at the BBC if you wish to do this - telephone 020 875 24371 or email carolyn.jarvis@bbc.co.uk

Finally, if you would like to include any leaflets in the packs being given out at a specific event, the BBC is happy to include these. They are preparing around 500 packs per location, so you would need to provide a leaflet for each of these. Please mark clearly what they relate to, and send them to:

FAO Carolyn Jarvis BBC White City, Room 253, 201 Wood Lane, London W12 7TS

I really hope that you find this project a useful and enjoyable opportunity to find new participants, or to engage in a different way with your local community.

Regards Evan Dawson.

Head of Support and Development, Making Music
2-4 Great Eastern Street, London EC2A 3NW

Phone: 0870 903 3780

E-mail: PIA@makingmusic.org.uk

Web: www.makingmusic.org.uk

SCARBOROUGH ACCOMMODATION

(10th Apr)

Andy Pearce says, “I have booked accommodation in the St Nicholas Hotel Scarborough for the following people, if this is incorrect then YOU MUST tell me. Fri/Sun/Mon is the 25th/27th/28th of May 2007. Note that you will have to pay your hotel bills on departure. The club has paid a £1000 deposit against any defaulters.”

Name	Arrive	Depart
SINGLES		
Brian Campell	Fri	Sun
Phillip Ward	Fri	Sun
Colin Ward	Fri	Sun
Alex Russell	Fri	Sun
Murry Downing	Fri	Sun
Chris Bradley	Fri	Sun
Bob Ridley	Fri	Sun
Julian Charman	Fri	Sun
James Porter	Fri	Sun
Maurice Scott	Fri	Sun
Simon Laight	Fri	Mon

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DOUBLES

Mervyn Clark	Fr	Mon
Graham Starkie	Fri	Sun
Andrew Pearce	Fri	Sun
Peter Cookson	Fri	Sun
Rod Adams	Fr	Mon
Barry Wills	Fri	Sun
Ian McCann	Fri	Sun
Chris Schrier	Fri	Sun
Andy Wheeler	Fri	Sun
Dave Colver	Fri	Sun
Garry Evans	Fri	Sun
Philip Paine	Fri	Sun
Peter Groves	Fri	Mon
Chris Shaw	Fri	Sun

TWIN

Mike Ayers	Fri	Sun
Rhi and Judith	Fri	Sun
J Kaiser/C Wheeler	Fri	Sun
Steve Jessop	Fri	Sun
Phil Wilson	Fri	Sun

I believe the following people have made their own arrangements for Accommodation in Scarborough

Own Arrangements

D Elson
G Colquhoun
C Thatcher
D Chisholm
R Leathem
P Dawson
A Brand
A Rzyzsko
A Hill
R Wilkinson
C Oliver
B Callaghan
M McKeown
P Stewart
J Shackelford
S Boyd
L McNulty
S O'Shea
K Mills

ACROSS THE BRIDGE

The Editor was right, last month, in stating that I would respond to his remarks regarding the Morriston Orpheus Choir. I would remind him that I wrote about the change in Musical Director in the April 2005 Tag Rag. Don't worry about it Graham, I am in the same position, sometimes I forget what day it is, but I never forget my music.

Our current MD, Sian Pearce, who joined us in January 2005, is now well into her stride and is adding new features and music into our repertoire, maintaining our position at the front of Male Voice Choirs.

I will remind you, as I stated in 2005, that out of a final four applicants for the vacant position there were three male and one female who were invited to rehearse the choir on separate Sunday evenings. The members of the choir had to be present on all four rehearsals and then voted for the one they liked best. Sian received more votes than the total of all the other three and it was no surprise to find that she is a full time professional voice coach. She has studied classical singing at Trinity College of Music, London and has performed extensively as a classical solo singer. Nowadays she is more interested in the teaching and directing of singers and has over 30 individual singing pupils, and is the recognised singing teacher in South West Wales for the government initiative Musical Theatre Arts Schools. Recently she presented a weeklong seminar on voice production in North Wales with her own company 'Singing Tune'.

Regarding Denis's observations, he is quite right; the members of the Orpheus are no different individually than any other choir. Our advantages are that we rehearse twice a week on Sunday and Wednesday giving a greater continuity; this is in addition to the average of two concerts a month. We are expected to do our homework after the initial introduction of a new piece of music and that means paying particular attention to the MD as rehearsal nights are for interpretation and fine tuning of the music. Obviously there are occasional distractions during rehearsals with people talking but a quick look or raised voice by the MD soon puts an end to that. If there is a problem with the music each section is tested and problems within a section are dealt with by testing each row (normally six in a row). I would also inform you that any major problems with an individual could lead to dismissal, one such occasion being a month ago. Our rehearsals are also happy and relaxed as the occasion demands with many innocent remarks made by our lady MD being misconstrued by some of the members and the quips flying around the hall

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but then it's quickly back to the serious business of singing. To sum up I would say that our success is due to paying attention to the expert (the MD), doing our homework and the twice a week rehearsals for continuity.

The Choir are touring overseas from the 6th April to the 4th May with concerts at Dubai in the UAE then on to Australia at Perth, Melbourne, then New Zealand at Christchurch, Nelson, Wellington, Palmerston North, Auckland, then back to Australia at Brisbane and ending with two concerts at the Sydney Opera House. For relaxation there are three days at Singapore on the way home, all this for the price of £250 (it's hard being a member!!!). Due to domestic difficulties (I'm getting too old) I am joining the tour at Wellington, New Zealand half way through the tour.

Our new CD will be released in May containing songs introduced to us by Sian and is quite a change from our previous recordings being more modern songs (at least to me). On the CD are the obvious three Welsh songs, two Latin, and one Maori (for NZ), one African (for who knows what comes next), Let It Be Me (G.Becaud), a medley of three Matt Monro songs, Bring Back The Beguine (a number containing the titles of songs by Irving Berlin & Cole Porter), One (from Chorus Line), a medley of 60's songs (House of the Rising Sun, Sealed With A Kiss, He Ain't Heavy, Pretty Flamingo, Silence Is Golden, How Do You Do It, Da Doo Ron Ron), You Raise Me Up (Westlife song which I first heard at Georgie Best's funeral), and Bohemian Rhapsody (I am told this was performed by Queen but I didn't know she could sing let alone have a hit song, still she's made a film now so it must be right).

So you see Sian has brought us into the 21st century, and I must say we are enjoying the new interest from the public. It's incredible to hear the reaction to Bohemian Rhapsody in our concerts, we feel like pop stars.

The title of our new CD is 'One Thrilling Combination' if anyone wants a copy let me know.

HAYDN ADAMS



ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP NEWS

By BOB RIDLEY Acting Assistant to the Associate Member Coordinator

Ron is now home but he is still in a hospital style bed with carers coming in four times a day. I was able to visit him on 12 April just after the two young lady carers were leaving. I watched as Stella expertly jiggled the controls to lower the bed and change the angles so Ron had a better view of the wonderful array of spring flowers in his back garden. Stella is now at beck and call but copes cheerfully. I read out what I intended to say on his behalf and he made comments throughout. Stella managed to find a photograph of Ron in the quartet 'Four No Trumps' from 1980 when Ron was the ace of hearts. Ron asked me to thank you all for your messages and kind thoughts. He sends his best wishes to you all.

It was good to hear from Robin Nichols in the sunny south of France, Steve DeHaven in sunny Clinton, Tennessee and Daph Powell in sunny Tilehurst. When I sent a reminder to Irene Rowe in Camberley, I recalled that Peter Rowe, Irene's late husband, was the PRO and the first member of RBHC that I called fifteen years ago to find out about the chorus. His welcoming warmth and enthusiasm was amazing and I was able to enjoy his company while sharing in the home of the Klintworths on the first Düsseldorf visit. The AM letters/ emails are below.

I asked Associate Members to let me have their email addresses and I now have ten of them. I will welcome receiving others to bob.ridley@btinternet.com. As Ron did, I also send out Tag Rag to Honorary Members of RBHC, a prestigious bunch! I was pleased to get two emails from one of the founder members of the Club, Gerry Holland. I hope he will forgive me for adding these to the AM letters slot. Since he was active with Ron in 1974, and attended the first official Convention that year, his memories of those times are welcome. Gerry is still an active member of the

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

Wantage Club and their recent experience of 'Learn to Sing' is interesting. Deciding to scrap the existing repertoire entirely and then learn a new one seems a daunting project.

Tag Rag is now available on our website www.rbhc.org.uk and I have had several requests not to post copies of Tag Rag. We will, of course, continue to send Tag Rag to everyone else unless I have a similar request.

Thank you to all the AMs for their continuing support of the RBHC.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS LETTERS AND EMAILS

Robin and Val Nichols

'Dear Ron,

The last time I wrote this letter, I was just about to be whipped into hospital here in France for a quick op. Here we are, one year on and I'm recovered only to find that you are still crocked. It was sad news to hear of your stroke but very pleasing to hear that, although progress is slow going, you are, nonetheless, improving a little each day, it seems. I can only half imagine how you must feel cooped up in that place, unable to get on with things that 'need doing'. It is hard also to appreciate fully what Stella must be enduring all this time. It probably seems like light years away from a hospital bed in cold damp old Blighty, being here in the beautiful sunshine and (albeit currently windy) warmth of the south of France but the pair of you are in all our thoughts and, no doubt the prayers of those who do that too.

It's an old worn out cliché, I know, but it doesn't seem a year since I last sent my subscription to you. It seems that once one reaches a certain age, the years pass so much more quickly than before. I guess it is that downhill momentum. Still, life is what you make of it, I suppose, and I am bound to say that it ain't bad for the most part. You may be prepared to argue that one with me right now I suppose but, I am told that you ARE getting well and that the next step will be to come home. I can't imagine any better news for all of us, particularly your family of AM's who are all so very grateful for your cheery words. You are a real tonic and that's for sure.

I am bound to say that your (provisional) successor is doing a splendid job too. I started this letter a few days ago, got sidetracked, and didn't get back to it until today. Just as I had found it again on the computer, and started typing, Val brought in the post. There was the March Tag Rag and along with it a copy of Bob's nice letter with a note on top

saying "Please treat this as a second reminder". And there's me thinking that with the new boy in the chair I might get away with it a bit longer. You will be pleased to know Bob has been doing a great job in your absence but I am sure he would be only too pleased to hand it back to you as soon as possible. With no disrespect to Bob of course, we all look forward to that day.

Well, me old mate, I don't suppose sleep is something you have been short of lately so I won't go on any longer. Suffice to say, Val and I wish you a speedy and full recovery and send you and Stella all our love and best wishes for the future - along with a cheque for twelve quid, of course.

In harmony as ever,'

Steve DeHaven (By email)

'Greetings from the beautiful Smokey Mountains of East Tennessee! What an absolute delight it was to receive the February and March TagRags. It has been a long time since reading one - for it has evidently been going to our old address and not being forwarded by the 'infamous' U.S. Mail, judging by the addresses on the envelopes - which arrived rubber banded together and a bit worse for wear. The last TagRag received was July 2006! You can imagine how every word of each issue has been read and reread - but the one thing most concerning is Ron's hospitalization. The March issue states that your condition is improving Ron - and what great news that is! It also appears the Away Weekend in sunny Bournemouth was a success - hard work and great fellowship, as always. What special times the Away Weekends are.

Pauline and I are becoming well situated in our new little home - after six months staying with our daughter and son-in-law in their lovely log cabin we managed to find a delightful little bungalow about ten minutes drive from their place. Moved in last May and are very, very happy. Haven't joined another barbershop chorus, even though there is one at Knoxville, as haven't really had the time. Am working six days a week, three for a top Ophthalmic Surgeon handling his marketing and advertising, and three for my son-in-law helping with his thriving Pawn Shop business. Pauline finally managed to get her Green Card, after 18 months of application time - so she is now on Permanent Residency status and is free to work as well - which will help greatly until I start receiving my U.K. Pension in 2008.

With all the delays with Pauline's Green Card - we have postponed our English Style Bed & Breakfast

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plans - but still live in hope and will keep you informed. In the meantime, although our little bungalow is small, we would still love to welcome any of our TVC friends if a visit to the Great Smokey Mountains is appealing. Fondest regards to Rhiannon and all the chorus!

Had best sign off for now - ...

Yours in (Country Music) Harmony,

Daph Powell

'Dear Ron,

I am so glad to hear that you are now at home and I hope that you are enjoying the comforts that only home can bring. It must be good for Stella to have you home again. Another year has come round and I enclose my subscription.

Life is really busy with all my activities at church and with the Barberettes. And, of course, fitting in time for the grandchildren too. I had a most wonderful holiday at the end of last year in Southern India – quite the most spectacular holiday I have ever had. This year I will not be travelling so far -- going to Sicily and catching up with old Italian friends. The Barberettes are very busy; we too have spent an away weekend at the Marsham Court, where we were treated with great courtesy and friendliness. So much so that we are staying there for our Convention in October. Kay will be retiring at the end of the year and we are now looking for a Chorus Director.....she will be a hard act to follow.

All the best Ron – lots of love to you and to Stella.

Sincerely,

Irene Rowe

'Dear Bob and Ron,

I am sorry to hear that Ron is still in poor health, please pass on my regards to Ron and Stella. That was kind of you to speak of Peter Rowe when you first met. I remember you were in Germany together. Funnily enough, last Saturday night I was at a barbershop concert by Windsor and I sat next to Peter Cookson who said he had the BOTY trophy on his mantelpiece. Also saw some old faces in the audience and the chorus.

I am still singing in the Epworth Choir in Woking. We are doing Haydn's Creation in Guildford Cathedral on 21 April. I saw 'Signature' the LABBS Champions and may try to join them if I could get past the audition!

My eldest son Neil is a Senior First Officer on 747s with BA- still single. Andrew, the younger son is

training to be a primary school teacher up in London-still single.

Hope you are well Bob and best wishes to Ron.

Kind regards,'

Gerry Holland (by email)

'Thanks for the info about Ron. I've known Ron since 1948 when me and three other guys used to tread the boards in Reading miming to records of the "Ink Spots" and "Mills Brothers" - a precursor to getting in to actually singing four-part harmony. Ron used to play bass with a band called the Denny Group and we often had a spot where they were playing, and it was Ron who used to encourage us teenagers with his cheery comments on our performances. I can tell you he looked pretty much the same then as he did before his stroke - amazing resilience, and one can only hope things will improve for him and Stella - they deserve better than this.

As a footnote he took my place as bari in "Four No Trumps" in 1980, and I sang with him for a short while in the mixed acappella group, "Variations" which disbanded after 26 years in 2004.'

'You may like to know that here at Wantage we are running our second L2S course with (so far) excellent retention results. From a chorus of 15 singers we are now 31 on the risers three weeks after the event. We made a bold decision to cut the bush right down to the ground and start afresh. ALL of us did the course, old members and students; we scrubbed our existing repertoire and are learning all new stuff along with the students - no "us and them". Naturally we are unable to do singouts yet and have put a date of October 1st for accepting new ones - and we have one already. How we fare is anyone's guess, but at the moment the atmosphere is just amazing on a Wednesday night - at least the average age has gone down by 20 years!

I have before me Issue No 1 of the Tag Rag dated October 1974, edited by one John Wiggins. At the end of his editorial John appeals for any ideas as to a club uniform!!!! There is much more in there to wonder over - especially as you see that we took seven men to the (first official) Tyneside 1974 Convention and managed to field 3 quartets, there being no chorus contest.

From little acorns.'

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HISTORICAL NOTES

5 Years Ago April 2002

5th 30 man chorus at Wargrave British Legion Club

11th Daytimers at Frimley Over-Sixties Club

There were only 9 in the chorus, probably the smallest number of singers ever at a daytime singout. After the show 15 CD's were sold. That means about 25% of the audience were impressed with the performance.

10 Years Ago April 1997

11th RBHC Show at Bearwood College for Parkinson Disease Society.

Taking part was:

Thames Valley Chorus

Penny Beavan (English National Opera soprano)

Side By Side (Roger Wilkinson, Ken Smyth, Chris Oliver, Rod Adams)

Flying High (Pat Deeble, Graham Frampton, Jim Dowling, Ed Dolan)

Geoff Sasse - monologue

Derek Hird & Dave Elson - boy and girl comedy act

Meyrick Wyard - M/C

Penny Beavan sang 'Ev'ry Day Of My Life' & 'You'll Never Walk Alone' with the TVC. She joined Flying high and did a duet with Graham Frampton. When singing songs from My Fair Lady she was helped out by Ed Dolan, Simon Adams, Mervyn Clark & Graham Frampton.

23rd Full Chorus Wargrave Piggott School

Pete Powell conducted the boys he had been teaching to sing barbershop at the school concert which included a variety of acts from solo singing, piano and guitar playing to Rap and Gilbert & Sullivan.

27th Full Chorus Douai Abbey, Woolhampton

Flying High sang four songs at a concert which included the Berkshire Youth Choir and The Ranelagh Girls Choir. The quartet, with Pete Powell

and Graham Lawrence had been coaching 25/30 boys in four barbershop songs. The boys, conducted by Graham performed and were encored, so they sang Mary Lou for a second time.

During the month Flying High was at the Ramada Hotel, Reading. Side By Side were at Slough Masonic Ladies Night, Camberley PROBUS dinner and the Maidenhead/Yorkshire Bowls Tournament.

15 Years Ago April 1992

11th Full Chorus Sandhurst Methodist Church

The last time the purple jackets were used, coincidentally ten years after we first wore them (see below).

Cyril Duckworth started a monthly German translation column in Tag Rag in readiness for the Chorus visit to Düsseldorf in September.

During the month a horsebox was purchased to transport the risers to sing outs replacing the previous trailer.

20 Years Ago April 1987

4th LABBS Prelims Aston University, Birmingham
The Barberettes was in 2nd place behind the White Rosettes (Leeds) out of 31 choruses.

5th Music Festival St.Peter's Church School, Woodley We had 32 on the risers and obtained 96 marks out of 100.

25 Years Ago April 1982

16/18th BABS Convention University of Warwick

Chorus results:

1st Roker Peers,

2nd Crawley Chordsmen,

3rd Pilgrimaires,

4th Hallmark Of Harmony

5th Liverpool,

6th Thames Valley Chorus (CD Graham Lawrence)

We had 30 on the risers and sang 'The Sunshine Of Your Smile' & 'Back In Dad And Mother's Day'. We wore our new uniforms (purple jackets) for the first time. Never before in BABS competition has anyone been awarded top marks for uniform by a Stage Presence Judge.

Quartet results:

1st Limited Company

2nd Partners In Time (Dick Coles, Pete Powell, Ian Douglas, Dave Heighway)

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In the semi-finals they sang 'We Kinda Miss Those Good Old Days' & 'Who'll Dry Your Tears'.

In the final they sang 'My Lady Loves To Dance' & 'Little Girl'.

The visiting American quartet was The Most Happy Fellows who had us enthralled with their Wizard Of Oz routine.

30 Years Ago April 1977

1st The Chorus (Berkshire Barbershoppers) were at Teddington TV Studios rehearsing 'Band Parade Medley' for a spot in the final programme in the series of "Opportunity Knocks" with Hughie Green. In the evening they returned to Reading for a sing-out at Padworth College.

2nd We return to Teddington to record the spot for an 'all winners show', not that the Chorus had won at an earlier appearance but we were a different act to all the winners. After the recording they went to the London Weekend Television Studios to take part in a charity concert, in aid of cancer research with the Reading Barberettes and the Barrytones (Barry Nowell, Nick Carter, Colin Carter, Bob Watkin).

16th Full Chorus Reading University Ileostomy Society

Also during the month at the Old Town Hall: "Reading Sings" with Radio 210

Taking part was:

Steve Crosier Radio 210 live
Pretzel City Chorus (USA CD Bob Seltzer
Berkshire Barbershoppers (CD Barry Nowell
Peter Westlake Magical entertainer
Reading Barberettes CD Pete Powell
Forrestaires (Pete Forrest, Dave Elson, Gerry Holland, Peter Bugden)
Four No Trumps (Ken Hopper, Ron Beal, Ron Collis, Pete Powell)
Barrytones current UK quartet champions (as above)
Compere Joe McGinnes.

Regards

HAYDN ADAMS

BABS AGM

Graham Starkie's notes of BABS AGM held at the University of Worcester on Saturday 31st March 2007 attended with John Price.

The BABS Chairman Bill Harvey opened the meeting, on time at 11am and directed the

representatives singing THE OLD SONGS. He then took apologies for absence of which there were a few but since I was getting John and myself a cup of coffee at the back of the hall I missed the names. The minutes of the last meeting were then accepted without contradiction and we sailed through the next agenda item Matters Arising without any comment.

The Chairman introduced the Directors' Reports saying that he was glad to report that the Association was in good shape in all respects and during his term of office in the next two years hoped to visit, with his wife, every Club in BABS. He said he would welcome invitations to fill up his diary.

The Chairman was very pleased to announce the appointment of the Association's first Patron – Mike Brewer. Mike is well known nationally and internationally for his choral expertise. He had attended the January Chorus Directors College to share his wisdom and in particular gave the Friday night Keynote Speech using African songs. He is the Director of the National Youth Choir, Laudibus (A mixed ensemble), author, arranger, Churchill Fellow and received an OBE in 1995. As a patron of our Association he will be a valuable adviser and advocate for our cause. Bill pointed out that the BABS Board was still looking to the member Clubs to provide leads that could result in further patron appointments. All suggestions would be welcomed.

The Chairman then referred to the past chairman's report for the last six-months that had been previously circulated to Clubs. He asked if there were any questions to which there was a nil response. The report was accepted without contradiction.

DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT – MIKE KETT

Mike first reported progress to his 2009 targets in his forward plan and noted that we have wrested the decline and made a small forward progress.

	Target	Actual
Number of Clubs	60	56
Members	2000	1765
Associates	350	156

He then listed the areas of our activity that could yield new members. The Learn to Sing courses run by Clubs had been very beneficial, and he urged every Club to think of increasing their membership by 10% in the next 12 months. A Learn to Sing activity was planned to be run in Scarborough in parallel with Convention using the Association's resources that were readily on tap. Note that Rhiannon is key to this activity on the Sunday. The

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Associate Club idea was still considered a valuable source in that new Clubs were being born through the activities of existing members fostering interest in new areas. Clubs also fell into the Associate status when their numbers fell to below a viable level. He noted the usefulness of quartet activities and A Cappella groups to foster Barbershop interest and individual Associate membership to keep past members connected to us. He expressed a view that the Board was looking forward to developing a closer relationship with other groups through the newly established link with Making Music. He was also open to overseas groups becoming affiliated to us and in that respect had had conversations with a group in Israel.

He acknowledged the importance of retention in the strive for increased membership and to that end he was planning to run a one-day conference in the Autumn to share ideas. He spoke of his thinking that Clubs didn't place enough importance on the role of Section Leaders to keep their Sections together as teams. He believed that the SL was in a better position to do that than the membership secretary of a Club. He envisaged that BABS should plan to have an adviser in each of its regions.

He briefly mentioned our new link with Making Music saying that there were many advantages. The first is a significant financial one with insurance costs. He said that we should appreciate that it was only full members on Club business that were covered by the insurance and that quartets on privately organised singouts were not covered. A revision is planned for next year that will eliminate this anomaly at a cost. A BABS version of the Society's Frank Thorne Chapter was being looked at to resolve other anomalies. That project is currently known as the Don Amos Club. The Board will issue a paper describing these initiatives to Clubs for the next meeting.

Thirty-one Clubs had now run Learn to Sing courses. The £100 grant and free leaflets are still available for any Club wishing to take advantage of them. The promotion of the Scarborough LtS day will be held in the Brunswick Shopping Centre between 1pm and 2pm using a chorus and quartet. He reminded everyone to use the LtS link on the BABS web site to tap into the Association's wealth of resources on this matter.

John Ellis asked how many members of the new Clubs were new to BABS – most was the answer. Of the two Clubs represented at the meeting only one member in each was a dual-club member.

Peter Mumford asked whether BABS was doing anything about contacting the Barbershop groups

that were now appearing in schools. Yes was the answer; where we knew of activities like this we supplied resources and Timm Barkwork the BABS Youth Development Officer visited them.

A discussion ensued centred on Dick Knight's question about 'empty' regions identifying the need to have a resource (man) on the spot to nurture interest. It was very difficult to do these things at arms-length.

The Calder Valley representative asked if BABS would do something to keep the Seniors quartet active after their success in competition. The Bromley representative posed a question about a quartet that had a Lead singer who was not a member of BABS. I must have switched-off for the responses to these questions because my notes are non-existent.

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING – LAURIE WHITTLE

Laurie formally thanked Paul Sherry for his five years editorship of the Harmony Express. On Paul's retirement Laurie was going to change the process a bit in that he would be acting as an editor but wanted to recruit a group of correspondents that would provide the copy. He then thanked his 'troops' for their continued support. Steve Green for Harmony Express labels and managing members' subscriptions, Harry Ambler for his continued work as National PRO, Alistair Taylor-Paine for providing the BABS internet radio and Laurence Prestage for being the new Web Master. Laurie pointed out that the Web Master would set up a Club web site if they didn't already have one.

Laurie answered the asked question about what he does by describing his activities over the last ten days saying that his work was driven by the other directors' needs. The list was impressive not only from the quantity of work but also the diversity of the activities. Even the most active of Barbershopper would be impressed.

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION – COLIN BENNETT

Colin spoke about the advantages of joining Making Music. There were now many opportunities for us to develop our involvement and much to be explored. The revised insurance had immediate benefits in cover and at a reduced cost. There was a saving of about £2500 on BABS funds and enhanced cover for registered quartets who were previously outside the cover. Each Club now has its own insurance policy document and can make adjustments for age and property to cover their individual circumstances. For example, electronic equipment and money can now be covered. The

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Making Music organisation is most impressed by the success of our Learn to Sing experience and has asked if BABS will present a paper on it at their annual conference.

A number of questions were asked at this point on specific issues about the cover. Colin couldn't answer them immediately and recommended that contact be made with Emma Gordon at Making Music. Colin pointed out that there were a lot of BABS Clubs unaware that the insurance cover was only available if the Child Protection issues notified to Clubs were implemented in their constitutions. Note I checked with Colin at lunchtime that we were ok in this respect.

Continuing with the theme of the Young People's policy, Colin advised that CRB checking was a simple operation through Making Music for a sum of £5. Other routes to getting this clearance started at £65.

Colin thanked his 'troops' for their work throughout the year. John Grant – BABS Historian, Peter Tathem – Quartet Registrar. (Colin noted at this point that the current quartet registration fee of £10 was to be increased to £20 next year.), Stephen Dumble – Harmony Foundation Grants Secretary, Harry Ambler – Central Communications Office, Bryan Donkin – Meetings Manager and Chas Owen – Minutes Secretary.

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND MUSIC SERVICES – MIKE LOFTHOUSE

Mike reported very successful events of Directors College and Harmony College. He also spoke about the increasing interest in youth activities, not only through the work of the National Youth Chorus but of contact with groups of students at schools and Universities. This work had made available the music score and teaching tracks for the song ALWAYS LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE OF LIFE. He has made arrangements with the copyright owners to bulk buy the approval to keep the cost down when he knows what the likely take-up is to be. Any interested Clubs should contact him ASAP.

The Guild of Judges continue their valuable work and are increasingly working together with LABBS. He expects the two groups to be working together from 2008.

Mike is to issue a questionnaire to all Clubs to sound out what the Clubs want from his department.

The BABS Harmony store had a turnover of £11,000 in 2006 and a web based shop would be available soon.

In the next year Mike listed the highlights: the Directors College visitor would be Royce Ferguson the Director of the Westminster chorus of the Society (Royce has an excellent quartet pedigree). A directory of Learning CD resources is to be published on the web site, two joint meetings were planned for the Youth Chorus (boys) and the Ivy League (girls). The Youth Chorus are invited to St Petersburg in Russia and he is providing advice for an LtS Adult Education course in Dorset in the Autumn.

Mike has also received a request from the Netherlands from DABS for the Guild to train their judges and a new stream will be introduced at Harmony College to cover the early concepts.

At the Society's International Convention in Denver Colorado in 2007 we will be represented by Cambridge Chord Company and Pitch Invasion.

The time was now 1308hrs so we broke for lunch after singing MY WILD IRISH ROSE under the direction of Dick Knight.

The Chairman restarted the meeting and Stuart Lines directed DOWN OUR WAY.

The Chairman asked the meeting if there were any questions for Mike Lofthouse in view of the fact that his presentation was terminated by the call for lunch. None were forthcoming.

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EVENTS – DAVID PLATER

David recapped on the success of last year's Convention at Harrogate and said what great guests The Ambassadors of Harmony had been with their quartet Vocal Spectrum. This year's quartets were to be Realtime and Metropolis. He then compared the Harrogate figures with the current Scarborough ones – Registrations 1879 and 1765, competing Choruses 26 and 33 respectively.

A fanfare announced the venue for the 2008 Convention – The Centaur Centre at the Cheltenham Racecourse. There is a 2200 seater auditorium and an open plan stage. We will be using many more racecourse rooms to accommodate our needs. It will be on the late May bank holiday 23-25 May 2008. All the seating in this auditorium is fixed and numbered. There are no tabs on the stage. There is a possibility that Northern Lights from Ontario will attend, discussions are continuing.

Costs for the 2008 event have been agreed with the BABS Executive. There are three stepped bookings increasing in cost towards the event. The best prices will be available at Scarborough. Viz Adult £45, Full

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Time Education £31, Junior £23. The second step is £55, £40, and £26. The third step adult rate is £65. There will be day registrations and separate prices for show tickets available.

David reported much work going on behind the scenes to plan Conventions venues for the next few years, namely:

2009	Cheltenham	Booked provisionally
2010	Harrogate	Booked provisionally
2011	Liverpool/Llandudno	Possible
2012	Bournemouth	Possible
2013	Harrogate Scarborough	Possible
2014	Cheltenham	Possible

David was asked from the floor what had happened to the idea of going to Butlins at Bognor. He said that there was much in its favour as a venue except the costs. The company wanted us to guarantee in excess of £250,000 for the weekend, a figure that was considered a risk that the Association could not take.

David pointed out that although most of his time was spent on Convention matters his title implied the wider role of events. To this end he was hoping to get involved with one-day regional events using BABS funds. Loose mention was made of a European event but my notes are too sketchy to be able to report anything concrete. There was also a discussion about the lifts at Scarborough being out of action throughout our stay and for the rest of the summer. David said that he had already been in touch with the Council and they are to run a continuous bus service from the hotels atop the cliffs to the Convention centre at no cost to us.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE – PAUL WILLIAMS

Paul started his comprehensive presentation by saying the finances were in very good shape identified the salient points in the financial report that had been distributed before the meeting. I have a copy and if anyone is interested just give me a call and I'll get a copy to you ASAP.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

There had only been one nomination - that of ALAN GOLDSMITH of the Lincoln and East Midlands Club. He is an ex senior police officer and came with excellent references and recommendation. He was elected without contradiction.

The ASSOCIATION'S SECRETARY COLIN BENNETT was asked by the Chairman to give a presentation on the state of the Harmony Foundation. There are four funds from which the

Association can make grants, STEVE HALL, DON AMOS, MARTIN HILL and the GIFT AID fund. The grants made from these funds are reported regularly in Harmony Express. Colin did however think it worth pointing out that the most significant was the Gift Aid that received income from the Chancellor of the Exchequer by our members simply filling in a form. He thanked the Clubs for the diligent way that they did this on the Association's behalf and hoped that it would continue. In 2006 we received £18,629.

Colin pointed out that Making Music was also a charity and have funds from which they can make grants. Understanding the qualification criteria and adherence to deadlines is important when making any claims. WE should note that the National Barbershop Youth Chorus had benefited greatly from the Foundation.

After a fair bit of discussion three motions were put to the vote with the following result:

A motion to accept some lesser rules for processing BABS accounts – nem con. We have been advised to accept the motion because it will reduce the amount of work needed and cost less to get the accounts audited.

A motion to admit the National Youth Chorus into BABS as a Club so that they could take full advantage of membership (including insurance cover) as a non-competing member. – nem con.

A motion to introduce a new reduced fee membership grade to students in further education was defeated.

A motion to get the Executive to consider moving the Convention to a less expensive time of the year to reduce accommodation costs was defeated.

The meeting ended at 1553hrs after singing KEEP THE WHOLE WORLD SINGING.

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SUPPORTERS

Firstly I must say how delighted we were to receive Christine Wilkinson's e-mail giving the positive news as a result of Roger's operation on Friday. All our thoughts are with you and your family and I am sure the lads are looking forward to getting you back on those risers – Roger that is!

Thank you to all those who contacted Peter Cookson and offered to host the Düsseldorf Chorus in June.

What amazing weather we're having! I am so frustrated that I can't get out there and get my hands dirty. Thank you to all those who have expressed concern at seeing me on crutches. For those who don't know, I broke my fibula whilst walking on Dartmoor some 3 weeks ago. The amazing thing was that son, John, had done exactly the same some 6 weeks previous and had just had his plaster removed the previous day. Our grandson now thinks it is the norm and can't understand why grandma can't run around and kick a ball with him. The good news is that Graham is coping marvellously with the household chores, and I am now putting some weight on the leg. Hopefully when the plaster is removed in 2 weeks, 5 days and 6 hours time I won't have too many problems walking!

Luv 'n' hugs as always,

IRENE

Golden sandy beaches Lots of historic remains Relaxed nightlife

Side (pronounced see-day) on the Mediterranean coast in Southern Turkey.

Two-bedroom ground floor apartment with air conditioning.
Set in lovely gated grounds with 24 hr security. Sleeps up to six.

Facilities include swimming pool, fully equipped gym with sauna, bar/café.
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Tel 01344 489445
(Bracknell) Evenings.

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INTERNET SCAMS & FIDDLES

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.

Thanks to Haydn Adams, Brian Callaghan, Mervyn Clark, John Price, Bob Ridley, Phillip Ward 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
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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.*

CLUB EXECUTIVE

John Price	0118 947 2700
Chairman	john_price730@btinternet.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

Vacancy
Musical Events

Other Roles:

Rhiannon Owens-Hall 01352 780825
Chorus Director Rhiannonhall@babs-education.info

Rod Adams 0118 934 4515
TVC Bookings rod.adams@wham-bam.net

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

Acting Assistant to the Associate Member
Coordinator:

Bob Ridley. Langton Lodge, Icknield Road,
Goring RG8 0DG Tel: 01491 872989
bob.ridley@btinternet.com

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

RBHC's

50 CLUB

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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



PEEK IN THE PAST

From TAG RAG dated April 1978

Battle Hospital January, 1978

As I sit around the hospital, slowly recovering from a severe attack of bronchitis, I have been reflecting on life over the past two years since I became a Barbershopper. It has been quite an experience: the thrills, the excitement, the companionship, the pure joy of belonging and helping to create such lovely chords with one of the best groups of men I have had the good fortune to know.

As some of you know, I moved from Lancashire to Reading in late middle age, and apart from my son and his family we had no friends here, although people were very kind and made us quite welcome so that we soon settled in. I now know that good friends are more precious than gold; this I discovered one night at the Reading Town Hall. Our son, Colin, asked my wife, Helen and I if we would like to go with him to a concert. We thought it would make a pleasant change and decided to go, although, Colin said it was an American Barbershop Concert that meant nothing to us, except that it would be a night out away from the TV.

What a night it turned out to be! Apart from the glorious harmonies of the chorus, the friendliness of both audience and performers was to me a thing of wonder: everyone behaved as though they had known each other for years - the atmosphere was electric! Never, anywhere, have I seen such genuine unaffected friendliness, and the singing ... WOW-EE!! How I wished I was about 20 years younger when Gerry Holland announced the formation of a group in Reading. It never occurred to me that I might be able to sing with this group. I thought I was past it! To cut this shorter, after a great deal of persuasion, Colin persuaded me to go to Harmony Hall, Kentwood Hill, and since that night, life really began for me.

Patient Pete Powell taught us the first few lines of Good-bye My Lady Love and even got in a bit of four part harmony. We were all really pleased and proud of ourselves, and personally I could not wait for next Monday's rehearsal.

Weeks went by and our membership was steadily growing. Pete worked hard with us and in no time at all we could stand up without our music and belt it out. Since these early days, my enjoyment and

pleasures have grown and grown. What excitement when we had our first sing-out at the Curzon Club - white shirt, black dickie, black trousers, black shoes and a heart beating like a drum! We stood up there and sang our hearts out, and in spite of the drinkers at the back of the hall, we made them listen and received quite an ovation. After that, sing-outs came and went and I can honestly say I have enjoyed them all. If the audience was a bit hard, we had our fun amongst ourselves (I have never met a really miserable barbershopper).

I am going to cut this short now. We all know the thrills and excitement we have shared since then, together with the odd slip up (Charlie Chester Competition), but even that was made a happy occasion by the success of the Barrytones; my favourite quartet.

My latest Barbershop thrills happened only last week, yes, even though I'm in hospital. My wife had come to visit me - Colin had brought her, and Barry was here too, and we hadn't been chatting for long, when in strolled Bob. Of course Barry and Bob were at each other in no time, and soon had us all chinking with laughter. Then, surprise, surprise, who should make an appearance, but Nick I immediately began to hope! "Have you got your pitch pipe, Barry?" I asked.

"I think so", said Barry, exploring his pockets. Yes, there it was! "OK, Boys, 'Something' - just for me."

All four began peeping over their shoulders. "Can't sing here, Jim," they said. But they did, and beautifully. My heart filled with joy and I felt this was a very proud moment in my life - a real climax to Christmas. To top everything they struck up with 'Silent Night' and Barry brought me in on the last verse. Probably those few moments did me more good than all the hospital treatment. Thank you Barrytones, you made my Christmas in hospital worth while. But wait, there's more -to come!!! A few days later I was honoured by another smashing bunch of men. First I spotted Ron Beal with his big cheeky grin; then Pete Powell with his chuckling laugh, followed by Ken Hopper, all smiles as usual and Ron Collis bringing up the rear - Ron always makes you feel happy and comfortable with his genuine concern. I was lucky enough to listen to two songs. They had an audience of only one, but how that audience enjoyed and appreciated their splendid efforts. Thank you, Four No Trumps - you really made it a Grand Finale for me.

Barersshopping has taught me that there is much more good in this world than bad, and the best way to bring out the good is to get together and sing, sing, sing. So Let's Get Together Again and Get the Whole World Singing!!

Thank you RBHC. for everything.

Jim Carter Lead (65 years)

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

THE REMAINING DAYS OF

APRIL 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
15	16	17 Rehearsal TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24 Rehearsal Convention Audition	25	26	27	28	
29	30	<p>April 2007</p>					

May 2007 Calendar is on page 2

A LOOK AHEAD TO

JUNE 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>June 2007</p>					1	2
3	4	5 Rehearsal	6	7	8	9 Show Reading Town Hall
10	11	12 Rehearsal TAG RAGCOPY DEADLINE	13 Daytimers Bray Disabled Club	14	15	16
17	18	19 Rehearsal TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 Rehearsal	27	28 Daytimers Kennet Court Woosehill	29	30

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Phillip Ward directing the Small Chorus on 12th April at St Mark's Hospital for the Alzheimer's Society.

Photo by Bryn Curtis



John Price beside the editor's empty chair and other delegates at the BABS AGM in Worcester on Saturday 31st March 2007.

Photo by Graham Starkie

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB



The Small Chorus under the direction of Phillip Ward at the Alzheimer's Society singout at St Mark's Hospital Maidenhead 12th April 2007

Photos by Bryn Curtis

