



FOUNDED 1974
www.rbhc.org.uk

TAG RAG AND NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2007

Belated Birthday Greetings to the RBHC



Now 32 years young*

*The Club was founded in July 1974.

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

A LOOK AHEAD TO

SEPTEMBER 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	September 2007					1
2	3	4 Rehearsal	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 Rehearsal MiH wk 1 of 6 TAG RAGCOPY DEADLINE	12	13 Daytimers Abbeyfields	14	15
16	17	18 Rehearsal MiH wk 2 of 6 TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 Rehearsal MiH wk 3 of 6	26	27	28	29

**Calendars showing the remaining days of August 2007 and the month of October 2007
are at the back of TAG RAG**

MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY * indicates an addition or update to last month's Tag Rag 2007

AUG	24/26	Fri-Sun			BABS 29th Harmony College Worcester
SEPT	11	Tue	Learn to Sing	Week 1 of 6	
SEPT	13	Thu	Daytimers	Abbeyfields	
OCT	6	Sat	Full Chorus	For Duchess of Kent Hospice in worldwide 'Voices for Hospices' at the Reading University Great Hall.	
OCT	16	Tue	Learn to Sing	Week 6 of 6	
OCT	27	Sat (aft)	Full Chorus	Emma Taylor's wedding singout - Hambledon nr Henley.	
NOV	5-12	Mon/Mon	Full Chorus	Krakow & Warsaw trip.	
	8-12	Thu/Mon		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	2	Sun	Full Chorus	Desborough Suite Maidenhead	
DEC	4	Tue	Daytimers	Thamesfield Nursing Home Henley	
DEC	6	Thu	Daytimers	Bracknell Stroke Club	
DEC	12	Wed	Daytimers	Christchurch Court, Reading 2.30 sing	
DEC	19	Wed	Daytimers	Weirside Court, Orts Rd, Reading	

2008

FEB	Feb 29	Fri-Sun	Full chorus	Away Weekend Marsham Court Hotel Bournemouth
	-Mar 2			
MAY	16/17	Fri-Sat	Full Chorus	2-days at Fawley Court Craft Experience Henley
MAY	23-25	Fri-Sun	Full Chorus	BABS Annual Convention The Centaur Building Cheltenham Racecourse

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NEXT COPY DEADLINE:

11TH SEPTEMBER FOR 18TH DISTRIBUTION



CHAIRMAN'S SPOT

Responses to my plea for something funny to sing have trickled in slowly. They vary in style, which is a good thing. Some are as yet not fully developed, so I think I'll extend the deadline to give you a chance to finish. If you haven't set pen to paper yet, please have a go. It would be good to publish them in Tag Rag next month (at least, the ones that would not get us sued for libel!).

The chorus has enjoyed two more sing-outs this month. Thanks are due to Tony Stephens for letting

us sing to his group at Crowthorne, and also for his generous donation to the club of some display boards. The performance at RHS Wisley was also well received. Phillip and Brian worked well as a team sharing the direction, and the glass house portico seemed to enhance the sound. Any keen gardener who has not visited Wisley recently is missing a treat.

However, sing-outs don't just happen: as in any business, somebody needs to actively pursue leads and contacts to bring the work in. We need a Director of Musical Events on the executive committee to co-ordinate this effort. Please consider whether you can help the club in this way. There will be two more vacancies on the committee this autumn, which are equally vital to the efficient running of the club. Theoretically, nominations for new members need to be in by 11th September in order to be considered at the EGM.

Which by coincidence is the date of the start of the Learn-to-Sing course. The club needs new, younger, members to secure the future of our art form in the Thames Valley area, and the course is currently our best hope for recruitment. Keep passing out the leaflets!

The club, through its performance team, obtains coaching of the very highest quality for our members, and I believe this has had a very positive impact over the past year. Therefore, we are booking further sessions with Mark Grindall at regular intervals over the coming year.

This is a wonderful barbershop chorus. One of the best in the country. So ask yourself, what do you want from this club? And perhaps more importantly, what can you do to help us achieve these aims?

Yours, looking for the notes to complete the chord,

JOHN PRICE

Chairman

APOLOGY

My apologies for slipping this publishing deadline for a week due to the interruption last week of our visit to the Royal Horticultural Society's Wisley Garden Centre for the charity Music Evening for the Open Gardens Scheme.

GRAHAM STARKIE

Editor

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

EDITORIAL

Much interesting copy this month. I am most grateful to our contributors. However I'm perturbed by the chairman's report - let's hope that this situation is only a temporary one.

BOF - So, who got a pint? I'll be interested to know if anyone got a pint out of Aidan for providing the correct interpretation of the abbreviation BOF. I guess he'll keep moving the goal posts until we forget all about it!

I've started a PEEK AT POLAND article this month that I'll run until November featuring articles that I think will be of general interest to members. I know I ran an article on the Salt Mines last month and if I'd have had my wits about me the PEEK' should have started then. My plan is to find snippets of information that will broaden our knowledge of the place in preparation for the trip.

RISER VAN - Mike McKeown filled me in with a bit more of the van's history. It was Mike that bought the van and the trailer, it was Peter Rowe's idea to do it.

You may be interested to know that the van has passed its MOT for another year. There were a few observations with the certificate. The most important one was that the rear offside tyre rubber was perished. But that was resolved within 24hrs of the pass because I had kept the tired wheel that had 'fallen off' on the M4 previously and had already asked for it to be put on the new rim. So we are back to four very new looking tries that have a good depth of tread. Tyres on the van last a long time because we don't do all that many miles. The other observations were about the bodywork and headlamp reflector but I'm hoping we can get by with them until we can find a replacement van.

In the few weeks that we were allowed to keep the risers erected in the School hall it gave time to give the back of the van a spring (summer?) clean. The banner stand was also repaired after being knocked out of shape by bumping with the ramp.

EGM & AGM - We are coming up to that difficult time of the year when we elect (or re-elect) our management team. We see two resignations this time around, Andy Pearce and Barry Howard. We should thank them for the hours that they have spent guiding us in their terms of office.

I hope we'll get the volunteers to take on these posts. I've always found committee work rewarding. Yes there are times when I've been very frustrated but it is important that we keep the fabric of our Club in good order. I hope we don't arrive at the EGM date

without the three necessary nominations for the vacancies. I say three because in addition to the Administration and Membership jobs being vacated there is the Musical Events post that has been vacant all last year. It would be easy to assume that since we've been without someone in those shoes we can do without the post - not so. The extra burden on other committee members means that they can't pay full attention to their own responsibilities for worrying about fire-fighting the absence of a Musical Events plan.

I would urge every member to think seriously about taking on one of these posts. If not then you need to talk to other members to see if they will. It's your leadership skills we are looking for. Don't forget that many members are already carrying out lots of routine tasks. The Executive's role is to plan for the future and coordinate this effort. A little often is the key to success in the management team.

BABS HARMONY COLLEGE - I am pleased to see that as well as Rhiannon and myself we'll have three other Club members at the BABS Harmony College this year. They are Andrew Pearce, Ian McCann and Philip Payne. We make a quartet in numbers but not by part. Harmony College was extremely popular this year. John Ellis the Accommodation man had to close the books about one-month before the official closing date. So well done Andy Ian and Philip for getting your bookings in early. I'm sure you'll all have a great time and learning experience. I'll see you there.

QUARTETS - Thank you to Mervyn Clark for his report of his quartet's visit to the Cantley Manor Proms. You may be interested to know that I'm talking to the Wokingham Theatre Guild about providing a quartet for their production of Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors. As unlikely as it may seem this production is set in the Wild West featuring Tombstone and San Diego! The quartet will add to the American flavour. The show runs for nine nights in December and a nucleus of nine singers have been recruited to get things moving but more may be needed to provide complete cover for the period. Three or four chorus songs will be used with 'Jeanie With The Light Brown Hair' if I can get the arrangement in time. The barbershop arrangement has been requested but my order coincided with the start of the Society's International and is now being hampered by their move to Nashville. Watch this space.

GRAHAM STARKIE

Editor

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POLAND PROGRESS

POLISH TOURIST OFFICE - As reported in Notices Irene and I had a very lucrative and informative visit to Hanger Lane. We returned with armfuls of brochures and booklets that I distributed on 14th August in named envelopes. An enclosed note explains that there are others but I don't have enough to give to everyone. They'll be available on the table and hopefully members will share them. I'll keep a reference copy. I'm sure I could get more but unless this set proves to be inadequate I'll go with what we've got.

SPONSORSHIP - My contact at the Tourist Office gave me a personal introduction to the British Polish Chamber of Commerce. I have since been in touch and have sent some detail of our trip that is being circulated round the Chamber's members. I tried to get individual company contacts but not surprisingly I was declined. I'm looking forward to making many big decisions! Watch this space.

ACCOMMODATION DEPOSITS - Ken has now paid the travel-company using the bank's International money transfer. It is the first serious amount of money that we have paid. All members have paid their share ON TIME, which is nothing short of a minor miracle. Let's hope this is setting the pattern. We have until the 31st of August to reduce numbers of travellers without losing an individual's deposit.

NEXT PAYMENT - The next payments are FLIGHT BALANCES, they are due by end of August from members. I expect to recover the two spare contingency deposits that we paid 'just in case' without penalty.

UK COACH TRAVEL - We are looking for a convenient pickup point west of London to save those members travelling to the Piggott School. This will be more convenient for them and ease the parking situation at the school.

CONTEST SONGS - I now have a Performance Improvement Plan that has been developed nem. con. with the Director and Section Leader teams. The idea is to galvanise the teams into a concerted action based around musical and vocal improvements using regular recordings. Action has been slower than I expected. Variable attendance patterns in both the teams and by members make it difficult to get continuity. It maybe that the only way forward is to plan Extra Rehearsals as has been suggested. Again, watch this space

GRAHAM STARKIE

Poland Tour 2007 Coordinator.

A PEEK AT POLAND

MONEY - Poland's national currency is the straight-forward zloty (PLN). One zloty equals 100 groszy. Banknotes come in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 zloty and there are 1, 2 and 5 zloty, and 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 groszy coins in circulation. Foreign currency can be exchanged at the airport, hotels, banks and exchange offices (kantor). You will get a better deal by using a kantor that displays its exchange rate in the window. Many hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, petrol stations and larger shops accept American Express, MasterCard and Visa cards. ATMs are widespread. The current exchange rate is is 5.62 Zloty to the Pound or 1 Zloty is worth about 18p

GBP	PLN
5.00	28
10	56
20	112
1.78	10
3.56	20
17.80	100
35.60	200

CLIMATE - Polish climate is transitory, as the masses of oceanic air confront continental air over Poland; hence in every season of the year the weather is changeable and difficult to forecast. The average air temperatures amount to 6 - 8.5 *C for a year, the annual rainfall is 500 - 700 mm, of which snow constitutes only 5 - 20%. The mountainous regions have got a distinctively different climate: depending on the altitude, temperatures tend to be lower by several or more than ten grades, while the rainfall, 40-60% of which is made up by snow, rise above 1000 mm a year.

MARIE CURIE (From Lonely Planet book on Poland) - In 1995 the remains of Marie Curie (1867-1934) were reinterred in the Pantheon in Paris, making her the first woman to receive this

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honour in recognition of her own achievements. Those accomplishments included the discovery of the chemical elements radium and polonium, work that laid the foundations of radiography, nuclear physics and cancer therapy. She was the first woman to be awarded a Nobel prize and the first person ever to win two Nobel prizes.

Born in Warsaw (then under Russian partition) into a family of Polish teachers, Maria Sklodowska lived here for the first 24 years of her life. She developed a strong fascination for science and decided to pursue a scientific career, but under Russian rule women were not allowed to enter institutions of higher education.

Maria therefore went to Paris in 1891 to study physics and mathematics at the Sorbonne, earning degrees in both subjects. In 1895 she married French physical chemist Pierre Curie (1859-1906), and changed her Polish name Maria to the French Marie. Their scientific partnership proved to be extremely fruitful, even though their living conditions were extremely poor - their laboratory was not much more than a barn.

Their investigation of the radiation of uranium ore resulted in the discovery in 1898 of two new radioactive elements, polonium (named after Marie's homeland) and radium. In 1903, they, together with Antoine Henri Becquerel, were awarded the Nobel prize for physics, for the discovery of natural radioactivity.

After Pierre's tragic death in a traffic accident in 1906, Marie devoted all her energy to the research work they had begun together. She succeeded him as lecturer and head of physics at the Sorbonne - the first woman ever to teach at this 650-year-old university. Two years later she became a professor and in 1911 was awarded the Nobel prize for chemistry, for the isolation of pure radium.

Marie Curie was instrumental in founding the Radium Institute in Paris in 1914, which later became a universal centre for nuclear physics and chemistry. She also helped establish the Radium Institute in Warsaw in 1932. She died in 1934 of leukaemia caused by prolonged exposure to radiation.

REPERTOIRE AS AT JULY 2007

Beach Boys Medley
Birth Of The Blues
Brother Can You Spare A Dime
Do You Hear The People Sing
Fields Of Gold
Happy Together
Have A Little Talk With Myself
If I Give My Heart To You
If You Love Me
I'm Beginning To See The Light
Lady Madonna
Lover Come Back To Me
Make 'Em Laugh
Once Upon A Time
Sound Celebration
Everybody Step/Alexander's Ragtime Band
Swing Low Sweet Chariot
Top Hat Medley
Tree In The Meadow (A)
Wonderful Day Medley

N.B.

1) All 20 songs will be built into the Tuesday rehearsal plan on a rota basis in order to be maintained at full performance standard, including choreography where appropriate.

2) The Daytimers will be encouraged to adopt this same repertoire with only minor exceptions and to aim for the same performance standard, hopefully benefiting from the regular revisiting described in 1) above.

3) Polecats and songs already relegated or relegated by this new list remain valid for performance in Afterglows.

4) Christmas carols and songs will be treated separately and will be confirmed in due course.

RBHC Performance Team

July 2007

ONCE UPON A TIME

This is a quote from the blog (internet diary) of a man from Preston about our beautiful new ballad.

“At Barbershop practice, Sergeant Grimsargh (baritone) coaches us in non-verbal emoting. Expressing meaning through cheesy actions and facial expressions is as much a part of barbershop as anything else, and I confess I'm not keen.

“Once upon a hill, we sat beneath a willow tree, counting all the stars and waiting for the dawn...”

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Sergeant Grimsargh wants us to look skyward, to smile and act serene. He demonstrates, and looks like a baby filling it's nappy. For the benefit of the judges and those at the back of the audience, we must amplify our emoting to grotesque proportions.

"... but that was once upon a time, now the tree is gone."

He hams a sour face, a comically down turned mouth, seems about to bawl that he wants his nappy changing, and we are expected to want our nappies changing too.

I trust my own judgement and there is no **&\$£! way I'm going to do that. It's a beautiful song, the lyrics are precisely weighted, delicately balanced, light and dark and poignant; the harmonies make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up and take notice.

The noise we make is rich, warm, devastating in it's simple purity. No sound engineer with all the technology in the world at their disposal could confect a resonance so perfect and whole as the one we produce in that rifle range, week in, week out.

The sight of forty grown men all conveying "I've just pooped!" kind of ruins it for me."



BARBERSHOP BABES

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO
AUGUST'S QUINTET**

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

QUARTET CORNER

TAKE FOUR AND THE PROMS.

No, not the BBC Proms but the Cantley House Hotel Proms on Sunday July 22nd.

This was our second appearance at the Cantley House Hotel Proms (the hotel is situated on the Twyford Road out of Wokingham, by the Wokingham Theatre).

We were taking part in this now the third Proms organized by the Hotel. We were asked to be "wandering minstrels" circulating around the grounds entertaining the picnickers before the main event, which started at 7.30. It was a very enjoyable two hours. The weather, which had been very dodgy over the Friday and Saturday, behaved itself, and we sang to the guests in very pleasant sunshine.

We were very well received by the various groups to whom we sang. Graham and I knew a number of people in the crowd and were greeted by comments such as "I didn't know you did this sort of thing ". One lady was in tears at our rendering of "If you were the only girl in the world" chosen for her by her husband from our "song list menu". Another highlight was at the end, when, as we were about to walk to the changing rooms, a man approached us and said that we hadn't yet sung to his group and could we please do so.

We decided to do the Beatles number "When I'm 64". It couldn't have been a better choice as he and his wife were Beatles' fans and held hands as we sang, and had big smiles on their faces. This made a very pleasing end to an enjoyable singing session.

One member of the audience has since asked us if we are available for an engagement in Farnham, and the Proms organizers want us back next year. So, a good result all round!

MERVYN CLARK

on behalf on Andy, Graham and Geraint of Take Four.

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SELECTED WEEKLY NOTICES

RECRUITMENT DRIVE 2007 (17th Jul)

Richard Leathem advises - Although reference has been made to "Learn to Sing" this year we are not advertising for men and women; just men. We are also only looking for those who can sing but may not have done so for a long time.

ACTION BY YOU - Please make a list of any likely candidates and a list of where to put up posters and who to ask to distribute them.

THE CONCEPT - The marketing is along the lines of "FREE six week vocal coaching course commencing **11th September 2007** from the men who sang with Robbie Williams. From bass to top-tenor featuring mainly barbershop close-harmony style. You don't need to read music (sing along recordings provided)."

The idea is to increase the number we keep out of those we recruit. There isn't much call for women or tone deaf singers in the TVC – but there again. We are not being shy about mentioning the "B" word. We are to email recruits details to James Porter: jporter75@hotmail.com. Denis Swift will be available on the phone during the day for calls and James Porter at the weekend and evenings.

Anyone interested in being directed to www.learningsing.org.uk. This web site will provide further information and materials.

IMPLEMENTATION - The course is to run on Tuesdays 7.30-9pm at The Piggott School commencing 11th September 2007.

The Executive effectively appointed the Music Team under Julian to run the event and Jim Downing ("Mr Musicman") is in charge of teaching. Lawrence McNulty ("Marketingman") for the marketing materials and me (Richard Leathem) for organising the recruitment drive. Lawrence is busy producing posters and pamphlets. I have prepared a list of team members and leaders for distribution of the materials and you will be called upon, please, to assist in the distribution as soon as the posters and pamphlets are produced by Dave Colver whose magnificent printing skills have been invaluable. Advertisements will shortly appear with articles.

HI GORGEOUS GUYS! (17th Jul)

Well, my wedding seems to be getting nearer and nearer and I am getting more and more excited! The dress is waiting, the flowers are growing and I am SO full of energy for the day! (which is only 3 months away now!) Also I now have the summer off

to enjoy and organise the final touches – it's a military operation! But certainly and enjoyable one....

Graham and I will be heading to the church in August to meet the Organist and look at the space inside – *Andy Pearce has mentioned that some of you would like to bring your Wives and partners – this should be ok, the more the merrier really!!! I would only ask that you wait for the main guests to seat before taking up your pews – as we have 140 guests to the day....! I hope you understand?*

Anyway, I have spoken to Andy re the repertoire for the day and I am thrilled to know that Rhi is able to direct, thanks Rhi.... The hymns in church are – All things Bright and Beautiful, Morning has Broken, Lord of the dance and Sing Hossana – so get practising!!! We want lots of happy sounds!

Thanks once again for joining me on this VERY special day, marrying Nige is going to be the best thing I have ever done. I thank you for supporting me and being there, I am eternally grateful to you all...Please don't forget your tissues though....

I look forward to seeing you all soon and I wish you all a very happy and healthy summer!

Much Love, always
x x x Emma Jane x x x

p.s None of our guests know you are singing on this special day as we wanted it to be a surprise !

(31st Jul Addenda) - I went to St Mary's church in Hambleton (Bucks) on Monday with Emma to talk to the organist about our role in this event. We have a very important part to play in the proceedings. We'll need to be at the church by 1.0pm so that we can have a quick recce of the layout and about 20 minutes warmup. Rhiannon will be directing us. We sing on three occasions. The first two songs BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT and IF I GIVE MY HEART TO YOU precede Emma's entrance (about 2pm) so the timing is critical. We'll be sitting in the choir stalls. We'll then sing IF YOU LOVE ME REALLY LOVE ME during the register signing. The next group of songs WONDERFUL DAY MEDLEY, HAPPY TOGETHER and others tbd will be sung outside the church weather permitting. There is a wet weather plan. I'll issue a full brief nearer the time.

RECLAIMING EXPENDITURE (24th Jul)

Alex Russell advises - If you need to spend money on behalf of RBHC, you can reclaim your expenditure ONLY by following these rules:

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- 1) Find out the best price for whatever you propose to buy for the club
- 2) Get approval from an Executive Committee Member, preferably the one responsible for the relevant aspect of club activity. You & he may need to check further if another member is responsible for a project (eg Peter C for the town twinning visit, or Graham S for the Warsaw trip) to ensure that the item/service is needed and in other ways is appropriate
- 3) Go and buy the item/service, and get a receipt. If a receipt is not obtainable, write the details on a piece of paper (ypop) like why, when, how, where and how much and sign it.
- 4) Go back to the Committee member and ask him to write on the receipt (or your piece of paper) 'Approved for payment', and sign it.
- 5) Take the receipt/ypop to Ken M, who will refund your expenditure.

This is the only way to ensure that responsibility for expenditure rests where it should, and to provide satisfactory records for auditing our accounts. Please do not expect Ken to approve, or to get authorisation for, your expenditure.

Some regular expenditure is approved in principle by the Executive Committee, and is exempt from these rules, e.g. hire of the hall, production and postage of Tag Rag, copying sheet music, riser van running costs, and purchase of some uniform items. If you are not certain that your expenditure is exempt, it probably isn't.

MEN IN HARMONY COURSE (24th Jul)

Here are some ideas for where you might display the A4 posters to advertise the September Course:

- Barber Shops
- Golf Clubs
- Libraries
- Office Notice boards
- Newsagents windows
- Charity shops

WARSAW SONGS (31st Jul)

Take a few moments to understand the following profiles that the Performance Team are using as guidelines to improve the competition set. They are

by no means set in concrete and could change if we find a better idea. The idea of sharing them with members is so that you can hopefully help the Team to achieve their goal.

SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT - This is a song sung by a slave who is looking forward to dying so that he can get to the other-side and live in peace and harmony released from the shackles of his earthly life. The audience should be 'carried away' by the performance feeling part of it. It has a rhythmic, happy-clappy Gospel feel dominated by the story in the melody line. Opening verse to be sung reminiscent of the way the England Rugby supporters do. The rest of the song is of the joyful thoughts of a slave looking forward to riding to heaven for an afterlife of eternal bliss on a chariot. The harmony parts provide an intricate rhythmic subtext including an exciting chromatic slide.

LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE - A sacred song that extols the virtues of believing in Christ using prophetic wording. The audience is a bystander for this performance of worship. Our performance is to have a reverence associated with the church. The melody line is to be sung with great clarity in an ecclesiastical 'bell' like quality. The pedal tone at the beginning is to be 'drone' like. The subsequent harmony is to be lush with accurate execution of embellishments to punctuate the melodic flow. The song is a complete adoration of Christ.

A TREE IN THE MEADOW - A song sung introspectively by a spurned lover in a reflective mood examining the 'tree' detail in depth. The audience is a bystander with this performance in this declaration of love. This is a classic barbershop ballad about the pains of a lost love. Performance is to be ad lib dominated by the story and the arrangement's harmonic flow. The ebb and flow of the lyric's emotions are supported and emphasised by the barbershop harmony and embellishments.

EVERYBODY STEP/ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND - This song is a medley lauding the creation and excitement of music and dancing. It stretches beyond the footlights and involves the audience. This is a classic barbershop up-tempo medley in the jazz idiom. It has a very strong 12/8 feel emphasised by syncopated word rhythms and barbershop embellishments. There's plenty of opportunity to use vocal mimicry particularly with instrumental qualities. In this fusion EVERYBODY STEP provides a thin shell that sets the scene for the evergreen standard ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND. The medley is a happy infectious toe-tapper.

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THANK YOU (7th Aug)

First thank you to Chris Bradley and Any Pearce for coming into school last week to do a complete service on the risers. You will also notice that they turned them around to face east so that we don't have the same trouble with the sun during rehearsal. This way the 'man out front' gets the hassle.

Secondly to Messrs Clark, Howard, Colver, Starkie Irene and Davina for having a cleaning blitz in the under-stage area. Everything was removed, the floor was swept and most items were put back after a dust down. The musty smell was coming from the decaying Hoover cardboard toolbox and other bits of fibreboard and hardboard that has become damp with water and growing their own microculture. There appears to be a leak in one of the pipes to the right of the door, it's lagging is all wet. I'll be speaking to the caretaker about it.

AN APPRECIATION

Letter received from Wendy
On behalf of Friends of Notrees.

Dear Phillip,
A whole week has passed since the Thames Valley gentlemen came to entertain us at Notrees. I do apologise for this shameful delay but the appreciation we all feel is none the less sincere.

It was so kind of you to give up an afternoon to sing to us and, as always, we all enjoyed your performance enormously. Hopefully we can persuade you to return for an encore some day.

With our sincere thanks and best wishes always from all the Friends of Notrees.

Wendy

A CRAFT LESSON ...

Craft Lesson from a non-craft viewpoint by S. P. "Ace" Philler, Des Moines, Iowa Chapter reprinted from Harmony Overtones.

Many years ago, I read a book by Dr. Maxwell Maltz about the process of psycho-cybernetics. In general, psycho-cybernetics is the scientific explanation of Professor Harold Hill's "think system" from The Music Man.

When I first read the book, I thought how amazingly simple the process was; then I applied it. My first approach was to apply Dr. Maltz'

principles to skiing—I was able to improve to the point that I became an instructor.

Over the years, I applied the Maltz "think system" to my job and, amazingly enough, to singing! Yes! It works to improve singing skills!

There are two steps that worked for me as a result of reading Dr. Maltz' book. The first requires deep concentration. I did it by sitting back in a comfortable chair, relaxed, eyes closed, then pictured, in my mind's eye, singing my part. As I mentally sang the song, I would also picture my facial expressions and imagine the director imploring that the word "I" be sung "ah-ee" with the diphthong turned, and not cut off by singing "ah." In addition, I would see myself inhaling from the diaphragm and supporting the notes and words being sung.

The second step is maintenance. I no longer have to concentrate on the first step. When there is new music, I apply the Maltz "think system." I think about the music when I'm driving, or during various quiet times at home or work. I use the learning tapes and then "think" them over later.

Breathing from the diaphragm is natural for me now. When Randy [Weir] stops during a song and asks, in his own way, "Who sang 'wahled' on 'My Wild Irish Rose'?" I know it wasn't me. I turned the diphthong and sang "wah-eeld." Dr. Maltz' psycho cybernetics, or "think system," gave me the key to self-improvement.

I prefer to sing correctly. It's not my idea of having fun to cause hoarseness, when I can sing longer and just as strongly by applying the basics.



ASSOCIATE MEMBER NEWS

By BOB RIDLEY Acting Assistant to the Associate Member Coordinator

I visited Ron on 27 July and we were able to have a long chat including what I am saying here on his behalf. He continues to make progress and a longer

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spell of physiotherapy is planned shortly. Stella and Ron welcome visitors but please call Stella first.

Ron appreciated the nice letters from Ernie Hughes and Alan Rogers. Bruce Beer sent the little note on Cambridge's performance at International. It seems they were keeping up to their own high standard. He hopes to be in the UK in September and if the planned schedule works out, we will look forward to seeing him at rehearsals on 25 September and 6th November. However, we note that these dates are somewhat tentative at the moment.

My thanks to Associate Members who have let me have their email addresses. I will welcome receiving others to bob.ridley@btinternet.com.

Tag Rag is available on our website www.rbhc.org.uk and I have started to send an alerting email out to the select bunch who have agreed to read it there when Graham Starkie/ Chris Bradley add a new issue to the site. 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

Dear Ron,

'... It must be about seventeen years since I was an active member of the club and I know you had been the Associate Member Co-ordinator (and FOTC) for many years before then. Your long service in these capacities is a great achievement and personally I always appreciated your friendly help. I do hope things will improve for you healthwise.

Best wishes'
Ernie Hughes

In a separate note to Bob Ridley, Ernie Hughes adds: 'I often find items of interest in Tag Rag which has been produced splendidly for so long by that other stalwart, Graham Starkie. In the June issue I was interested to read about the chorus's new song "Once Upon a Time". I came across this song only once before when it featured in an Andy Williams album I acquired- it must have been nearly 50 years ago (the reverse side of the record contained several numbers from "My Fair Lady".) I do feel the lyrics are a bit special and quite moving. The words "Everything was ours... as though tomorrow wasn't there" are very poignant- and particularly so when one is now an octogenarian!

'Dear Ron

Firstly, I'm sorry to hear that your spell away from the chorus whilst "hors de combat" continues. How ever will they be coping? I do sincerely hope things improve for you sooner rather than later.

Well, it doesn't seem like five minutes ago that I was writing the last cheque for my Associate Membership but it must be twelve months. I have been racking my brains to think of what may have changed in between times, but overall things are much as reported last time. I am still waiting for the "World's Favourite" to take pity on me, and it seems the wait may soon be over. Nothing definite yet but a chance of an amicable exit seems on the cards for late November. I have to say the idea of being a pensioner (albeit a Company not a State one) at my age is a bit daunting, but I'm sure to get used to it soon enough! I have been practising saying "I don't know how I had to go to work, I'm so busy" which I'm told helps a lot with the adjustment.

I enclose a cheque for another year of the indispensable Tag Rag without hesitation, Ron, and look forward to visiting the chorus soon.

My very best wishes for your continued recovery'

Alan Rogers

Bruce Beer (by email)

'Just been re-reading the July Tag Rag and have a minor comment - Cambridge did not get the highest placing ever of a British club this year (12th) they were 11th in Montreal in 2003. Both performances were excellent and a credit to the UK. However, I would have placed them higher this year - certainly 11th and maybe even 10th.'

TOMTOM IN TEXAS

South East Texas was as welcoming as ever with plenty of heat and humidity. In Beaumont they are well advanced in rebuilding after Hurricane Rita but recent flood warnings had been issued after heavy rainfall. It was a great surprise to find the UK floods reaching the foreign news page of the 'Beaumont Enterprise'!

James Porter had brought along his Garmin Satnav on the trip to Scarborough. It proved valuable in finding the hotel of Syd Boyd. Encouraged by this I bought a TomTom. I had a false start until I discovered that there were two map options: one

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Western Europe and the other (which mine was set to), the Canary Islands! Despite this I added the map of the US and decided to take it to Texas. It is possible to rent a Satnav from Alamo but the daily rate is high. The experience was worthwhile particularly in finding the homes of friends in the suburbs of Beaumont, San Antonio, Friendswood and Galveston. In Beaumont the logical street layout grid is broken by the newer freeways and it was impressive to find TomTom negotiating the necessary zigzags. Perhaps even more useful was the several occasions when the main turn was missed in a strange town and TomTom calmly rerouted the recovery. I recommend TomTom in Texas.

BOB RIDLEY

HISTORICAL NOTES

5 Years Ago August 2002

Rockaholix (Roger Wilkinson, Alan Hill, Chris Oliver, Brian Callaghan) appeared at The Buckeye Invitational Convention held at the Ohio State University Campus, USA. They were last of 12 competitors but 6th in entertainment value. In the quartet contest the report states they have really consistent energy and on the last of their four songs "Who Put the Bomp..." it states that this was definitely a crowd-pleaser. At the concert it was reported that they enjoy singing acapella rock-and-roll, particularly from the 50's and 60's. In honour of the 25th anniversary of the death of Elvis Presley they sang a medley of his songs that was much appreciated. During their stay at Columbus they performed at the Riff Theatre, Columbus Crew soccer stadium, Columbus State fair, Riverside Buckeye Show and at "Max & Ermers" restaurant in downtown Columbus.

10 Years Ago August 1997

2nd Time Out (Adrian Cox, Mervyn Clark, Denis Swift, Simon Adams) were at Westminster for an Army Officers Mess Ball.

8th The Time Out quartet was on board a yacht at Hamble during Cowes week and at the Marina Club in the evening.

30th Southern Comfort (John Carter, Alan Hill, Gerry Holland, Colin Thatcher) were at a combined 25th wedding anniversary and 50th birthday party at Cognac in south-west France. The client who, had seen them at the Henley Festival, booked them on Eurostar to Lille then on to Augonleme on the TGV, picked them up and put them onto a 5 star hotel in

the centre of Cognac for an overnight stay after their performance.

During the month Time Out also did a couple of charity performances in Reading and Wokingham plus at a beer festival in a pub at White Waltham.

15 Years Ago August 1992

15th Full Chorus at the Civic Hall, Camberley for Frimley & Camberley Lions with the Congleton Lions Youth Brass Band.

20 Years Ago August 1987

13th Full Chorus at Thames Yacht Club, Teddington We sang at a dinner organised by Roger Wilkinson's father and, although we could only muster 21 on the risers we gave a good account of ourselves supported by the quartet Berkley Square (John Lane, Roger Wilkinson, Derek Smith, Tim Cockell).

25 Years Ago August 1982

21st Full Chorus at RAOB, Kings Road, Reading

HAYDN ADAMS

PRINCIPAL VIOLINIST

From the Daily Mail 20 August 2007

QUESTION - In what manner does a principal violinist 'lead' a large, modern orchestra, or is it simply a courtesy nowadays?

It is by no means a courtesy. The larger the orchestra, the more important the role of principal in the orchestra. Principals are essentially the leaders of each of the sections in an orchestra, and have important artistic responsibilities. -

They help the conductor by ensuring everybody in their respective sections is phrasing the music the same way, and using the same technical devices such as tonguing (woodwind and brass players) and bowing (string players). The principal needs to be the section's most skilled musician good at learning music quickly, counting and observing the conductor for the rest of the section to follow. Bowing is particularly important, and it is the responsibility of the First Violin, normally called Leader (UK) or Concert Master, to decide on the bowing for all the string sections.

The number of notes a player plays without changing the direction of their bow affects the

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sound. Different bowings are used for loud or soft or short or smooth notes.

The Leader has the pleasure of being able to tune the orchestra or band at rehearsals and performances. The Leader also plays a social role, serving as liaison between the conductor and orchestra, and as a spokesman for the orchestra on management issues.

The Leader walks on stage before performing, bows and receives applause on behalf of the whole ensemble.

Francis Mill-Thomson, Oxford



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(Bracknell) Evenings.

SUPPORTERS

Graham and I visited Ron and Stella about 3 weeks ago and it was great to hear that he had felt a slight movement in his leg. As Bob mentions in his piece Ron is to have more intensive physio, in fact he may have already started it by now. His speech had much improved since we last saw him and he is so anxious to hear news about what is happening at the Club. He and Stella are receiving great backup from Social Services.

As I look out of my window it is raining yet again, but hey the garden looks great! Thinking about gardens Graham and I visited Wisley a couple of weeks ago with our local horticultural society. It was an amazing coincidence that the Chorus have now been asked to sing there this coming Tuesday. We went on a very hot day and it was just beautiful, and so I am really hoping it is nice weather on Tuesday so you can all see it in its glory. The Chorus is singing in front of the new "Glasshouse" of which the RHS are very proud, and they have every right to be. It is well worth a visit.

I have not much else to report. So, let's hope for a warm and sunny September.

Luv 'n' hugs as always,

IRENE

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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, Mervyn Clark, Richard Leatham, John Price, Bob Ridley, and Irene for supplying copy.

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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.*

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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.

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THE REMAINING DAYS OF

AUGUST 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
19	20	21 Rehearsal TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	22	23	24 Harmony College Worcester	25 Harmony College Worcester
26 Harmony College Worcester	27	28 Rehearsal	29	30	31 RBHC Exec mtg	August 2007

September 2007 Calendar is on page 2

A LOOK AHEAD TO

OCTOBER 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
October 2007	1	2 Rehearsal MiH wk 4 of 6	3	4	5	6 Singout Reading University Great Hall
7	8	9 Rehearsal MiH wk 5 of 6 TAG RAGCOPY DEADLINE	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 Rehearsal MiH wk 6 of 6 TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 Rehearsal	24	25	26	27 Emma's wedding
28	29	30 Rehearsal	31	October 2007		