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TRAG AND NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2007



Club chairman John Price presenting a cheque to the Air Ambulance paramedics Mark Chambers and Neil Plant at White Waltham Aerodrome on 9 February 2007



The Daytimers in the Reception Area of the Royal Berkshire Hospital with Colin McLean the Chairman of the Hospital Trust. 9 February 2007

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

A LOOK AHEAD TO

MARCH 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
March 2007				1	2	3 Chorus Away Weekend Bournemouth
4 Chorus Away Weekend Bournemouth	5	6 Rehearsal	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Rehearsal TAG RAG COPY DEADLINE	14	15	16	17
18 Mothers Day	19	20 Rehearsal TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Rehearsal	28	March 2007		

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

MORE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY * Addition/Update to last month's TAG RAG 2007

MAR	2-4	Fri-Sun	Full Chorus	Chorus Away Weekend Marsham Court Hotel Bournemouth
APR	12	Thu	Daytimers	Maidenhead Alzheimers Club - Denis to provide detail
MAY	15	Tues	Daytimers	Maidenhead Blind Club 2.30 sing
MAY	25-27	Fri-Sun		BABS Convention Scarborough
JUN	9	Sat	Full Chorus	Show Reading Town Hall 60th Anniversary of Düsseldorf twinning.
*	JUN	13	Wed	Bray Disabled Club at 2pm
	JUN	28	Thu	Kennet Court Woosehill Wokingham at 2.30pm
	JUL	4	Wed	Notrees Nursing Home Kintbury
	OCT	27	Sat (aft)	Emma Taylor's wedding singout - Hambledon nr Henley.
	NOV	9-11	Sat	<i>Full Chorus Potential Warsaw trip.</i>
	NOV	13	Tues	Tuesday Club, Hungerford Town Hall to sing at 2pm
	NOV	29	Thu	Kennet Court Woosehill Wokingham at 2.30pm
	DEC	12	Wed	Christchurch Court, Reading 2.30 sing
	DEC	19	Wed	Weirside Court, Orts Rd, Reading

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

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NEXT COPY DEADLINE:

13TH MARCH FOR 20TH DISTRIBUTION



CHAIRMAN'S SPOT

Last month I wrote about the quality of our communications. We, the Executive Committee, then upset people by our account of our last meeting. Let me make it clear that there will be an away weekend last year, and it will in all probability be "away". We are well aware of the value and importance of this event in the life of the club (we're not daft, you know). The exec. had discussed the level of attendance at the away weekend and Convention, which we felt was a bit disappointing this year, and looked for ways to make it easier or more attractive for people to join in the fun. Bringing the venue closer to home was just one option put forward for consideration. Barry was set

to work producing a questionnaire so that we could canvass members' views. If you haven't handed yours in yet, please do so soon – your opinion is important to us. When we've analysed the results of the poll, we'll let you know what we propose. I'm sorry for any distress caused – I read the draft report and failed to notice the problem.

Friday, 9th February, was an interesting day for me. In the morning, Lawrence McNulty and I met at the West London Flying Club, White Waltham, to present a cheque to the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust. We had a welcome cup of coffee in the clubhouse, chatting with Mrs. Stevie Horton, the Head of Fundraising, and paramedics Neil Plant and Mark Chambers, and were introduced to the High Sheriffs of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Eventually, we trudged out across the snow so that Lawrence could take some publicity shots of me handing over the cheque by the helicopter. Whilst the Trust is still based at White Waltham, the helicopter is no longer stationed there, but has been moved to RAF Benson. This has halved their fuel costs from £150 to £75 per hour. I did some rapid mental arithmetic and realised that our cheque would keep the machine in the air for a full eight hours, which I think is a great achievement. Our efforts may well have saved somebody's life.

From the airfield I drove to Mike and Gabi McKeown's house, where our skiing buddy and resonant bass, Guy Stephenson, joined us. After a delicious lunch and a gentle warm-up, we made for All Saints' Church, Swallowfield to take part in the funeral of Mrs. Kate Ruel. Kate was a friend and neighbour of Mike and Gabi, and from the tributes read out at the service, it was clear that she was loved and respected by all who knew her. We stood as a quartet to sing "Steal Away to Jesus", and Gabi sang Kate's favourite hymn, "My Life Flows On". Later, during tea and refreshments at Riseley Memorial Hall, we sang, "Lean on Me". It was a privilege to be invited to take part in this celebration of Kate's life and work, and it seemed that our contribution was appreciated by all.

These events caused me to ponder on the power of music, and the many and varied, sometimes unexpected, ways it can touch people. The Daytimers, of course, have this rewarding experience whenever they perform in a hospital or nursing home - lucky men! We have every reason to be proud of what we do. Can there be a better hobby than this?

In Harmony
JOHN PRICE

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

EDITORIAL

I've had plenty of contributions this month. Thank you - just keep 'em coming. There was more than enough copy to fill twelve pages but not quite enough for sixteen so I've been back to an earlier issue to find an interesting article for another PEEK IN THE PAST. It is an informative personalised treatise on reading music written by Peter Tinker. If my memory serves me correctly Peter came to us with John Wiggins from the Chesham area and then moved on further west to Bristol. All this happened at the time that I was joining the Club in 1976 to become a Berkshire Barbershopper. I distinctly remember Peter being the donor of that Sheng Pitch Pipe that's awarded annually to the highest placed novice quartet in the BABS Quartet Final.

I'm indebted to the Communications Department of the Royal Berkshire Hospital for providing the photograph of the Daytimers when they visited Ron Collis on the 9th February and sang to the Chairman, staff and passers-by.

I'm preparing a BRIEFING NOTE for the AWAY WEEKEND. I'm waiting for the timetable from the Performance Team. The Note will be available as soon as possible and on Tuesday 27th at the latest. Anyone not at rehearsal on that night will receive a copy courtesy of the Royal Mail. We'll have a BABS Singing category judge MARK GRINDALL with us on the Saturday. He'll be sharing with us his ideas on how we can improve our performance to that Performance Team goal of an average score of 75%.

There's been a flurry of activity on the new song teaching materials front. That elusive FIELDS OF GOLD is now with our members along with HAVE A LITTLE TALK WITH MYSELF. A TREE IN THE MEADOW was issued at the same time as last month's Tag Rag.

It has now been decided that the men of the Learn to Sing course will be invited to perform DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING? and I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT with us on the Twinning Show in June. We are now waiting for the scores for this last song to arrive from the Barbershop Harmony Society in Kenosha. WITH A SONG IN MY HEART which was an eight part mixed voice arrangement is back in the cool store.

The Club executive have decided to withdraw their decision announced last month not to have a hotel based Away Weekend next year. Instead they are conducting a survey of members to assess ideas on suitable alternatives. I would encourage all members

to fill in and return those questionnaire forms quickly so that the ideas can be evaluated soon.

Aidan has kindly written an article about his feelings of this part of the Barbershop year. I share similar views and thoroughly enjoy watching and participating in the build up to the Convention. We are so used to reaping a creditable result in contest that as he points out we are in danger of becoming too complacent thinking that it will all happen by itself. It won't - we need everyone to put in their half pen'orth. I believe we succeed in Reading because we all make a significant contribution to creating and keeping our Barbershopping environment alive. Let's make sure we don't loose our hold on that. I'm reminded of those wise words spoken by Harold Hill to Marian Paroo in Meridith D Willson's Music Man (paraphrased)."Pile up enough tomorrows and you'll find you've collected nothing but a lot of empty yesterdays. Make today worth remembering."

To help focus our minds on the task in-hand. I have reprinted three pieces of text from the BABS Guild of Judges web site providing an insight into what constitutes a 'B' level score in a contest. I'm sure you'll find this enlightening. Our job is to get out of the early seventy's into the mid seventy's. I know it doesn't sound very much and it won't be if we all concentrate on the task. Even then we won't be in the 'A' level scores but an upward movement in Scarborough might whet out appetites for even greater heights.

GRAHAM STARKIE

Editor



BARBERSHOP BABES

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO
FEBRUARY'S QUINTET**

**JULIAN CHARMAN
DAVE ELSON
RICHARD KIRSOP
ANDREW RZYSKO
PHILLIP WARD**

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

A SUPER TIME

Well it is a year from the Learn to Sing when I took the first steps into singing Barbershop harmony. I have thoroughly enjoyed this time and would like to thank you all for the support given. It has been much appreciated and I hope to carry on for many years to come. Thank you.

STEVE JESSOP

THANK YOU

Very many thanks to Graham Starkie who kindly gave up his evening to explain to Derek Hird and myself the intrinsical workings of our mp3 players, it appears that we were being far too heavy-handed! Graham also amazed us by pressing a few buttons on his laptop thus enabling us to picture the cloud cover over Bangkok etc. I watched open-mouthed. I feel sure his machine would mow the lawn if Graham instructed it to do so!

Many thanks Graham and Irene for your hospitality.

DON JEFFERY

A SPECIAL TIME

So, my favourite barbershop time of the year is upon us. For me it is a special time to be savoured; the lead-up to Convention.

I know there are those among you who feel Convention is over-rated and who prefer not to attend, but, for me, it is the best time. It is rather like Christmas, the preparation, the hope, the fear, the trepidation and the anticipation. These are a major part of the fun so that the weekend is merely a culmination of the build-up that begins in the new year and, for me, helps overcome the doldrums of January and cures my post-Christmas blues.

I used to be in a choral group that competed at the International Eisteddfod at Llangollen at the beginning of July every year. I loved being a part of this group and Convention always reminds me of the good times I had with them for the very reasons I mention.

I think some of you have no idea how much other clubs wish to knock us off our spot. Did you witness the obvious and overt pleasure Spirit of Harmony from Calder Valley took beating us last year? They are not alone in their desire to beat us. Are you really willing to allow this to happen?

I know you are a proud lot, and quite rightly so (although you pretend not to care), as we have achieved a hell of a lot over the years, however we are in danger of resting on our laurels and, in so doing, losing them.

I am sure you would rather this didn't happen, but, unfortunately, to just maintain our position we need to work hard. To improve our status we need to work harder still.

Being the best we can be is all well and good, and I mean that, but to be better than our peers and improve on previous competition performances is so much better. Unfortunately, when you nail your colours to the mast and then fail to achieve, the fall is painful, but I am willing to take the risk. Are you? I believe in our ability but we will only achieve if we all pull our weight.

Yes, we are a bunch of mediocre guys who, together, as a team, do such wonderful things that make me so proud that I just don't want the party to end; it's the child in me.

Think about it.

Nothing is for free. It is hard work, sometimes it is boring, but the rewards and the camaraderie more than make up for it, and the stories you can tell to your.....great, great grandchildren.

See you at the Away Weekend and Convention, I'll be the one at the bar waiting to buy you a drink.....sorry, got that wrong, waiting for you to buy me a drink.....no? Well let's buy each other a drink and talk of past and present glories and future aspirations.

AIDAN BRAND

SCORING BABS CONTESTS

Have you ever thought about how a judge, sitting at that table in the contest hall, assesses our level of performance and assigns a numeric value to it? Is it whim, fancy or maybe - black magic? Not so!

The members of BABS Guild of Judges take an enormous amount of time and trouble on our behalf (voluntarily), to be very objective in their assessments. What is more it's not behind closed-doors. You'll be surprised at the amount of information they share with us. Just take a look on the Guild web site. at

<www.babs-education.info/judges>.

The following extracts should enlighten you as to what a B-level performance' is. This is the level that

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TVC regularly performs. We have consistently achieved around a 70% average score in the three scoring categories. Our Performance Team's stated goal in the Back-To-Basics document is to improve that to 75% in the two years from September 2006.

Now 75% will need some doing because we haven't achieved any more than 73% in recent years. Hopefully after reading the following paragraphs extracted from the Music, Singing and Presentation category descriptions you'll appreciate where we are in the grand order of things. You'll be better prepared to become involved with the development of our abilities to raise the 'bar' under the leadership of Rhiannon and the Performance Team.

As you will see there is still considerable room in the B level band for us to move into. When you've time, take a look at the complete Category Descriptions on the Guild web site. That hopefully will whet your appetite for more.

GRAHAM STARKIE

MUSIC B-level scores (61 to 80) are for performances that frequently demonstrate a good mastery of the musical elements. The music is generally well-suited to the performers. The theme of the song is well-communicated, but there may be moments where technique becomes apparent.

In a performance in the mid-range of B (around 70 points), the harmony is generally consonant, with chords clearly distinguishable, and the embellishments tastefully support the song. The performance generally reflects understanding of, and sensitivity to, the music, with high musicality in its best moments. The musical elements are generally executed accurately.

The upper range of B scores is for performances that have only minor distractions. Part of the performance may be at the A level, but the performers do not achieve the high level of consistency required for an A score.

In the lower range of B performances, the performance is still good, but there may be several distractions and occasional examples of C-level performance. Part of the performance may also be of A-level quality.

The difference between B and C levels is often a matter of consistency.

SINGING B-level scores (61 to 80) are for performances that frequently show skills of artistic barbershop singing, mixed with more distractions or lack of artistic unity.

A typical performance in the mid-range of B (around 70 points) is only occasionally out of tune, frequently exhibits good vocal quality, is often a unit, has infrequent interruptions in expansion of sound and has some artistry.

The upper range of B scores is for performances that do not have any substantial breakdown in artistry, but minor distractions occur. Some part of the performance may be at the A level, but other parts show lack of skill or a breakdown in the overall artistry.

In the lower range of B performances, skill errors may provide significant distractions in some phrases, but most of the performance is still good. The performance may have a short duration of A-level quality. Intonation and vocal quality are better than satisfactory. Expansion of sound is inconsistent.

The difference between B and C levels is often a matter of consistency of skill and blending into an artistic unit.

PRESENTATION B-level scores (61 to 80) are indicative of performances that deliver frequently appropriate and believable emotional or entertainment content. Such presentations are frequently of high quality; they will usually exhibit good musicianship, rapport with the audience, and good performance skills. You would expect performances of this level or higher to be presented by a featured performer on a typical barbershop annual show.

In the mid-range, the judge may find that all achieved effects are appropriate and properly presented. These performances are quite enjoyable.

The upper range of B scores indicates increasing levels of excellence in the presentation. Such performances keep the audience almost totally involved, moved emotionally, or entertained, as appropriate. Some instances of A-quality performance are common. At the lower range of B scoring, nominal consistency is demonstrated but frequent distractions may occur. The result is usually a competent but undistinguished presentation.

The score, as in the other ranges, measures total net quality; the vocal and visual components may or may not be at the same level as the net effect.

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

SELECTED WEEKLY NOTICES

TWINNING SHOW (Jan 23)

Peter Cookson needs volunteers for hosting. Please read his article on page 6 of January's Tag Rag. The important paragraph is reproduced below for convenience.

If you are able to provide accommodation for our guests please will you let me know what you can provide by completing the list on the board at the Piggott school. Please could you also identify if you or your spouse/partner can speak German. NOTE - There is a separate list to sign up for those performing in the show on the Saturday evening}.

NEW TEACHING TRACKS (6 Feb)

The mp3 files are available for HAVE A LITTLE TALK WITH MYSELF and the elusive FIELDS OF GOLD. Make sure you pick up copies of the music scores and load the mp3 files onto your player.

TWINNING EVENT UPDATE (6 Feb)

Peter Cookson says "I'm delighted to report that John Ward's group "Vox Concordia" will be on stage with us in the Twinning Show in June. We are also inviting back the Learn to Sing students to take part in the show. Because of restrictions on numbers on the Town Hall stage we have limited the invitation to LTS students to male participants only. We will be singing two songs with them (and Düssharmonie) "DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING" and "I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT" which will be issued to the chorus in about two week's time.

Düssharmonie, the visiting men's chorus, has confirmed there will be 16 singers and 8 partners coming. Please can I encourage you to complete the form on the notice board indicating if you are able to act as a host to our guests.

RON COLLIS (13 Feb)

Sixteen members turned out to visit Ron last Wednesday at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Unfortunately he was reckoned to be not well enough to see us all so a group of six went to sing at the end of his ward. He looked as well as we've seen him recently and we reckon that the ward sister wasn't too happy with our presence. Not wanting to miss out of an opportunity to promote our cause Heather scaled the hospital's management hierarchy to get permission for us to sing a few songs in their reception area. This permission was granted by non-other than the chairman of the Hospital trust a Colin Montgomery McLean. He was in great praise of the

'noise' we made, a word that we couldn't dissuade him from using however many times we tried to correct it. We hoped that it was meant in the kindest sense. We sang Barbershop Song, Zing and Sound Celebration to an appreciative audience. Many photos were taken and we should appear in their house magazine in the not too distant future. Let's hope that it puts Ron higher up the list of priorities to get him back with us!

DAYTIMERS (13 Feb)

Twelve intrepid members visited the Lynwood Nursing Home Sunninghill near Ascot last Thursday. We sang to a very appreciative audience. Our programme of songs directed by Alex Russell was spiced up by a performance of SUNSET POEM by a pick-up quartet made up of Alex Russell (T), Barry Howard (L) Mike McKeown (Bt) and George Colquhoun (Bs).

MAKING MUSIC (9 Feb)

As you will know BABS has joined Making Music and therefore we are members of that same organisation.

A couple of weeks ago Anne Harrison sat in on our rehearsal, she is the chairperson of the Western side of the Southeast Region of Making Music.

Needless to say there are some web sites that you can access for more information. The Making Music site is:

<www.makingmusic.org.uk/MM/home.aspx>

and the Southeast Region site is:

<www.makingmusic-southeast.org.uk/>

If any one has any queries Andy Pearce will try to answer them in the first place.

NEW APPOINTMENT (9 Feb)

Thameside Ladies Barbershop Chorus has a new Director Phillip (TWOLLS) Ward has been appointed to this post. He is excited at the prospect of leading this chorus forward. They have just twenty-five members, and were in need of an injection of enthusiasm that they have now got. With Convention at the end of October there is work in plenty to do. This is a very friendly club, so if you happen to be in the Area - Hampton, Middlesex on a Wednesday night around 20.00 please feel free to drop in, Phillip will give exact location details.

Phillip adds that his commitment to TVC will NOT diminish as a result of this.

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FIELDS OF GOLD - THE SONG

This is about feeling joyous, but knowing that the joy is going to end someday. Sting wrote this after he bought a house near a barley field. The sunsets and the colors of the field were an inspiration for the lyrics, along with his love at the time. (thanks, Charlotte - Coventry, England). The major theme in this is commitment. It is about a man who has broken promises before, but is determined make this relationship last.

The story is chronological. It is about courtship, marriage, and eventual death. The two people in the song meet, court, fall in love (at this point, he reveals that he has never really made such a strong promise/commitment to someone) but feels he is ready to now. "See the children run," their offspring and the "jealous sky" refer to the Heavens. Even Heaven is jealous of their love/relationship. The esteemed sun is jealous. Eventually, he dies and tells his love that they will always remember their love specifically, when she thinks of him, he wants to be personified as such... walking in fields of gold (barley). (thanks, Hatch - Cincinnati, Ohio)

Sting started writing this on the guitar. He thinks his simple songs are often his best, and uses this as an example. Sting's wife, Trudie Styler, considers this one of her favorites.

FROM <WWW.SONGFACTS.COM>

GLOBAL WARMING

I know we are constantly reminded about Global Warming, but I am confused.

At a sing out in the middle of summer with 90 degrees, I was firmly rebuked for wearing a short sleeved shirt. Yet here we are in the freezing cold winter, and we are told to wear Polo Shirts! Surely we have enough money in the kitty to purchase Sweatshirts or Jumpers that we can wear at winter functions. Talking of outfits if we are to get new dress outfits for Convention we had better get a move on.

We at Daytimers have had a couple of outings this Month. At the Reading venue the parking was very bad, we drove round & round before finding a space. It would have been easier to park in Woodley and catch a bus. Inside a nice building the residents were seated and waiting, their Zimmer Frames were lined up, in the hall for what looked like a Le Mans start. After we had sung a lovely old lady thanked us and said how nice it was to see so many men with flat tummies' and plenty of hair. I suggested that she should go to Specsavers!! On talking to her I

found out that she was only 97, but she was not the oldest resident as one lady was 101.

This week we travelled in the snow to Sunninghill. I went with Squire Don in his 4X4, so we were prepared for all weathers. When we started singing I heard a strange noise to my right I quickly remembered that Dennis wasn't with us. Glancing at our audience we see some nice old boy singing away to his hearts content. Unfortunately he was singing something completely different, but he was enjoying himself. It was a pity that he could not sing Tenor or Bari as we were short on both.

SYD THE BEARD

Syd Boyd

LUCKY BREAK?

You may have missed this on the radio.

A man was driving to an important meeting and after arriving in the town, drove endlessly in search of a parking place. Finally at the end of his tether he cried "dear God find me a parking space and I will go to church every Sunday for the rest of my life, and I will also give up smoking and drinking"

At that moment a parking space miraculously appears, and the man calls to God and says "never mind I've found one"!

THE JOYS OF TRAVEL (1)

Graham reminds us of scams regularly. It is as well to be mindful of the hazards involved in travel.

The Times mentioned recently that on the metro in Belgium, a correspondent bent down to help pick up a shower of coins that had been dropped. Later, she realised that a small travel bag was missing. She was informed that gangs of youths frequently used this diversionary technique.

If reminded me of an incident three years ago on the metro in the centre of Paris, at Place D'Etoile station. I was with Jan and her sister and brother-in-law, Charles, from Texas. Charles could have played the John Wayne parts in films. Very tall and well built. In London we had persuaded him to remove his billfold from the back pocket of his jeans to his side pocket for safety. Shortly after we entered the train and while the doors were still open, a young man dropped his glasses in front of Charles who bent down to help retrieve them. His billfold was exposed in his jeans pocket and, quick as a flash, it had been taken by an accomplice who immediately leapt off the train with Jan in hot pursuit, shouting loudly. Someone pulled the communication cord so

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the train stayed stopped with the doors open both sides. Charles grabbed the first chap so I joined him to help. Jan was able to return shortly with the billfold which had been handed back to her. The euros had been taken but the credit cards and US dollars in a zipped compartment were still intact. Earlier, Charles realising that the man he had grasped did not have his cash let him go. This left me holding on to the guy on my own with no plan! And a head butt later I had to let him go too. At that time the cameras at the station showed pictures on screens in the control room but nothing was recorded!

We have seen since on other occasions on the Paris metro groups that were almost certainly trying similar diversion tactics. Be careful and enjoy your travel.

BOB RIDLEY

TWOLLS AND HIS THAMESIDE LADIES

Taking on this chorus of twenty-five ladies has been an exciting experience What knowledge I have learnt at Directors College has considerably helped me. I hope that what I am currently doing with Sound, Words, Vowels (Tall Variety) and Smooth Singing will pay its dividends down the road.

We are entering the Croydon Music Festival in April, the Bournemouth Music festival in June and of course LABBS Convention in October this year

The Ladies are very keen and I have been overwhelmed by their attention to what I am trying to achieve with them. It's early days for us both, but they suffered some very bad knocks at their last Convention. Coming last did not go down well

I have to pick them up and restore their confidence. They are a great bunch who really enjoy Club Nights. It is quite a journey especially after a working day, but when I see them that is forgotten

My hope is that if any of you are in the area of Hampton in Middlesex on a Wednesday Night you will come in and see for yourselves. I assure you a very warm welcome. Yours for a Song

TWOLLS

Phillip Ward



ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP NEWS

By BOB RIDLEY Acting Assistant to the Associate Member Coordinator

May I remind readers of my piece in January TAG RAG, that shortly before Ron Collis was taken ill I had agreed to act as an Acting Assistant for him in his capacity as the Associate Member Coordinator. I expected this to involve minor tasks but instead I have been on a fast learning curve to act for him overall, albeit temporarily. I visited Ron on 14 February and I was able to run through with him what I was saying here on his behalf. He sends his best wishes to you all.

I asked Associate Members to let me have their email addresses and the first to respond was Jane Wilkinson. Jane has been an AM for more than 10 years and as you see below she has decided not to renew this year. Thanks Jane for your support over the years and we will all look out for you in Scarborough.

It was great to get Pip Griffith's renewal with the letter below. We will look out for you too in Scarborough, Pip.

Readers of January 07 TAGRAG will have seen that Bruce Beer pointed out that he can now read TAGRAG on our website www.rbhc.org.uk so he has requested that we do not post them to him. (The Chairman's photograph is much better on the website!) The site even includes an archive. We will, of course, continue to send TAGRAG to everyone else unless I have a similar request.

It would be helpful to have the email addresses of other Associate Members who have them. My email address is bob.ridley@btinternet.com. Thanks.

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS' LETTERS AND EMAILS

Jane Wilkinson (and Steve Dann)

'I was so sorry to hear of Ron's condition and wish him a speedy recovery.

After many years as an Associate Member of the club I am emailing to say that I will not be renewing my subscription this year. Thank you for all the happy memories I have of listening to you rehearse and perform.

I am no longer a member of Phoenix but as a member of the LABBS Convention Team I am thrilled to be helping out on reception at your Convention in May so hope to say hello to some of you then.

With very best wishes to all in RBHC.'

Pip (Phil and Maureen Griffiths)

'Dear Ron, I can't tell you how sorry we were to read of your current problems and really hope that the reported improvements continue to a complete recovery of your joyful self.

... I have much pleasure in enclosing a cheque... The pleasure comes from the fact that it keeps us in touch - which is always a good thing innit.'



HISTORICAL NOTES

5 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 2002

4th Daytimers at Magnolia Court, Bracknell

9/10th Chorus away week-end, Dudley Hotel, Brighton. Nick Frampton coached the chorus on the emotional plans for the contest songs.

16th Les Hearn cut the ribbon, as everything went as planned, at the opening of the 'Man O Man' barbers shop in Winnersh. The aptly named barbershop quartet 'Completely Uncalled Four' (Mervyn Clark, Brian Callaghan, Roger Wilkinson, Jim Downing) provided a much appreciated vocal

entertainment.

Current repertoire:

Lover Come Back To Me
You keep Coming Back Like A Song
Catch A Falling Star
Zing Went The Strings Of My Heart
Delta Dawn
At The Hop/Tears On My Pillow
Hello Mary Lou
Ghost Riders In The Sky
How I Wish
Under The Broadwalk
Fit As A Fiddle
Broadway/Good Morning Medley
Make 'em Laugh
Singin' In The Rain
You Are My Lucky Star
You were Meant For Me
Irish Blessing
Buddy Can You Spare A Dime
Moonlight Serenade
A Bundle Of Old Love Letters
My Baby Cares For Me
Dream A Little Dream Of Me
Softly As I Leave You
Smoke Gets In Your Eyes
Abide With Me
The Lord's Prayer

10 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 1997

1st Side By Side (Roger Wilkinson, Ken Smyth, Chris Oliver, Rod Adams) were at the Beehive, White Waltham.

14th Adrian Cox, Simon Adams, Mervyn Clark and Chris Oliver performed 'Singing Valentines' at Tilehurst, Reading and Basingstoke.

During the month Flying High (Pat Deeble, Graham Frampton, Jim Dowling, Ed Dolan) demonstrated Barbershop singing to the Berkshire Youth Choir.

Dog Aires (Frank Paice, Cyril Duckworth, Richard Kirsop, Don Jeffrey) appeared at the annual Briarfield Kennels social evening.

15 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 1992

6th Derek Smith, Roger Wilkinson, John Lane & Brian Callaghan were on Radio Berkshire, as a quartet, publicizing the RBHC Hexagon show in March.

17th Full Chorus at Coronation Hall, Woodley for the Woodley Ladies Club.

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22nd Full Chorus at the Village Hall, Hurst for the Hurst Village Society

20 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 1987

17th Charrington/Old Spice Quartet competition at Tylers Rest, Tilehurst. We had three quartets entered: Rogues Gallery (Dick Coles, Nick Carter, Ian Douglas, Dave Heighway), Southern Comfort (John Carter, Alan Hill, Gerry Holland, Colin Thatcher), Kennet Valley Chord Company (John Harvey, Pete Powell, Bruce Beer, Peter Wickham)

Rogues Gallery and Southern Comfort won through to the next round. Southern Comfort was eliminated in the semi-finals. Rogues Gallery was placed fourth in the finals. The competition was won by Delta Kings.

22nd Rogues Gallery appeared on Harry Secombe's Sunday TV program 'Highway' singing on the banks of the Thames.

25 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 1982

6th "Brighten Your Life With Some Music" at the Hexagon, Reading. Our joint show with the Barberettes featuring:

Thames Valley Chorus
Reading Barberettes
Spectrum (Jenny Lovegrove, Sheila Childs, Beryl Still, Pam Teasdale)
Harmony Heritage (Pete Forrest, Nick Carter, Ron Collis, Pete Bugden)
Partners In Time (Dick Coles, Pete Powell, Ian Douglas, Dave Heighway)
Ron Beale (one man band) who interrupted the show all evening long.
The Farnborough Majorettes (marching band) M/C.....Ernest Johns

The show had something new for that time in that apart from the usual spots for the performers it had a couple of medley spots. In these, both choruses and all the quartets were on stage singing a non-stop medley of songs linked together by Pete Powell and Graham Lawrence.

Regards

HAYDN ADAMS

ANY OFFERS?

I am looking to dispose of approx 250 vinyl LPs, perhaps some of the club members might be interested in some of them. About a third of them are big band jazz, the artists include, Stan Kenton, Billy May (8 off), The HI LOs (5 off), Singers Unlimited (6 off), Count Basie (10 off), Shorty Rogers, and various West Coast Jazz musicians, also there are 16 - Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee,

ALAN HILL



SUPPORTERS

Graham and I went to see Ron recently and it was lovely to meet Stella and their daughter there also. Ron knew who we were and when I started to talk about the daffodils beginning to open in the garden he remembered the bank at the bottom of the garden. I am so pleased that his memory is returning and hope he continues to make good progress. It was a shame that only six of the contingent of Daytimers who visited last week were allowed to sing to him but I am sure he was pleased to hear them.

Only a couple of weeks before the Away Weekend, and I am looking forward to meeting up with those partners who take advantage of a weekend away to explore and shop while the men are otherwise occupied! Hopefully the weather will be kind to us.

Luv 'n' hugs as always,

IRENE

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

John Ward
34 Wentworth Crescent
Hayes
UB3 1NN
Tel 0208 230 0837

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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, Peter Cookson, Barry Howard, Andy Pearce, John Price, Bob Ridley, Denis Swift 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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TAG RAG is published by the Reading Barbershop Harmony Club for the benefit of Members, Associates and anyone else who is fortunate or otherwise to come into contact with us. The opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily the official Club view.

Advertisement lineage will be accepted and printed free of charge in TAG RAG (subject to editorial discretion). Display advertising is available in exchange for a donation to club funds as agreed between the sponsor and the editor before the publication date. Please note that advertisements will be carried for two months only and then will be dropped (at the editor's discretion) unless requested otherwise.

Objectives of the RBHC - To encourage the singing and enjoyment of Barbershop Harmony in both Chorus and Quartet form. It is a non profit making organisation and shall support such worthy

charitable causes as the Executive Committee think fit. (paraphrase of Club rule number 2)

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

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RBHC's

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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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PEEK IN THE PAST

From TAG RAG Number 5 March 1976

BUT I...ER...CAN'T READ MUSIC

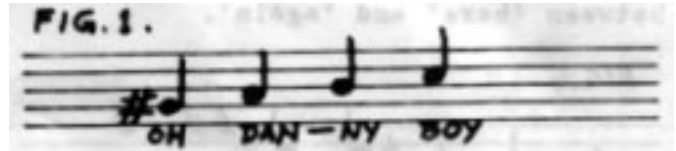
Have you ever tried to learn a language from one of those 'Do-It-Yourself' books? I tried once - Spanish I think it was - and it was a bit of a dismal failure. At the end of six month's swot, I had learned a few words and phrases and could translate such essential sentences as 'You will have to dress quickly in order not to miss the train' and 'Do not speak so fast I cannot understand you.' I am willing to bet, though, that no Spaniard would have understood me no matter how I had spoken anyway, as I'd never spoken the language to anyone. Although I had tried to follow the chapter on pronunciation, I don't suppose I could have successfully ordered myself a glass of plonk at the local bodega. That comes from not knowing how to change written words into the correct sounds. Now, with one of those gramophone record courses at least I could have heard the sounds and learned to imitate them.

It is the same with singing. Trying to learn a new song straight off the 'dots' is far more difficult for most of us than picking up a song that you hear on the radio - hence the popularity of teach tapes. The problem, then, is how to translate written symbols into sounds.

As far as music is concerned, the first thing is, of course, to learn the symbols and now that the excellent SPEBSQSA Craft Manual is available that should not present any difficulty. Even then, it is all very well knowing a B flat from a C sharp in print but what is the difference in sound?

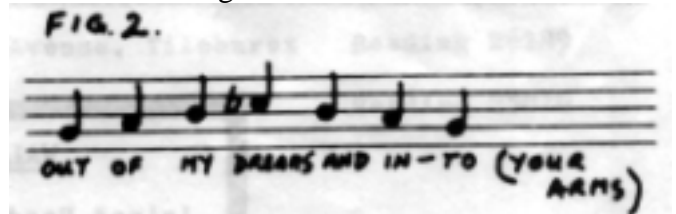
Well, how do you know what these pitch changes sound like? The chances are that you already know. Here's a nightmare example. Imagine that you have just been singled out by the Director for singing flat. 'Don't you know what a semi-tone is?' he bellows. 'Oo-er, yea' you reply meekly. 'Go on, then he snarls 'sing me two notes a semi-tone apart.' At that point you wake up in a cold sweat. Now, if he had asked you to sing the first two notes of 'Danny Boy' no doubt they would have rung out loud and clear and

you would have had your semi-tone without any trouble



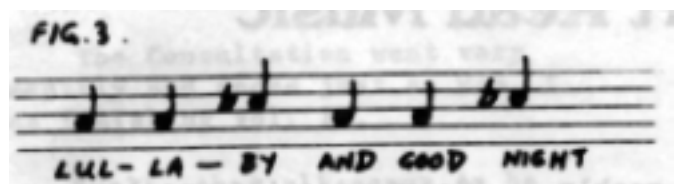
In Fig. 1, you can see the opening notes of 'Danny Boy' and you can see that the first two notes are a semitone apart on the words 'Oh Dan -'. No clef or key signature is shown as it's not the absolute pitch that matters here, just the relative change of pitch between one note and the next.

So there is a semi-tone but what does a full tone sound like? '-ny' and 'Boy' in Fig.1 are a tone apart or you could just sing 'Do-Ray-Me' or, like Julie Andrews, put in words and sing a song from 'Oklahoma' in Fig.2.

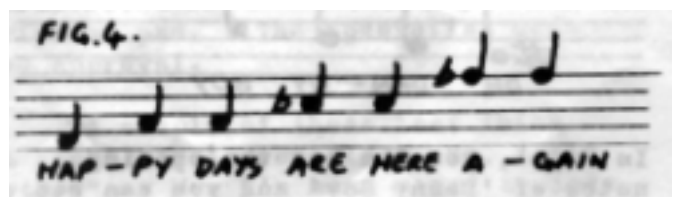


There are the full tones between 'Out' and 'of' and 'my', a semi-tone between 'my' and 'dreams' and then back again. If you really want to you can sing 'Do-Ray-Me-Fa-Me-Ray-Do' to the same notes.

Now, what about a tone and a half? That is easy - just listen to the next police car going by with its donkey horn going. Or you could be classical and sing the opening bar of Brahms Lullaby. In Fig.3 you can see the change in pitch of one and a half tones between '-la' and '-by' and between 'good' and 'night'.



Two full tones? Sing 'Happy Days Are Here Again'. In Fig.4 you can see the two tones between 'Hap-' and '-py days', then one and a half between 'days' and 'are here' (check it against Fig.3) and two and a half between 'here' and 'again'.



For two and a half tones, try the first two notes of 'There's a Long Long Trail A winding' - and check it mentally against 'here and 'again' in Fig.4. And so

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on. The object of these few examples of a musical mnemonic is just to demonstrate that all the pitch changes or intervals are really very familiar - it is just (?) a matter of recognising them when we see them and then practise and, if there is time, more practise.

The proven way of relating printed music to sound is, of course, tonic solfa or solmization. This is also covered in the Craft Manual and it is well worth studying it, as it says, we wish to elevate ourselves above the level of parrots! However, as we are

dealing with sounds which we recognise with our ears perhaps (like me leaning Spaniah) a Lingaphone type course would be ideal. Is there such a thing? Perhaps one day B.A.B.S. will make a teach tape! (hint-hint). What was that you said? Can I read music? Well...er... at the moment I'm still at the KER...AH...TER spells PUSSY stage' But next week, NEXT WEEK, I'm going to start on those four letter words!

PETER TINKER

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SITUATIONS VACANT CONVENTION ORGANISER

Andy Pearce is standing down as convention organiser as of the 2007 Convention. The Club needs to have a volunteer to organise our participation in the 2008 Convention, as well booking a hotel. As yet BABS are not disclosing the location of that event, but we need someone in place when it is announced. Andy is prepared to give advice and guidance to that person, but we need to have someone to step up to the mark and get involved. Interested? - Please talk to Andy to find out what is required to do the job.

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THE REMAINING DAYS OF

FEBRUARY 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
18	19	20 Rehearsal TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Rehearsal	28	February 2007		

March 2007 Calendar is on page 2

A LOOK AHEAD TO

APRIL 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 Rehearsal	4	5	6 Good Friday	7
8 Easter Sunday	9 Public Holiday	10 Rehearsal TAG RAG COPY DEADLINE	11	12 Daytimers Maidenhead Alzheimers Club	13	14
15	16	17 Rehearsal TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Rehearsal	25	26	27	28
29	30	April 2007				