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TAG RAG AND NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2007

WISLEY
GLASSHOUSE
21st August 2007



There can be few outdoor performance spaces as good as the newly built Glasshouse at Wisley. We had the privilege of singing on the first night of the National Garden Scheme Music in the Gardens in this (un)natural chorus shell. I'm sure that this is what it must be like singing in the Hollywood Bowl? Let's hope we get invited back.

I would love to have shown a picture of the chorus on the risers but none have come my way. The picture shows the Tag Rag editorial team on a reconnaissance visit. Photo by Mary Rutterford.

READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

A LOOK AHEAD TO

OCTOBER 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
October 2007	1	2 Rehearsal MiH wk 4 of 6 Mark Grindall to visit	3	4	5	6 Singout Reading University Great Hall
7	8	9 Rehearsal MiH wk 5 of 6 TAG RAG COPY 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 BABS Chairman to visit?	31	October 2007		

**Calendars showing the remaining days of September 2007 and the month of November 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	SEPT	18	Tue	MiH	Week 2 of 6
	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		Poland
	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 ***Caancelled***
	DEC	12	Wed	Daytimers	Christchurch Court, Reading 2.30 sing
	DEC	19	Wed	Daytimers	Weirside Court, Orts Rd, Reading
2008	FEB	Feb 29 -Mar 2	Fri-Sun	Full chorus	Away Weekend Marsham Court Hotel Bournemouth
	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:

9TH OCTOBER FOR 16TH DISTRIBUTION



CHAIRMAN'S SPOT

As some of you may know, Rhiannon finally moved into her new house near Wrexham on Friday. Welcome to your new home, Rhi and Whitney! I hope you are soon settled in and I'm sure the whole chorus join me in wishing you many happy years there.

I was privileged to spend a weekend with Rhiannon a few weeks ago. Rhi was attending the Association of British Choral Directors' Convention, and on Saturday evening we heard their Gala Concert in Chester Cathedral. The performers were wide-ranging in age and style – Manchester Boys Choir, Joyful Company of Singers, North West Honour Choir, Magnificat Children's Choir, and Laudibus, with a massed choir finale that raised the roof with

“Hope for Resolution (a Song for Mandela and de Klerk)”, arranged by Paul Caldwell and Sean Ivory. It was an uplifting experience.

The earlier performers sang songs in Spanish, Finnish, German, Russian, Latvian and Hungarian, and during the interval I wondered aloud whether people in those countries would have understood the words so carefully learned phonetically. This was soon to be tested. The Magnificat Children's Choir hails from Hungary, and they produce a wonderful, richly resonant, unit sound. Their fourth song was “The Snow” by Sir Edward Elgar. Having read the programme, I was prepared and listened intently, but it was difficult to make out the lyrics. Without this preparation, Rhiannon was completely unaware that they were singing in English! This brings into question the importance of the words in what we sing. Clearly, to these classical choirs, they are secondary to the music. But in our genre, words are central to our mission to bring out the mood and full emotional message of the song – the audience must be able to hear and understand them. Food for thought.

On the Sunday we went to one of the open-air concerts of Bryn Terfel's Faenol festival near Bangor. It was an idyllic evening. Michael Ball, Ruthie Henshall, Connie Fisher and John Owen-Jones entertained a field full of people with songs from various musicals. As is sadly common with such events, the music was accompanied by a rustling of crisp packets and the low murmur of conversation. One wretched woman behind us even sang along to the most well-known songs, as if we had purchased tickets to come and hear her! But the whole field fell completely silent as John Owen-Jones sang his song from the Phantom of the Opera. The sheer passion that he put into every piece he performed was awe-inspiring. If you get a chance to see him – I understand he's off to New York soon to play his acclaimed role as Jean Valjean in Les Miserables over there – I thoroughly recommend that you do so.

And touching on audience behaviour, am I the only one who hates the current habit of applauding before the song has finished? As we in barbershop are well aware, the tag is the best bit. It is the height of bad manners, both to the artist and to fellow audience members, to start clapping before the last note has died away. It even happens at Convention! Perhaps MCs should open a concert by reminding the audience of this simple courtesy?

JOHN PRICE

Chairman

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EDITORIAL

A bumper crop - That's the only way I can describe this month's post bag! Our foreign correspondents are dominating the pages. Thank you Haydn and Bruce I like it when natural forces coincide like this - a spring tide of copy! Thank you to Haydn for giving us his perspective on the Morrision debacle. That situation has some parallels with ours of 2000. Well done Haydn. Edifying Selected Weekly Notices are thin on the ground this month. I know that we missed a week by going to Wisley - which must mean our business has just been routine.

EGM & AGM - Progress is slow in receiving nominations for the vacant Executive posts. Please examine your schedules to see if you can spare the time needed to fill one of these roles. Maybe you have some time but not enough to make a full commitment - then tell John or Andy and I'm sure they'll find a way of working round your availability. The Club takes a serious knock when these jobs aren't done and it's usually too late to do anything about it when we find out. Please heed the plea.

Riser van matters have been moving on apace in the last few days. Don't hold your breath but we may be on the verge of purchasing a replacement van! There are just a few questions to answer and the - do we bite the bullet? Watch this space!

When I was constructing the November Calendar I couldn't avoid seeing what an impossible situation I'd created with the Tag Rag deadlines. As announced, the copy deadline is the day after we depart for Krakow and the distribution is the day after we return! I think I'm going to accept defeat on this one and make the October issue do both October and November.

GRAHAM STARKIE

Editor

POLAND PROGRESS

Not long to go now. There is just one more Tag Rag between us and getting on those aeroplanes. There's been a little toing and froing in the party size. Brain Campbell is the only one to pull out because of his continuing back trouble. He was going on the extended Krakow tour. That is sad news and let's hope the rest will help Brian to get better. On the plus side James Porter is now coming. James is joining us for Warsaw. Arrangements were in place for Chris Schrier to arrange his own flights to join us on the Friday and leave on the Sunday but he has been unable to change his family arrangements. The

final lists of passengers are shown in the tables below.

KRAKOW & WARSAW (52)

Adams Rod & Irene
Ayres Mike & Stella
Bradley Chris & Debbie
Charman Julian & Marge
Chisholm Derek & Rosalie
Clark Mervyn & Janet
Clifton Reg (Ken & Heather's neighbour)
Colquhoun George
Curtis Bryn & Jan Raymond
Eady Brian & Jackie (Groves' friends)
Elson Dave & Gill
Groves Peter & Pam
Hall Rhiannon (Own travel arrangements)
Hird Derek & Jean
Howard Barry & Davina
Laight Simon
McCann Ian & Stephanie
McKeown Mike & Gabi
Mills Ken & Heather
Pearce Andy & Lynda
Price John
Scott Maurice & Doreen
Sheen Malcolm (Simon's friend)
Starkie Graham & Irene
Swift Denis & Christl
Wheeler Andy & Louise
Whittle Whitney (Own travel arrangements)
Wilson Philip
Wright Denis & Doreen
Wyard Meyrick & Dot Beveridge

WARSAW (17)

*Aidan Brand and Kasia will be in Warsaw for the competition but are making their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

Brand* Aidan
Colver David
Dawson Peter
Downing Murray
Hall Malcolm
Leathem Richard
McNulty Lawrence & Sylvia
Milbank Brian
Porter James
Ridley Bob + Jan
Rzysko Andy
Thatcher Colin
Ward Colin
Ward Phillip

SPONSORSHIP - The begging letter I sent out via the British Polish Chamber of Commerce has been met with a stony silence!

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Undaunted I will soldier on and I'm now awaiting replies from three direct approaches to companies/individuals. Once I'd crafted a letter and tailored it for postal and email transmissions it's a quick operation to customise it to a recipient I'll keep this going as long as I think it practical. Keep your fingers crossed.

FLIGHT BALANCES - We are now in the final throes of making these payments to BA. As far as we can see everyone has paid up. The uncertainty is due to a few payments being made electronically and confirmation of those has to await the arrival of the bank statement. We are now using all the seat deposits we paid to Warsaw and we'll release two of the two surplus seats for Krakow.

COMPETITION SONGS- How are we doing? We launched the Performance Improvement idea in July and we believe that it is paying dividends at last. There is no doubt in the people out-front that the songs have taken on a new life in the last few weeks and that thinking is even supported by Rhiannon.

We should all be grateful to the Section Leaders for taking on this task. The exciting thing is that this new level of performance opens up a new starting point to add extra layers of finesse. It's a job well done. There is the added benefit that the work is crossing over into other songs. It's not easy, as you know, to rework old material but this process appears to be at least one way. Thank you to the Leads and Basses for sparing that extra time before rehearsals to squeeze in an extra Section rehearsal. You always knew that to make a change you have to do things differently and here is living evidence.

I know it's only a small sample but Peter Cookson shared the results of his review of the three recordings that he evaluated. The difference could easily be heard. Congratulations to all.

GRAHAM STARKIE

Poland Tour 2007 Coordinator.

A PEEK AT POLAND

PALACE OF CULTURE & SCIENCE

Described endearingly as an elephant in lacy underwear this building was a 'gift of friendship' from the Soviet Union, Warsaw's most prominent landmark dominates the city centre like a socialist-realist rocket ship.

Built between 1952 and 1955 and officially christened the Palace of Culture & Science (Palac Kultury i Nauki, or just PKiN), it was then Europe's

tallest building (231m) outside Moscow and is still the tallest in Poland (and now fifth-tallest in Europe). The palace was immediately hated by most of the city's residents and soon garnered a whole string of nicknames, from Stalin's Palace to Russian Wedding Cake to Vertical Barracks; the best of them makes reference both to the building's size and to the fussy sculptures that frill the parapets - the Elephant in Lacy Underwear.

It houses a huge congress hall - not only the former meeting place of the Polish Communist Party, but also a concert venue once graced by the Rolling Stones - three theatres, a multiplex cinema and two museums, as well as hectares of office space. The basement levels are patrolled by a 50-strong pride of feral cats, who keep the building clear of rats and in return receive pampering from an official vet.

After the fall of communism there were debates about what should be done with the unloved colossus, with ideas ranged from demolishing the whole thing to hiding it behind a screen of surrounding skyscrapers. The huge empty area around the PKiN is now earmarked for redevelopment, with construction due to begin in 2005. At the time of writing, work had already begun on the Złote Tarasy (Golden Terraces) project, to the west of the palace, which will include a retail and leisure complex and a new bus station. Editor's note - The palace can easily be seen from the Novotel hotel providing of course you're not on the blind-side.

THE ROYAL CASTLE

This is a castle reborn. Its history goes back to the 14th century, when a wooden stronghold was built by the dukes of Mazovia. It was later rebuilt in brick. Greatly extended when the capital was moved to Warsaw, the castle became the seat of the king and the Sejm and remained so until the fall of the Republic in 1795. It then served the tsars, and in 1918, after Poland had regained its independence, it became the residence of the president. The castle survived most of WWII without major damage, but after the Warsaw Uprising in 1944 it was blown up by the Nazis.

It wasn't until 1971 that reconstruction began, and by 1984 the splendid baroque castle stood again as if nothing had happened. Given its spiritual importance as the very symbol of Warsaw, thousands of Poles living all over the world donated funds for the castle's rebirth, and many volunteers participated in the building's re-creation. Although the brick structure is a copy, many original architectural fragments have been incorporated into the walls. The castle's 300 rooms have been filled with period furniture and works of art, some of

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which had been hidden elsewhere and survived WWII. Most were collected from other historic buildings.

A good part of the castle's interior is now a museum, providing an insight into how royalty once lived. The rooms are once again richly decorated and crammed with objets d'art as they were two centuries ago, and it's hard to believe that the building is actually less than 40 years old. Editor's note This building is in the first that you see in the old city. It fills one side of a triangular shaped square! You'll understand what I mean when you see it.

GRAHAM STARKIE

August's Tag Rag covered MONEY, CLIMATE and MARIE CURIE



THE HEALTH OF THE SINGER.

I firmly believe that, to sing to your optimum, you need to do more than just rehearse once a week. I also believe any training you do doesn't have to be only concentrated around vocal training.

It is a well known fact that, if you want to get fit and gain muscle, but only train once a week, you may as well not bother; you will not succeed. You have to train at least every four days for your body to respond. I think the same is true for the human voice. How many of you have come back from Convention, our Away Weekend and/or Harmony College and felt like you could sing for England? I for one have. Of course you have to separate the improvement through singing from the deterioration of your voice through excessive drinking which, luckily for some of you, doesn't include coffee.

There is another way we can improve our singing and performance that has never been mentioned before, certainly in barbershop circles, and that is the improvement of one's own physical strength and wellbeing. The likes of Andy Wheeler and Rhi' do put us through our paces on some tuesdays and at Away Weekends but these physical exercises are geared towards stretching and cardio-vascular improvement. We are all getting older and, by the very nature of things, we tend to do less exercise as

we age and this does affect our stamina and long term performance.

There are things that we can do individually that can improve one's ability to sing well and, what is more, improve one's own physical well-being. These are muscle improvement exercises only; if you suffer from arthritis, don't do them.

Here are a few:

Situps - Tightens and develops the muscles around the stomach. For singing, this helps your ability to drive the air out of the lungs for relaxed, controlled singing. It also helps reduce the old paunch.

Knee bends - This exercise strengthens the muscles around the knee joint and helps protect the bone and cartilage from damage (stand straight and slowly lower your body at the knee and raise it again, ten times a day, the slower and the lower the better). I have suffered for years from a knee injury through cycling. I did this exercise prior to last year's energetic performance (Top Hat) and the damage has been repaired and the pain completely gone.

Back strengthening exercises. Lay on your back. Bend your knees so that your feet are close to your bum and place your arms and hands flat beside your body. Raise your bum off the floor by using your feet and legs. Do this slowly up and down ten times a day. This strengthens the muscles around the spine, especially in the back area (The improvement is akin to tying up your boot straps before going skiing or ice skating to protect your ankles. The muscle growth and improved tightness protects and taughtens the weakest bone structure in the human body, namely the spinal column). Again I had suffered for years with a bad back and this simple exercise alleviated the problem. You don't even have to do it every day. Do it every day until the strength is there and the pain dissipates and then you can stop. If the pain ever comes back, just start the regime again. Apart from the euphoric sense of relief one feels when the draining pain disappears, the other benefit is the improved ability to stand for longer periods of time. One of the causes of back pain is the age related weight gain which, in men, tends to affect the midrif (Women suffer the same problem when pregnant). This can be alleviated by this exercise which develops the muscles around the back of the spinal column to cope with this additional weight and pressure and therefore helps the spine manage this increased weight and pressure without putting undue pressure on the bone or cartilage.

Finally, when climbing stairs, use all your leg muscles from the bum, down the thighs, through the knees to the calves ending up by stretching and

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extending those toes. Climb slowly and concentrate on this. This will help you with your balance and add an extra spring to your step as the muscles grow stronger, especially in your feet and toes.

Once again, I stress, if you suffer at all from any form of arthritis, you should not attempt these exercises without seeking medical advice.

I hope this helps and maybe I'll see some of you cartwheeling across the stage in the near future.

AIDAN BRAND



BARBERSHOP BABES

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO
SEPTEMBER'S QUARTET**

**CHRIS BRADLEY
LAWRENCE McNULTY
CHRIS OLIVER
GRAHAM SWATRIDGE**

SELECTED WEEKLY NOTICES

BABS 29th HARMONY COLLEGE (28th Aug)

After a very successful event in weather that was more appropriate for Crete than Worcester Andy Pearce, Philip Paine, Ian McCann and Simon Laight had a very worthwhile learning weekend. Andy and Simon attended the College Chorus, Ian went to Theory of Harmony and Philip did a combination of Singing classes. I misled you all by suggesting that Rhiannon would be there. In fact she was on a fact-finding mission on behalf of BABS at a similar educational event with the Association of British Choral Directors (ABCD).

You'll be pleased to know that the van performed very well on its 270-mile round trip. Ian kindly

returned on the pillion seat with me - that broke the tedium of the journey nicely. I calculate that the van gave us 14.33 mpg on that trip. The extra load of the bits and pieces I took to Harmony College knocked about at least 5mph of the cruising speed when compared with the trip last Tuesday to Wisley. The cruising altitude was constant throughout! We'll get £150 from BABS for doing this plus the cost of fuel.



ASSOCIATE MEMBER NEWS

By BOB RIDLEY Acting Assistant to the Associate Member Coordinator

I visited Ron Collis on 12 September in Oakwood, the swish new physiotherapy unit in Prospect Park. He went in on 3 September to take advantage of a special high-tech gadget which supports his back during the exercise procedures. His progress will be reviewed shortly.

Ron appreciated the nice letter from Nick and Jen Carter. Nick was a member of the Barrytones quartet, RBHC's very own gold medal quartet. Nick was also a long-time member of Ron and Stella's mixed ensemble, the Variations. Nick is ingenious in finding a different meaning to RBHC! Thanks too for the other letters. Seamus and Gail McDonald have been recent visitors and are enthusiastic supporters of our shows. Peter Simmons was a strong member of the bass section for some years and even when MS struck, he continued to sing for us in competition until his condition made this impossible. I have seen one of these motorized wheelchairs and they are extraordinary vehicles. Thanks to Bruce Beer's brother-in-law for paying Bruce Beer's subs for him. No doubt we will hear from Bruce himself soon!

Please note that Phil and Maureen Griffiths have moved to 5 Marina Court, Wharncliffe Road,

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Highcliffe, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 5UA. We wish them well in their new home.

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

Nick and Jen Carter

'Dear Ron and Stella,
Just a line to hope that you are both coping with things and that Ron is on the road to recovery. I know what a very strong team you are and I hope that each day will bring steady progress and that Ron will soon be singing again.

I do not think many people know that R.B.H.C. really means RON (Barbershop Harmony) COLLIS!!

God bless you both.'

Seamus and Gail McDonald

Howdy Ron,
We've not been over to Twyford as much as we would like this year but we thoroughly enjoyed the visits we did make. The D ssharmonie show in Reading Town Hall was absolutely brilliant - well done to all concerned and we have the Maidenhead Christmas Show pencilled in our diary so we look forward to seeing you all there. This year has been a rather barren one musically as for various reasons I've not been able to get involved in anything but we'll see what next year will bring!!!.

Other than that best wishes to all the gang at RBHC and to you and Stella - hope to see you at Club the next time we visit.

In harmony

Peter and Anne Simmons

Anne and I send you our very best wishes. It is always nice to be in your own home but especially

when you are unwell. How this year has flown by, it must be something to do with the awful summer we have had. I do find it so frustrating not to be able to get out into the garden but we have had some really cold and wet days here in Cambridge and it just does not entice me to go out. Anne and I have done some more work in our garden that has become a great hobby for us both. It really looks lovely.

We have been to a family wedding down in Hampshire this year which proved a challenge for us and ended up with Anne driving 7 hours and us missing most of the main wedding ceremony due to dreadful traffic problems. Once we were there it was very enjoyable. Along with other neighbours we arranged a Carysfort Close BBQ and we were so lucky with the weather.

I have made some adjustments to make our lives easier. One of these is a new power wheelchair which will let me lay on my back in the sun (if we ever get any) and it will also stand me up. I find being able to change my position during the day a great benefit but did not realise how complicated the working of the wheelchair was going to be, but I will get there.

Once again our best wishes to you and Stella and regards to everyone who remembers me.

Billy Hopkin (Bruce Beer's brother in law)

Dear Ron

... Judith said you have not been well. Hope this letter (with Bruce's subs) gets to you, when you are feeling better.

Take care with best wishes



HI Y'ALL FROM THE BIG D

You may not realize it, but do you know I haven't contributed to Starkers' organ since last Christmas? Long may it continue I hear some of you shout, but

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ignoring those people, and despite your pleas for peace & quiet, here are a few well chosen words (well words anyway) from over the pond in sunny Dallas. I know this may be a sore point with some of you because I understand that you have had the worst summer on record, but we have had it tough over here as well this year – it has been weird. We had torrential rain during our Spring, filling all the local lakes and closing all park lands around the lakes (unless you were a SCUBA diver!), and it didn't get hot (100F/ 37C) until the beginning of August and it has already cooled down to the 90s. Do I expect sympathy from you? – no I don't – I just thought you would love to know this information.

So, what about the VM? Well this year was our “swan song” year at convention – as retiring champs we get to enjoy ourselves, wave our gold medals around for the last time, and sing up a storm while most people in the audience are desperate for you to stop singing so they can hear the results of the chorus competition. I presume everyone knows now that it was a tie between Ambassadors of Harmony (winners 3 years ago) and Westminster (who gave us a bit of a jolt last year), which was broken by the higher of the two singing scores, so the Westminster youngsters won with a superb demonstration of top quality singing supported by first class presentation – it was a stirring performance. I felt very sorry for Jim Henry and the AOH, but they took defeat like the champions they are. Next year will be a real showdown between AOH and the Masters of Harmony – both recent gold medalists, AOH wanting to prove a point after this year and the Masters wanting to continue their winning streak of 5 (I think) consecutive gold medals.

So, this adds even more interest for 2009 when the VM enter the fray again – we will be up against the losers from next year, and whether that is the Masters or AOH they are going to be extremely p'd off and will be doing all they can to bring our winning streak to an end. It is about time we had a head to head competition with the Masters, but whoever the competition is, may the best chorus win providing it is the VM!

I must say how well Cambridge did this year – they did a tremendous set and really represented BABS extremely well - they had the crowd on their feet hootin' and hollerin' for them and I thought they did even better this year than in Montreal, and although they slipped from 11th to 12th place, I would have put them at least 11th possibly even 10th but that's how the cookie crumbles as we say over here.

We have had a very busy year this year – we recently finished recording our new Christmas CD due to be released in October, we put on a stage show at convention, a mini show not just a few random songs, and we have learnt a “Western” set for our Fall show in 2 weeks time. We had the music to one of the new songs, an excellent but huge long one by Jay G. only two weeks ago, so have had to learn it (plus another two new ones just started), in 3 weeks – very tough believe me. However, due to a total screw up, it doesn't concern me too much. Yes the VM can screw things up!! They published the dates for our Fall shows many months ago as the weekend of 14th September. I was planning to visit the UK for an extended 2 month stay, so I booked my flights for 18th so I could sing on the show. I even lined up some teaching work for Global Knowledge in Wokingham for the week of 24th. Then with no explanation the dates changed to be a week later!!!! It was too late to change my bookings, and although Jim Clancy wanted to cancel the whole thing because I couldn't be there, I persuaded him to soldier on without me. It didn't just affect me – they had lined up one of the top US quartets to sing on the show, but when they put the date back, that quartet couldn't make it either, so we now have to put up with MAXQ – the current quartet gold medal champions!! Talking about which, did anyone see their performances this year – spectacular comes to mind, as does brilliant. When you consider that Greg Clancy is the VM associate director, he is the VM lead section leader, is on the music committee, and attends every VM rehearsal, and that Jeff Oxely is the Bass section leader, star of the VM mini show for our swan song, and also on the music committee, it is astounding and a real credit to their ability that they did so well. What dedication both those guys have got to the VM, and yet can still put on a superlative quartet performance – truly outstanding. Also they won by almost 300 points this year after losing by only 6 points last year – a landslide victory in anyone's language.

Anyway, I digress – during my visit to the UK I had planned to teach for Global Knowledge, and introduce a new Project Management course into the UK but I heard last week that not enough people have booked on the class so they had to cancel it - bummer – I had of course planned to visit you on that Tuesday but the best laid plans of mice & PMs etc. I am currently booked to teach in Wokingham again on November 5th, so providing they get enough people booked, I shall see you that week. If you know any experienced Project Managers who want to get PMP qualified (that is the global PM certification) tell them to book on the class on 5 November - not only make sure I earn some money, but also to allow me to visit TVC!

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Enough about me for a while, how about Judith I hear the lovely Irene and other wives say. Well she is fighting fit, still in remission thank goodness, and she is now into extreme sports – well long distance walking. She is doing a walk for one of the US main breast cancer charity societies in October. This is no gentle amble – it is 20 miles per day for 3 consecutive days!!! This is a total of 60 miles in 3 days for the less numerate of you and Les H. When she started training I used to go with her and could stay with her up to 6 miles (even though it creased me for a couple of days after that). But then as the temperatures started to heat up and as the mileage got more and more, she started going out at a ridiculous time of the morning before the heat built up. She was getting up at 4.30 am (so she told me – I was never awake to check!!) to walk 10 to 13 miles, something like 3 times a week so I give her my total moral support from the prone position! She has to raise a minimum of \$2,200 for the charity, which is fine except that once she committed to doing the walk, she also committed to paying the money out of my pocket if she couldn't get enough donations - this is no laughing matter! Her donations are climbing, but we still have a couple of hundred to get before I can breathe a sigh of deep relief.

Anyone who is still awake at this point will know that we are due to be coming to the UK next week – 18th September - and that I will be staying with my mother in Pershore for 8 weeks. SWMBO is coming over with me but can only stay for 3 weeks before she has to return for this walk. So we will be pounding the roads around Pershore while we are there – I may well be pounding them in the car while she walks, but she will be OK – last weekend she walked 18 miles on Friday, 12 miles on Saturday, and 8 miles on Sunday – I wilt at the very thought of it, not so much for the miles walked, but three consecutive days of getting up before you can see what you are bumping into is scary. It is a good job Les Hearn is in the UK – the thought of possibly bumping into him on a dark night is the stuff of nightmares!

Anyway, I return to the US on 20th November with the mater person in tow and she will stay with us for Christmas in Dallas, then we all fly back to the UK on the day after boxing day and we stay until 10th January, so we may be able to visit the TVC before we return.

Well the moment you (the sole remaining reader) have been waiting for has arrived – time for me to stop driveling all over the place and pack up my keyboard for a while. I hope to be able to pop in and

see you in November, it is a shame I won't be there on 25th September as I had originally planned.

All the very best to y'all,

Pip pip for now,

BRUCE BEER



ACROSS THE BRIDGE

After my last report on life at the Morriston Orpheus Choir in April this year and, following a successful tour of the Antipodes and the release of our latest CD, our world fell apart with the resignation of our lady MD. We were headlined in the south Wales newspapers, on local TV news, and even teletext with the following:

South Wales Evening Post 19th June 2007

CHOIR PLUNGED INTO TURMOIL AS DIRECTOR QUILTS.

Morriston Orpheus Choir has been plunged into turmoil following the resignation of their musical director. Conductor Sian Pearce has quit after almost three years with the baton amid allegations of a campaign to oust her by some members who did not want to be led by a woman.

Ms Pearce said "There is only so much pressure you can take – it has been a case of snide comments, under-handedness and a campaign of rumours since the day I started. In the end I feel I have been forced out by a small minority of members". "The overwhelming majority of members have been wonderful, very supportive. But in the end I feel I have been hounded out of the job I love – it is a horrible situation".

The Evening Post and the Western Mail continued commenting over the next few weeks with letters from the public and even the BBC TV news joining in.

The Choir had an AGM to sort out the problem with some outspoken and biting remarks from some members. The main problem seemed to be between the MD and the Chairman, with the Committee, less

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the Chairman, being on the MD's side so the vice-chairman of the choir chaired the AGM. Unfortunately after a very long evening of argument he lost control near the end and decided to call for a vote of confidence in the Committee, which was objected to by some members, as the Chairman is a member of the committee. However a vote was taken and as most of us were confused as to what we were voting for it ended up with a tie.

South Wales Evening Post 27th June 2007
NOTE OF DIS-CHORD STRIKES ORPHEUS.

Morrison Orpheus Choir is on the brink of a shock split as the row over the resignation of musical director Sian Pearce continues. The award-winning, world-famous choir has been in turmoil since Ms Pearce dramatically quit.

Now it has emerged a breakaway group is meeting tonight to form their own choir. Ms Pearce is due to attend.

South Wales Evening Post 29th June 2007
PHOENIX RISES FROM CHOIR SPLIT

More than a quarter of the members of the Morrison Orpheus have dramatically walked out to form a breakaway choir of their own. The rebel choristers have already been given a £3,000 donation to help establish the choir, which will be known as the Morrison Phoenix Male Voice Choir. The Phoenix will be led by conductor Sian Pearce, whose resignation from the Orpheus last week amid allegations of a sexist campaign to oust her began the angry split.

Thirty-two members of the Orpheus attended the Phoenix's first meeting on Wednesday, with another four choristers saying they wanted to join.

South Wales Evening Post 7th July 2007
SPLIT CHOIR'S JOY OVER NEW LEADER

The new hand guiding the Morrison Orpheus Choir is the former accompanist, for 15 years, Joy Amman Davies. Ms Davies, who is married to the former MD Alwyn Humphries, said "Obviously what has happened has been very upsetting for everyone involved, but it has only been a blip in the choir's long history. I am very happy to be leading the choir, and I think the Orpheus's soul is definitely back"

Note: I have only put in relevant points as these press cuttings included both sides of the argument and each day there were readers comments and editorial with each person giving their opinions.

I have remained with the Orpheus as I feel I have heard all these arguments before in my life and I do not get involved anymore, being content to do what I want to do (that's the privilege of old age). The whole of the committee resigned and I realised it

was a good thing as 5 of them have been on the committee for 16 years and a further 2 for 10 years. The Orpheus is down from 125 to 101 members as some previous men have re-joined, having left when Sian took over. We are now putting 90+ on stage but will soon pick up as new members are having auditions every week.

Yours in HARMONY!!!!

HAYDN ADAMS



HISTORICAL NOTES

5 Years Ago September 2002

9th Daytimers at Catherine's Court

20th Daytimers at Cockayne House, Barkham Ride, Wokingham.

28th Full Chorus at Clare School, Newtown, Nr. Newbury for the Newtown Residents Association.

10 Years Ago September 1997

6th RBHC Show 'Autumn Harmony' at the Haymarket Theatre, Basingstoke.

Taking part were:

Thames Valley Chorus

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

Basingstoke Ladies Choir

Compare.....Paul Connelly

13th Hyde Park, London. BBC 'Proms In The Park' an open-air concert stage with an audience of 40,000

Taking part were:

John Williams, Larry Adler, Michael Ball, Riverdance

Thames Valley Chorus with a 15 minute spot.

Announcers.....Terry Wogan & Ed Stewart.

Ed Stewart put TVC's name forward for the occasion following the RBHC show at the Hexagon.

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25th Small Chorus at Lord Harris Court, Sindlesham.

During the month Side By Side (Roger Wilkinson, Ken Smyth, Chris Oliver, Rod Adams) were at Surbiton Arts Club Annual Dinner and at Lainston House Hotel, Winchester where they entertained senior Vodaphone executives from around the world.

Time Out (Simon Adams, Adrian Cox, Denis Swift, Mervyn Clark) entertained diners at the Beehive, White Waltham.

15 Years Ago September 1992

5th Full Chorus at Coronation Hall, Woodley.

25/28th The TVC European Tour with 47 chorus members, 19 guests and the Barberettes quartet 'Renaissance'.

25th The coach took the group to Düsseldorf and everyone settled in with their hosts.

26th The morning was spent sightseeing and an evening concert held at the Church Hall, Bamber Friedenskurche.

27th Church service in the morning and an afternoon concert at the Sudaller Heiliggeistkirche.

28th Return to Reading.

Ten pages of rave notices of the trip was published in October Tag Rag.

20 Years Ago September 1987

10th Full Chorus at Dickens Court, Wokingham including our quartet Kennet Valley Chord Company.

26th 'Barbershop Showtime' at St.Edmund Campion Church, Maidenhead.

The Chorus had two spots on our own show which included:

Rogues Gallery (Dick Coles, Nick Carter, Ian Douglas, Dave Heighway)

Berkley Square (John Lane, Roger Wilkinson, Derek Smith, Tim Cockell)

The Linda Butler School of Dancing who also performed while the chorus sang 'The Showboat Came To Town', 'Girls Medley' and 'Cockney Medley'.

The M/C was Colin Thatcher who also had two solo spots.

During the interval our Skiffle Group entertained (Roger Wilkinson, Ron Collis, Haydn Adams)

The following extract appeared in the Newbury Weekly News: SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AT SHALBOURNE FETE

Mr. John Harvey, who lives in the village, brought along his three colleagues Mr. Bruce Beer, Mr. Pete Powell, and Mr. Peter Wickham of the Kennet Valley Chord Company, who are members of Reading Barbershop, and in their red suits they made a colourful scene as they strolled round entertaining the crowd with some delightful singing.

The current TVC roll call showed the following membership:

5 Tenors, 27 Leads, 10 Baritones, 18 Basses & 31 Associate members.

25 Years Ago September 1982

14th We had a golden oldies night when we sang all the Polecat songs and some of the songs not now in the repertoire. The Barberettes came along and performed their songs for their convention on the 25th.

21st We were treated to the magic of Dr Bob Johnson SPEBSQSA with people from Chesham and Guildford joining in the evening's education at our rehearsal.

25th LABBS Convention at Loughborough
Chorus results:

1st Liverpool Ladies (C/D Rhianon)

2nd White Rosettes (Leeds)

3rd Reading Barberettes

24 choruses competed.

30 Years Ago September 1977

23/25th BABS & LABBS Convention at Leicester
BABS Chorus results:

1st Great Western Chorus

2nd Berkshire Barbershoppers (TVC) with 30 on the risers singing 'Piano Roll Blues' & 'It's Opening Night On Broadway' C/D Barry Nowell. The quartet competition was won by the Fortunaires (Crawley) with Reading interests:

9th Four No Trumps (Ken Hopper, Ron Beal, Ron Collis, Pete Powell)

11th Forrestaires (Pete Forrest, Dave Elson, Gerry Holland, Peter Bugden)

In the LABBS chorus competition the Barberettes were the winners with Pete Powell conducting.

A triumph for the ladies.

HAYDN ADAMS

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amazing how many things I find myself doing and saying that bring back the memories!

Luv 'n' hugs as always,
IRENE

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Thanks to Haydn Adams, Bruce Beer, Aidan Brand, John Price, Bob Ridley, and Irene for supplying copy.

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16th September 2007

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~~13th November for 20th distribution~~
11th December for 18th distribution

SUPPORTERS

Well I wished for a warm, sunny September and we have had just that. The garden looks great when usually the flowers are beginning to fade. The Wisley singout went very well and the 34 guys who sang did a great job with Phillip, Brian and Alex directing (not altogether of course!). There was a great crowd of appreciative people watching.

The Men in Harmony course started with a good turnout of 24 people last Tuesday, all keen to learn to sing.

Rhi has now moved house and is beginning to sort out boxes and find a place for everything. She very wisely put some things in store until she is settled. She tells us that Whitney has settled into senior school very well. It is always traumatic at the best of times but moving house and having no friends from your old school must be quite a challenge.

Congratulations to Heather on completing her 5Km walk for DEBRA. Also it is great to hear Judith Beer is well and preparing for a 60-mile walk for breast cancer charity.

We are aware that things are getting into place for Emma's wedding. Hambleden village is one of the most picturesque in the country, I do hope we have fine weather, I have been shown where any partners attending should sit in the church. It will be a packed house. I've seen the order of service with production notes that should make the chorus songs a special part of Emma's day. Please remember that Emma wants the chorus's presence to be a surprise for her mother. We know that she doesn't read Tag Rag.

By the October issue we will have had a trip to Northern Italy for 4 days with several local friends and be looking forward to our Polish trip. Where does the time go? My mum used to say that and I used to get really annoyed with her!!? Hey it's

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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.*

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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

SEPTEMBER 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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

October 2007 calendar is on page 2

A LOOK AHEAD TO

NOVEMBER 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
November 2007				1	2	3
4	5 8-day Poland trip start into Krakow	6 Rehearsal	7	8 5-day Poland trip start into Warsaw	9	10
11	12 Poland Return	13 Daytimers Hungerford Rehearsal	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 Rehearsal	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Rehearsal	28	29 Daytimers Woosehill Wokingham	30	November 2007