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# THE RAG AND NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2008

Sean O'Shea invites you to join him and his Rotary Club members to an enjoyable evening of



SATURDAY 19 JULY 7pm  
South Berkshire Concert Band will be  
playing light classical music  
Park open from 5pm

Bring your own picnic including tables, chairs, rugs and candles. Wine will be on sale and there'll be some Side Stalls. Tickets in advance £15 adult, £10 Children (under 15). On-the-door prices are £5 higher. In aid of Alexander Devine Children's Cancer Trust and other local charities.



Please add your name to the **ORANGE LIST** on the board indicating the number of tickets required or phone **Graham Starkie 0118 934 5214**. *If there are enough people interested Sean will try and get a group booking at a reduced price.* More info at [www.readingabbeyrc.co.uk/musicinthepark](http://www.readingabbeyrc.co.uk/musicinthepark).

# READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

A LOOK AHEAD TO

**JULY 2008**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>July 2008</b>		<b>1</b> <b>Rehearsal</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <b>Rehearsal</b> <b>Piggott OR</b> <b>Billingbear -</b> <b>TBA</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <b>Rehearsal</b> TAG RAG COPY DEADLINE	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <b>Daytimers</b> <b>Woodcote</b> <b>Crowthorne</b>
<b>20</b> <b>Ferrari Fun</b> <b>Day</b> <b>Singout</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> <b>Rehearsal</b> TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>July 2008</b>	

**Calendars showing the remaining days of June 2008 and the month of August 2008  
are at the back of TAG RAG**

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

*	JUL	8	Tue		Piggott Hall is not available - we are considering using the Drama Studio OR open-air at Billingbear GC - TBA
	JUL	19	Sat	Daytimers	Woodcote Crowthorne at 2.30
*	JUL	20	Sun	Full Chorus	Ferrari Fun Day - <b>confirmed</b>
	AUG	6	Wed	Daytimers	Thamesfield House Henley sing at 2.45
	AUG	15	Fri		Dot & Meyrick's Wedding Calcot Hotel Bath Road
	AUG	19	Tue	Full Chorus	RHS Wisley for National Gardens Scheme - evening
	AUG	22-24	Fri-Sun		No Piggott School rehearsal
	SEP	17	Wed	Daytimers	BABS Harmony College Nottingham
	SEP	20	Sat	Full Chorus	Christchurch Court, Christchurch Road Reading 1pm for 2pm
	OCT	11	Sat	Daytimers+	2x40min spots - Corn Exchange Theatre Wallingford.
	DEC	3	Wed	Daytimers	All Saints Church Wokingham Harvest Supper
	DEC	6	Sat	Full Chorus	Cornerstone Hall at 8.30pm for 30 mins
	DEC	10	Wed	Daytimers	Kennet Court Woosehill Wokingham at 2pm
	DEC	17	Wed	Daytimers	Christmas Show Desborough Suite Maidenhead
2009	MAR	5	Thu	Daytimers	Matinee & Evening Performances
	MAR	7-8	Sat-Sun		Thamesfield House Henley sing at 2.45
					Chequers Hotel Newbury
					Twyford Townswomens Guild
					Away Weekend 2009 Bournemouth

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NEXT COPY DEADLINE:

**15TH JULY FOR 22ND DISTRIBUTION**

### EDITORIAL

June is traditionally a time for reflection - a reflection on the fruits of our labours over the last twelve or so months leading up to Convention. This year is however a little different in that we've had a somewhat turbulent time leading up to Convention. Thank you to Richard Leathem for conducting a survey of members' views and summarising the results for Tag Rag. My thanks to our regular contributors, Haydn Adams for his historical notes and Bob Ridley for keeping us abreast of Ron's Associate membership news. And, I musn't forget Irene and her Supporters column. I've taken the opportunity to bring back that note in Internet Scams and Fiddles on page 14 after a member asked me for the information to forward a scam. I do it as often as I get a scam, about every two months, and I occasionally get a reply.

I am amongst the most sceptical about the value of our placing at Convention. My argument is that if you have done all that you planned to do then that is success in itself. I think that you can only ever expect to do as good as you plan but have to admit that on this occasion we have fared much better! A fifth place albeit with a lowering of the average score is most acceptable.

Richard's questionnaire focuses our attention on the songs and our contest preparation. There will be much to be learned from an analysis of the responses. However I believe a more useful story is contained in the analysis of the Back-To-Basics review conducted by Julian recently. That will show the missed opportunities to implement the laudable goals laid out originally. The good news is seeing

how positive our members are when it comes to reviewing our plight. Let's hope that as many members predict, that this is a turning point in our fortunes.

I'm trying to get a good-sized party of members to the MUSIC IN THE PARK on July 19th at ENGLEFIELD HOUSE. I realise there are risks but I think a Club Picnic followed by an evening of light music would be good therapy for us. Are you up for it and will it fit your diary? The Daytimers have a singout at Crowthorne that afternoon and we all have the FERRARI FUN DAY to attend immediately afterwards on the Sunday at the Newbury showground. It'll be an action packed weekend for some of us and will be of great benefit to two of our favourite charities. Go back and study the front cover for more information.

### **GRAHAM STARKIE**

Editor

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### BARBERSHOP BABES

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO  
JUNE'S TRIO**

**RON COLLIS  
ED DEACON  
MIKE McKEOWN**

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### FERRARI FUN DAY

Our commitment to this event is now confirmed. A tentative plan has been agreed that we'll sing three half hour slots, the first at 11am, then 12.45pm and 2pm. Chorus members should expect to be at the showground by 10am. The showground is just north of junction 13 of the M4 motorway. There'll be loads of things to see and do for all your friends and family; much more than when it was at Highclere Castle. Apart from having a (£15) ride in a Ferrari sports car twice round the prepared track you'll be able to climb over a large static display of

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the 'red' beasties. There are also tethered hot air balloons to amuse you. The new Air Ambulance helicopter will be making an appearance beside a machine that you can place your order for if the whim takes you! I'm also assured that you can buy yourself a new Ferrari car if that is your wont. Unfortunately because of the proximity of the motorway there'll be no flying displays. All that plus an Italian Piazza to browse round, many eating places and sidestalls to empty your pockets all in aid of the Berks, Oxon and Bucks Air Ambulance.

### GRAHAM STARKIE

Editor

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### DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING

*(We are currently putting life into this repertoire song with a dramatic presentation)*

This song is taken from the musical Les Misérables by French author Alan Boublil and composer Claude-Michel Schönberg and produced by Cameron Mackintosh. In this version the themes and ideas of the famous French novelist Victor Hugo are accompanied by excellent music and touching scenes. The plot is simplified to make it fit better on stage.

Victor Hugo wrote Les Mis in 1862. It's a story about living in misery and yet having hope for something better. It's a story about love greater than life, a story about despair and yet salvation, a story about people doomed to death because of their principles and people dooming others to death or to life in misery - it's a story about life.

The novel is set in France in 1800. A man (Jean Valjean) is sentenced to prison for stealing a loaf of bread. After 20 years in prison this kind man is hostile to the society but his attitude changes when a bishop forgives him for stealing his silverware. The man decides to start a new and honest life, but is pursued by a policeman (Javert) dedicated to putting him back in prison.

The story culminates in the revolution in Paris in 1832 which actually took place when the real 'les misérables' tried to get the right for better life. This is where DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING comes in. The oppressed poor rose up and took to the barricades. At a political meeting in a small cafe, a group of idealistic students prepare for revolution. With their leader they stream out into the streets to whip up popular support. The revolutionaries defy an army warning that they must give up or die. They build barricades. With ammunition running low, a hero runs out to collect more and is shot. The rebels are all killed save for one, Marius. This

leads to the touching song – where Javert offers his life if only the young man is allowed to live – a cue for the beautiful song “Bring Him Home” (also available to us in 4 part harmony).

The story has been filmed several times - the latest in 1998 directed by Bille August with famous actors like Liam Neeson and Uma Thurman.

### RICHARD LEATHEM

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### CAN YOU FEEL THE LOVE TONIGHT

This great ballad from the Disney classic film The Lion King has been introduced recently to the chorus repertoire. Tim Rice writes the lyric and the music is by Elton John. The barbershop arrangement has been beautifully crafted by June Dale who hails from Sharon Towners' Sweet Adelines chorus North Metro in Toronto. Let's hope we can do a good job in performance.

We've been asked more than once what this song is about without a coherent answer. The lyric is reproduced below to let you study the story away from the clutter of the 'dots'. Let me have any good interpretations for next month's Tag Rag.

There's a calm surrender  
To the rush of day  
When the heat of the rolling world  
Can be turned away

An enchanted moment  
And it sees me through  
It's enough for this restless warrior  
Just to be with you

And can you feel the love tonight?  
It is where we are  
It's enough for wide-eyed wanderer  
That we got this far

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And can you feel the love tonight  
How it's laid to rest  
It's enough to make kings and vagabonds  
Believe the very best

There's a time for ev'ryone  
If they only learn  
That the twisting kaleidoscope  
Moves us all in turn

There's a rhyme and reason  
To the wild outdoors  
When the heart of this star-crossed voyager  
Beats in time with yours

And can you feel the love tonight?  
It is where we are  
It's enough for this wide-eyed wanderer  
That we got this far

And can you feel the love tonight  
How it's laid to rest?  
It's enough to make kings and vagabonds  
Believe the very best  
It's enough to make kings and vagabonds  
Believe the very best

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### THE CONVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Comment and some results by its originator Richard Leatham.

We have a considerable divergence of views from club members. I have extracted comments below so you can see examples. I believe it would be wrong to publish the forms without permission because it was intended that they should be frank (and some contain quite personal comments. I have only omitted 2 personal ones from the forms checked. I hope that the Performance Team will very much take them on board, and I promise I will ensure that we publish the plan resulting from your views.

### RECENT CONVENTION BACKGROUND:

**2006** The choreographer (a top professional) who had worked with us on the Ant & Dec show offered to create the moves. A number of difficulties arose e.g. complaints by many members of complicated moves, too many changes. The choreographer resigned complaining of too much interference. The TVC came through on the day – we are historically and today a great club however much we may moan because we care.

**2007** we sang two ballads with no significant choreography. We failed to sell the songs on the day. We did not achieve what we hoped in terms of scores even though our total focus had been on improved singing.

**2008** We had most of a team: Rhi as CD had chosen the songs. Mark was to be our vocal coach. No-one volunteered for the firing line to be responsible for designing the moves. Members were asked. One member offered a suggestion (a move incorporated). Alex volunteered to be i/c rehearsals on moves. We had strong views from you - from no moves to calls for a special performing chorus. In this vacuum, the Performance Team met & decided to take up the offer of Emma to work with us. She had a record of success with us including “silver” and Performance Judge Nick who had worked with her “had a lot of respect” for her. Emma was told that any significant full body moves should be limited to the front row as per comments from you in 06. Members had been inventing their own moves for the Medley particularly on phrases such as “You’re driving me Crazy” and these points were given to Emma. She was provided with the recorded version of the songs from the away weekend as they stood at that time.

### THERE FOLLOWED THE RUN UP TO CONVENTION AND HERE ARE YOUR COMMENTS

#### **The Ballad :**

“Fine”, “8/10 “. “Good, a great number arranged well“. “Yes”, “Yes”, “Yes”, “No I don’t rate the song. Doesn’t go anywhere. Needs a very solid interpretation plan. “ An unnecessary key change”, “Excellent & the TVC did it proud”

#### **The Medley:**

“ Great”. “5/10”, “What an awful song, drivel.”, “Did not have zip” “No, we didn’t do it justice”, “choreography got in the way of singing”, “more time was needed for the singing technique and choreography to be polished”. “Yes (but) teach tape was not great”, “Introduced swing

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time....Improved greatly”, “disliked the tempo changes & the moves”. Moves & tempo/interpretation caused the chorus to be unsettled with it”, “My heart sank when the choreography was introduced to a bunch of geriatrics”. ”Not a comfortable song to sing”.

**Convention preparation:** “Songs were prepared in time but alterations unsettled some members”, “Hard unenjoyable grind”, “Medley dominated”, “No real problem, I know a number of people complain about singing 2 songs for 5 months, an exaggeration”, “Our mastery of songs in 07 was far more advanced – partly due to the welcome distractions of Poland & Christmas”, “Just no control or management. Until we MANAGE and MOTIVATE the chorus, we will lose members and decline in standings”, “ 3 out front is too much”, “Too many people from the body of the chorus were having an input to moves and singing points.” Choreography developed late & over-fussy, moves for moves sake”, “ Dreadful, very poor teach tapes & very boring rehearsals”, “Eventually got to grips with the songs apart from the key changes”, “Word by word correction of songs awful”, Moves too complicated & almost took too long to learn”. “We left it too late”, “the interpretation kept being changed”. “Not enough time with Rhi & without Mark”. “Even Monkey magic didn’t make it anything special”, “Too many “fluters””,

### **Away Weekend:**

“Great but we need 100% attendance”, “Good but needed to finalise the songs.” ”No realistic planning and objectives. Did not have the songs learnt before away weekend and moves set.”, “Great, better than last year, less intense”. “Enjoyed the quartet singing on Saturday”.

### **How did you rate our singing /performing at the friends and family evening :**

“I felt it went well, We seemed relaxed”. “The casual approach made it more like an afterglow”. “It appeared to be OK & the audience were happy”, “Not thought through, Discipline on risers was bad.” “Good, entertaining, enjoyable”, “I thought this was fine”. “Very good”. “Not sure why we underachieved on the medley”. “Below what we are capable of achieving”

### **Our singing at Convention**

“Not good”. “I actually thought this was fine”, “We sang and delivered what we had prepared very well”, “1<sup>st</sup> song OK, 2<sup>nd</sup> song not up to our best, very disappointing”, “Started off on questionable notes”, “The last 7 conventions I came off choked with emotion, this time (went off not feeling a thing, why” (We sang the ballad first?). “(we were) noticeable by our absence, do we need a break from

convention?”, “Sing less complicated songs”. “Excellent. I’ve sung in 24 conventions & thought we put in a good performance” “(not confident in our performance”, “Singing – not good”, “Below what we are capable of achieving”

### **How could Convention have been made better for you?**

“Really enjoyed... from the quartet semis right through to Sunday show but (should have had) more opportunity for TVC to do things together”, “Never go to shows”, “I would have welcomed more social participation. I was hoping for a bigger get together in the hotel.”, “Many members are pensioners, could cost be a worry for them, should we downgrade accommodation”. “Wall to wall barbershop for many wives”, “With these different views it would be impossible for the club to act as a group”, (no point in having a coach plenty of car parking) (Better if more of a team, coach to event?), “ I like afterglows but they are so late”

### **Skills/Club improvement**

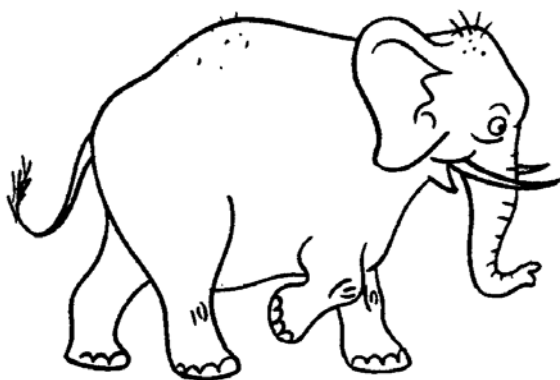
“Focus on the basics for individuals.” “More quartet singing”, “help every member to improve their singing technique”, “Refocus on targets e.g. concerts”, Give goals to the chorus to bring them back to working together”, “Get fitter”, “More quartet work”, “More sing outs”, “Less sounding off from people on the risers”, “ (some) Emails were an abuse of the TVC email group”, “Improve the social aspect, see Trevor’s email”, “better teaching material (already happening), “More quartetting”, Sing at least 2 repertoire songs each Tuesday”, “ There was a time when TVC stayed together”, “ Get across to the newer guys that TVC has always been a great chorus”. “It’s possible to win without being swamped with moves”. “I would welcome a competition chorus”, “I learn by listening, it is very important to have an up to date recording”. “Hold auditions for the front row”. “Stick to the published programme”. “Produce teach tapes that are close to the final version”, “Energy”, “Individual coaching but that’s scarcely possible”, “Too many not prepared to take on board coaching from Peter, Rhi, Brian”. “A more targeted approach to repertoire with members input”.

**Prize winning comment so far** “As a new member I am finding the other members are giving me wonderful support and a very friendly welcome”

### **RICHARD LEATHEN**

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### DAYTIMERS AT BRAY

We returned to sing for one of our fan clubs in Bray village hall on Wednesday 11th June. The Bray Disabled Club have been inviting us back to entertain them on a yearly basis for as long a Denis Swift can remember! Our instructions were to be there at 1pm to perform at 2pm.

The song list was:

SOUND CELEBRATION D  
DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING Ab  
FIELDS OF GOLD Bbm  
TOP HAT MEDLEY G  
Sing along led by Graham  
HAPPY TOGETHER Gm  
HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN F  
UNDECIDED MEDLEY D  
Heather's Handful! quotable quotes  
A TREE IN THE MEADOW Eb  
WONDERFUL DAY MEDLEY F  
MAKE EM LAUGH D

This song list is notable in that it includes four songs making their debut in the Daytimers' repertoire: Fields of Gold, Happy Together, How Deep is the Ocean and Undecided Medley. These must have been welcome additions for this audience who have heard us many times before.

This singout was also notable in another respect. Denis Swift carefully repeated in an email part of Meyrick's brief to all the singers that we were to wear short-sleeved shirts for this occasion. This was a welcome reminder to some for which Denis was thanked. However he was put into the proverbial stocks when it was realised that he was the only one that hadn't read to the end of Meyrick's message and was the only one without a blazer! No cigar on that occasion Denis.

### **GRAHAM STARKIE**

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### LOOKING BACK

The following description of the now superseded Arrangement Category is an extract from a BABS Guild of Judges Category Descriptions that I had the privilege of editing and published it in 1980. Although this judging category no longer exists the ideas expressed will enlighten many on what is the thinking behind the Barbershop Style. These original texts were the work of Bob Walker.

The Arrangement Category assesses and scores the suitability of a song for arrangement in the Barbershop Style, and the quality of the arrangement in the context of the Barbershop Style.

The Song. - A song must have certain qualities to lend itself to arrangement in the Barbershop Style. Generally popular songs written between 1890 and 1930 have these qualities in greater measure than songs of other eras. However, any song with these qualities may be suitable.

a) The melody should consist, to a large extent, of notes within the major scale of the key of the song, with few accidentals (sharps or flats other than those of the key signature) other than occasional chromatic passing or neighbouring tones. It should contain few awkward intervals and a limited number of notes which are not part of the chords of the Implied Primary Harmony. Melodies ranging from Sol to Sol are preferable to those ranging from Do to Do.

b) Primary Harmony should generally follow the Circle of Fifths. The chords of this Primary Harmony must use more than just the Tonic (I), Dominant (V) and Sub-Dominant (IV) chords, as a folk song or blues would do. Chords on II and one or more of VI, III and VII should also be present in this Primary Harmony.

c) Meter and rhythmic patterns should be simple, with gaps in the melodic rhythm (held notes and rests) in which to put embellishments (swipes, echoes, etc.) which are an essential part of the Barbershop Style.

d) Lyrics should be generally simple and unsophisticated, expressing thoughts of love for a wife, sweetheart, home, country, friends, etc., as in ballads, or joyful or happy thoughts, as in uptunes. They may be amusing, but should not be ironic or cynical. Lyrics must be in the best of taste by contemporary standards and usage. Lyrics not in good taste will be subject to disqualification.

e) Songs which are strophic in form, that is, which consist of a number of verses which are musically

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similar but with different words, as in hymns and many folk songs, are not typical of the barbershop style and consequently are not suitable for contest.

f) Barbershop songs are composed of four or eight bar phrases, or multiples of these, and this type of symmetrical form should be sustained during intros and tags. Extra beats should not be added to any bars, the form being thus intact throughout any one section of the song. This does not imply that the song should be sung in strict tempo. We are dealing here with the number of beats to the bar or the number of bars to the phrase, not with how these are interpreted.

g) Songs used to form medleys must have some apparent logical lyrical or musical connection. Medleys of songs without such a common factor are subject to penalty.

The Arrangement - The essential features of a Barbershop Arrangement suitable for contest are:

1) The bass should sing roots and fifths of chords. Only occasionally should the bass sing other parts of the chord, and then only for the purposes of good voice-leading and not on sustained chords.

2) The tenor should be consistently higher than the melody, except very occasionally to avoid a voicing or range problem. The melody should not be sung by the tenor except for an occasional note or two or in the tag.

3) Chords used are many. However, Dominant Sevenths (Barbershop Sevenths) and Major Triads should predominate, especially on sustained notes. Chords containing four different notes (octaves are not considered as different notes) should be used wherever possible and appropriate. Major Seventh chords should be used only when the melody is on the Major Seventh of the chord, and when Major Seventh harmony is specifically demanded by the song. Minor Second intervals (two notes, one semitone apart) are never used. Major Sixth chords and Ninth chords (except where the melody is on the ninth note) should be used very sparingly indeed. Minor Sevenths and Diminished and Half Diminished Sevenths should be used normally only in passing and in swipes and echoes where these chords resolve naturally to a sustained Barbershop Seventh' adding interest and variety to the arrangement. For a definition of these and other chords see "Chords Used in Barbershop Harmony".

4) The baritone is always above the bass and below the tenor, but may be above or below the lead (melody). However, only very infrequently (on a

triad) will any two voices sing the same note (unison) within a chord. (This is not to be confused with the intentional use of unison by all voices not within a chord, for special effect).

5) Embellishments, such as swipes, echoes, bell chords, key changes, patter, etc., are an essential part of the Barbershop Style. Should any arrangement seem harmonically or rhythmically dull, and this be adjudged due to a lack of appropriate embellishments, it will be penalised.

6) Notwithstanding 5) above, the following points must be borne in mind:

a) Too many, or too complicated, embellishments may lower the score in the Interpretation Category. Over-embellishment may cause the message of the song to be weakened or lost, thus adversely affecting its interpretation.

b) Excessive use of patter, bell chords or pick-ups may lower the score in Sound, for this category is listening for full, four-part chords most of the time.

c) Generally, embellishments are there to lend interest to the performance of the song, not to dominate it.

7) Alteration by the arranger of the melody, lyrics or Primary Harmony of a song may be subject to penalty. Changes in the meanings of some words since the song was written could allow a substitute word to be used, without penalty. The arrangement should set off the song to best advantage, not alter it.

8) Normally both the verse and the chorus of the song should be included. If the verse is not used, or if there is no verse to the song, an intro should be created to take its place and to set up the chorus. Should a second chorus, or part thereof, be sung, it should, if possible, be different in some way (embellishments, bass melody, patter, etc.,) from the first chorus. A tag will almost always be necessary to finalise the song.

Two Rules of Thumb - There are many arrangements in existence which are in the Barbershop Style and are good Barbershop songs, but which are not suitable for use in Barbershop Contests. TWO simple checks can be made on an arrangement, as follows.

Check 1. - Look for notes in the three harmony parts which are accidentals, i.e., notes with a sharp, flat or natural in front of them. There should be a liberal sprinkling of these throughout the arrangement. A lack of them means that the variety of chords essential to a good Barbershop

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Arrangement is absent, and it will sound harmonically dull. This will produce a low score.

Check 2. - Look for the curved, tie lines above and below series of chords (indicating swipes) and also repeated words above and below the normal horizontal line of the printed lyrics (indicating echoes). A lack of both of these will suggest that the arrangement is under-embellished. This will produce a penalty, possibly severe.

Special Notes.

1) The Judge marks on the basis of what he hears, not what he expects to hear. If a non-stylistic element, e.g., non-barbershop chord or voicing, or a structural fault, e.g., alteration of melody or distortion of implied harmony, are sung due to incorrect learning of the parts by one or more singers it is the duty of the Judge to penalise these faults. If he believes their cause to lie not in the written arrangement but in the way it is being sung he must nonetheless penalise them, and advise the singers in the clinic to double-check the notes they are singing with the written arrangement.

2) If elements of an arrangement which have received bonuses are repeated, such repeats will not gain further bonuses. However, if elements which have been penalised are repeated, the penalties will not only be repeated but may escalate in severity.

3) In general, arrangements published by SPEBSQSA, Inc., are most suitable for evaluation as contest material except where they have the special note to the contrary. Contestants are advised to subject all arrangements considered for contest to the criteria contained in this Category Description and to further seek qualified advice if necessary.

4) A song or arrangement which brings the house down on a show will not necessarily be suitable for contest use. The purpose of an arrangement of a song, when used in a Barbershop Contest is to show off to best advantage the ability of the quartet or chorus to perform in the Barbershop Style. The Barbershop Style has many facets, and, while one arrangement of one song can seldom demonstrate all of these, it should allow the performers to show their mastery of as many elements of the style as possible, whilst retaining the flavour of the song which the composer intended.

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### ASSOCIATE MEMBER NEWS

By BOB RIDLEY Acting Assistant to the Associate Member Coordinator

I called in to see Ron and Stella Collis on 13 June and had a long chat with them. They were both interested in the news from Cheltenham. Ron has had two visits from the carers to hoist him into the wheelchair to wheel him into his new conservatory for short visits. These have been successful in that the wheelchair with a new cushion is less painful than the special armchair. Ron hopes to be able to use the wheelchair daily soon. A special ramp is being built to the front door that may allow Ron to venture further afield. Ron and Stella had enjoyed a visit from Meyrick and they were excited to hear of his and Dot's marriage plans.

Again there are no new letters from the Associate Members this month but I was able to greet Seamus and Gail McDonald, Peter and Beth Powell, and Barry and Sharon Towner at the rehearsal prior to convention. The Towners send their love to Ron and Stella.

Well, what a convention! The racecourse facilities were excellent but the journey to and from the excellent hotel took some getting used to. Thanks to Rhiannon and Mark again for all their patient preparation of the Chorus. Congratulations to Figaro. I saw their performance on Friday and they were superb, missing a place in the finals by a whisker. And then clearly showing their superiority as mike warmers. Well done to Catch 22 also. I saw Simon and Marilyn Adams both before and after the well-deserved Gold by the Great Western Chorus. Congratulations to them and also to Jim Downing and Windsor for winning Silver. I also managed to see Peter Mumford, Martyn Lapworth and John Logan but I regret that I missed Phil and Maureen Griffiths. Apologies if I missed someone out.

## READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

The stars of the weekend were definitely the Northern Lights Chorus. They gave us a memorable performance of 'Buddy Can You Spare a Dime' on the Friday show; three one-hour insightful master classes on Saturday; singing at the Church Service; and a wonderful show to a packed house on Sunday afternoon that nobody wanted to end. Come back soon.

I have to record a new Associate Member. It is to the regret of the whole chorus that André Blanchard is returning to the US after too short a time with us. I believe André heads back first to Washington DC where I hope he manages to find the Alexandria Harmonizers, regular contestants at International. Perhaps, he can match Bruce Beer's communications to Tag Rag on what it is like to sing with a big American chorus. All the very best wishes to you and Sara.

TagRag is available on our website [www.rbhc.org.uk](http://www.rbhc.org.uk) thanks to the efforts of Graham Starkie and Chris Bradley.

Thank you to all the Associate Members for their continuing support.

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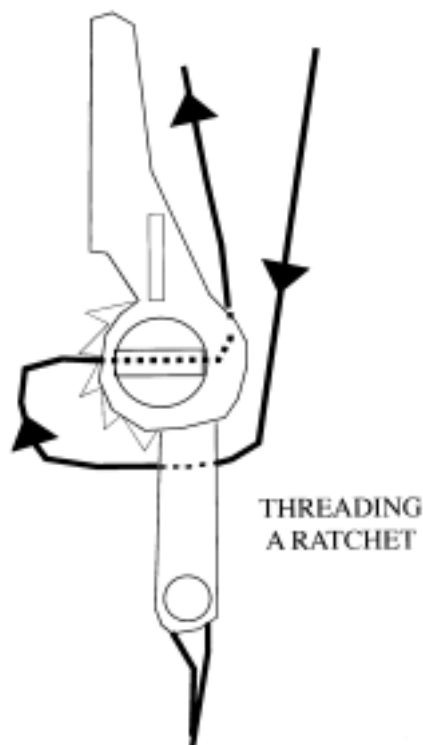
### SELECTED WEEKLY NOTICES

#### **TROLLEY STRAPS (20 May)**

You may note that new trolley straps have been fitted this last week. These new straps eliminate the chains and dog clips and as a result will make the straps more reliable in operation.

It is possible to separate the two parts of these new straps in that the loose end will pull straight through the ratchet. This is seen to be a desirable feature because it allows the strap ends to be stowed at the

ends of the trolley when using the ramps. The following figure shows how the ratchet should be re-threaded.



Scotty and I took the opportunity to inspect the trolleys for wear and tear after nearly six-months of use. The majority of wear is noted to be with the chains and dog clips that should be fixed with the new straps. We also took the opportunity to improve the rigidity of the trolley along its length to reduce the bowing in the baseboard.

#### **TVC FACE AWARD (27th May)**

Congratulations to Ed Deacon for winning the Graham Starkie Face Award. The friendly gorilla is given to the TVC member whose face has shone most leading up to Convention, in the eyes of Rhiannon and the Supporters.

#### **VAN TO CHELTENHAM (27th May)**

I looked forward to taking the van to Cheltenham just to see how it behaved on a longish journey. Moreover it was good to put some miles on the clock so that when the 12-month mechanical failure insurance expires we can say that we've given it a reasonable test. We've done 1,831 miles now in 8 months. The mileage was 40,898 when we bought it and it now reads 42,729.

The van met all my expectations. I was able to drive it more like a car using all three lanes of the motorway; it was convenient on more than one occasion to use the outside lane for overtaking two lorries occupying the near side. It will cruise nicely around 60mph and that's a comfortable speed to

## READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

behave like a trucker in the near side lane. I nudged an indicated 70mph in the right conditions and I still felt in control. The 55mph of the old Fright-Rover didn't quite allow that sort of driving. The driving position is very comfortable and Irene thinks that the passenger's comfort level is much better - just like riding in a coach.

I believe there was added benefit to having the van sitting in the racecourse car park to advertise our presence and this was over and above providing us with a convenient cloakroom on Saturday. Three individuals (non-Reading men) commented on how good the van looked and I was able to show one interested party the trolleys.

### NEW PERFORMANCE TEAM MEMBER (3rd Jun)

Julian advises: After standing down from the Exec earlier this year Andy Pearce has continued to do good works for RBHC on a "without portfolio" basis, most recently as part of the New Repertoire team headed up by Peter Dawson. I am delighted to say that Andy is now joining the Performance Team with immediate effect.

### BABS HARMONY COLLEGE (3rd Jun)

If you were interested in attending this year's event I would advise you book now to avoid a possible disappointment. Nearly 100 of the 350 places were booked before we went to Convention. Remember that the Club will make a contribution to your costs if you are attending for the first time. Speak to a Club Executive member if you need more information.

If you're into learning songs this is your opportunity to add three to this year's total - EACH TIME I FALL IN LOVE, RECIPE FOR LOVE and that old favourite GIVE ME A BARBERSHOP SONG. Note that there's a change of venue from Worcester to Nottingham this year. The timing remains the same - the weekend of the late August Bank Holiday (Friday - Sunday 22-24 August).

### INVITATION TO WARSAW (3rd Jun)

I received an invitation from Maciej on behalf of the chorus (dated 15 May) to attend this year's Warsaw Festival "VARSOVIA CANTUS". The following correspondence followed. I realise it was a bit presumptuous of me to turn down the offer but I'm sure it can be reversed if we so wish.

(Email dated 16 May)

Hi Maciej,

Thank you for this invitation. We have no international travel plans at the moment.

You need to know that the Thames Valley Chorus had a really good time visiting the festival last year; the memories will live for a very long time. Much of the credit for that is down to you. Thank you. Hope you and your family is well. Irene sends her regards. Graham

(Email dated 17 May)

Hi! Graham,

I was nice to hear from you. and I really enjoyed your concerts in Poland as you were between few best choirs that ever come here.

If you hand any plans for concert tours around here in central or Eastern Europe I would be glad to help you with organisation.

Presently I have invitation for foreign choir from my friend from Beralus to sing 2-3 BIG concerts in large concert halls. I know that Belarus sounds strange but besides the Lukaszeko it's very nice and interesting country.

Of course I have also good contacts in Hungary, Austria, Slovakia and Baltic States.

Warm greetings from Warsaw. Maciej

### LLANDUDNO HOTEL (3rd Jun)

Phillip Ward is being chased by the Somerset Hotel that he's booked for us next year to see whether he can release any rooms! He'll be asking you to help him check the accuracy of his estimates.

### FROM BABS to all club members (3rd Jun)

#### FOUNDATION COURSE 2008

Following the success of the Foundation Course at BABS Harmony College 2007, we will be running the course again in 2008. It will be held over the weekend of 18th to 20<sup>th</sup> July in Walsall, near Birmingham.

The course has been created, to consolidate a basic standard of barbershop craft and to enable barbershoppers to learn more about the judging categories. It has lots of valuable material for chorus directors and quartet singers - in fact, anyone who takes part in competition. It will also supply the tools that will enable you to pass on the knowledge to your choruses and quartets.

You will come away with

- An overview of the contest system.
- A knowledge of what each of the three scoring categories are 'looking for' and their scoring methods.
- Knowledge of how the categories overlap with each other and how this is managed.

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- Some 'evaluation' and 'recommendation' skills that will help you as a performer and future coach.

The course will be attractive to music team personnel, quartet singers, chorus directors and anyone considering judge training. The foundation course will be a compulsory part of the training for those who are considering joining the judging guild.

Both BABS and LABBS judging guilds will jointly run the course. If you are interested and require more information, including details of venue and costs etc., please contact Norma Head: [normahead@lineone.net](mailto:normahead@lineone.net) or Tel: 0117 965 6681. The closing date for applications is the 30th June 2008

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### HISTORICAL NOTES

#### **5 Years Ago June 2003**

**16<sup>th</sup>** Dedication of a newly planted Copper Beech Tree with a plaque at Billingbear Golf Course as a permanent memory of Steve Hall. The dedication read:

‘This tree was planted in celebration of  
STEVE HALL 1959 – 2002’

“I’m outa here”

Thames Valley Chorus and Friends  
Billinbear Park Golf Course Wokingham  
16<sup>th</sup> June 2003

**17<sup>th</sup>** A fun evening was held with stalls run by members, families and friends that raised over £400 for Club funds.

**29<sup>th</sup>** A 25 man chorus performed at Legoland, Windsor.

The Performance Team is now under the leadership of Brian Milbank following the retirement of Graham Starkie. Peter Kennedy decided to step down as C/D and take a break from the Chorus after the pressure as a novice director in the 2002 and 2003 conventions. No immediate replacement is being sought and Phillip Ward, Brian Milbank, Meyrick Wyard and Roger Wilkinson will direct at sing-outs. Rhiannon Owens-Hall will choose, teach and direct the two 2004 convention songs.

June Tag Rag was full of congratulations and praise from friends and supporters of TVC for all the team, including Emma Taylor (choreography), and chorus for the 2<sup>nd</sup> place at convention.

During the month Rockaholix (Roger Wilkinson, Alan Hill, Brian Callaghan, Chris Oliver) were at Tadley Court, Tadley for a Masonic evening, a private party at Sunningdale and Bisham Abbey for Chris Oliver’s son’s engagement party.

#### **10 Years Ago June 1998**

Tag rag recorded the accession of Steve Hall to the Chorus Director’s role with the TVC after a third placing at convention under the shared batons of the retiring Tony Searle and Steve Hall. Chris Davidson took over the role of Musical Events Director on the Club Executive.

#### **15 Years Ago June 1993**

Squadron Leader Rod Adams (Rtd) became a Member of The British Empire in the Queen’s Birthday honours list.

#### **20 Years Ago June 1988**

**7<sup>th</sup>** Reading Festival Ramada Hotel Reading

On the show were:

Thames Valley Chorus, Reading Barberettes, Tapestry (LABBS quartet from Chesham), Southern Comfort (John Carter, Alan Hill, Colin Thatcher, Gerry Holland), Compere Jim Bosley (RBHC Associate member). As well as Derek Smith, our regular C/D, we also had Pete Powell (Battle Hymn & Girls Medley), John Lane (Cockney Medley), Colin Thatcher (Do-wacka-do), fronting the chorus.

#### **25 Years Ago June 1983**

**4<sup>th</sup>** We took a riverboat trip in the “Southern Comfort Mississippi” on the Thames organized by Les Hearn & Ken Hopper.

**25<sup>th</sup>** Full Chorus at Marston Court Old Peoples Home, Oxford.

An afterglow was held at the Wantage Club.

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A new quartet performed at the Henley Festival calling themselves "The Coxed Four" (John Carter, Alan Hill, Colin Thatcher, Gerry Holland). Due to his shift work Colin was unable to appear on Thursday and Friday, his place being taken by Graham Starkie.

TVC current repertoire:

Sing A Song With Your Heart  
Alexander's Ragtime Band  
When Sweet Susie Goes Stepping By  
Mississippi Medley  
I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen  
Just A Cottage Small  
Sunshine Of Your Smile  
Do-Wacka-Do  
Back In Dad And Mothers Day  
Now Is The Hour  
I've Found My Sweetheart Sally  
Meet Me In Rosetime Rosie

### 30 Years Ago June 1978

9<sup>th</sup> Full Chorus at Ufton Nerve School

24<sup>th</sup> Full Chorus at Central Hotel, Cardiff  
With the Barberettes for Cardiff BHC's first birthday show. This was my first sing out with TVC or Berkshire Barbershoppers as we were then called. By a strange coincidence it was my birthday and back in the land of my birth.

During the month Gerry Holland appeared in a BBC Television film entitled 'Airport Departure' and his off-duty hobby showed his quartet 'The Forrestaires' (Pete Forrest, Dave Elson, Peter Bugden, Gerry Holland) singing in a pub.

### HAYDN ADAMS

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Thanks to Haydn Adams, Richard Leatham, Bob Ridley, and Irene for supplying copy.

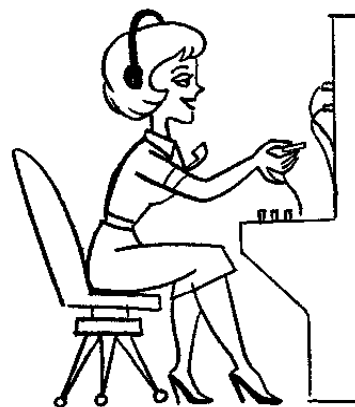
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### SUPPORTERS

It seems a long time since all the angst of Convention. As always it was great to catch up with "old" friends, especially Barry and Sharon. Last time was in Anaheim in 1999. They both looked well and I am sure you all enjoyed the 'Northern Lights' show as much as I did.

Although the Centre was good, it was unfortunate that it was out of town and therefore away from the hotels. This meant that we didn't really have any TVC social time. Apparently some choruses were about 6 miles away! Phillip did a great job at organising the hotel and it was a pity he ended up leaving early after his fall. However, I believe he is fully recovered. Anyway congratulations to TVC on maintaining 5th position.

Our two quartets were great and I think it wasn't only the quartet supporters who thought their performances rated higher placings.

I would have liked to have spent more time exploring Cheltenham as it looked really interesting. Will have to make a return visit.

Luv 'n' hugs as always,

### IRENE

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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.

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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](http://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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[bob.ridley@btinternet.com](mailto:bob.ridley@btinternet.com)

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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](http://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](mailto:Pravina.Makwana@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk).

## READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

RBHC's

# 50 CLUB

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Regular listening to recorded material improves your awareness of the barbershop style and will help you to work-smarter with your singing.

## Barbershop Recordings Resource Library

Save yourself the cost (and trouble) of getting your own recordings by borrowing other members through Andy Wheeler's Lending Library Service. Look for the Library List on the notice board for current titles.

Borrowing requests should be made either by email or a personal note that should include name of item required and a reply address. Speak to Andy on Rehearsal night or at [andy.wheeler@sportscentre.org.uk](mailto:andy.wheeler@sportscentre.org.uk). Andy will coordinate the loan and put the lender in touch with the borrower to complete the deal.

A charge of £1 per item loaned per week is payable to Andy. The money will go into Club funds and Andy will review the need to purchase recorded material on behalf of the library.

## READING BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

THE REMAINING DAYS OF

**JUNE 2008**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
15	16	17 <b>Rehearsal</b> TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 <b>Rehearsal</b>	25	26	27	27
29	30	June 2008				

July 2008 calendar is on page 2

A LOOK AHEAD TO

**AUGUST 2008**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31	July 2008				1	2
3	4	5 <b>Rehearsal</b>	6 Daytimers Thamesfield House Henley	7	8	9
10	11	12 <b>Rehearsal</b> TAG RAG COPY DEADLINE	13	14	15 Dot & Meyrick's Wedding	16
17	18	19 Sing at RHS Wisley <b>No Rehearsal</b> TAG RAG DISTRIBUTION	20	21	22 BABS Harmony College	23 BABS Harmony College
24 BABS Harmony College	25	26 <b>Rehearsal</b>	27	28	29	30