

Voice Box

Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers
www.labbs.org.uk

Autumn 2025 £4



LABBS goes global!



Plus! *Music festivals, new members, anniversaries and plenty of fun in the sun!*

Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers

Chair:

Jill Cook
chair@labbs.org.uk

Vice-Chair:

Alys Galloway
vicechair@labbs.org.uk

Secretary:

Liz Mountain-Town
secretary@labbs.org.uk

Acting Finance Director (Vacancy):

Alys Galloway
financedirector@labbs.org.uk

Membership Director:

Zelda Gray
membership@labbs.org.uk

Events Director:

Kristina Mair
events@labbs.org.uk

Education Director:

Alison Thompson
educationdirector@labbs.org.uk

Communications Director:

Nancy Philbin
communications@labbs.org.uk

Youth Director:

Chloe Cale
youth@labbs.org.uk

Director of Diversity & Inclusion:

Kate Middleton
diversity@labbs.org.uk

50th Anniversary Coordinator:

Alison Liddell
anniversary@labbs.org.uk

Immediate Past Chair:

Sue Ranson
pastchair@labbs.org.uk

VoiceBox Editor (Acting):

Melanie Baber
voicebox@labbs.org.uk



Chair's Foreword

What a fantastic time we've had as an Association over the past few months. There's so much to celebrate and be proud of.

In the spring our four regional education events were attended by over 400 members from across the country. Each group learnt *Songbird*, a beautiful arrangement by Linda Corcoran in remembrance of [Katy Phillips](#). Our volunteer educators and MDs did a super job, and it was a wonderful way to catch up with old friends, make new ones, and feel the joy of singing harmonies together. Further education took place in May when Dr Liz Garnett, our Chorus Director Development Specialist, led a workshop for sixteen novice or aspiring musical directors. It's heartwarming to see how much talent and potential we have across our Association.

In the sweltering heat of June, we were treated

to around 40 quartets singing to the highest standards at Prelims with delicious refreshments provided by The Belles of Three Spires. Congratulations to everyone who crossed the stage and to all those going on to compete at Convention in October.

Women's and mixed quartet singing is in excellent health in the UK – I can't wait to see what comes next!

Then of course we enjoyed a bumper Brits year at BHS International with no less than five quartets and three choruses representing our country. We were thrilled to see the amazing performances of Amersham A Cappella, Cheshire Chord Company and Lux A Cappella on the big stage, and the fantastic sets from Ami Quartet, The Sharrow Vale



Blues, The Light Fantastic, Hot Ticket and Fifth Element. Our hearts are brimming with love and pride, and the reputation of British barbershop in the global community just gets stronger.

Meanwhile clubs have been singing at summer events in local communities, entertaining audiences and having fun together. Now it's full speed ahead to Convention in October – see you in Harrogate!

Jill Cook
Chair, LABBS

Update from your Editor

Welcome to the Autumn edition of VoiceBox.

As you read this a great many of us will be preparing for Convention which is just around the corner. Do check out the Club News section to find out all about what our clubs have been up to over the past few months to prepare, as well as all the other brilliant events and activities they've been a part of over the summer months.

As one of our contributors has noted, there's never a dull moment in Barbershop World and there's often so much to write about it can be challenging to know what to leave out. But leave things out we must. To make sure we have room for everyone's news, we have a limit of 350 words per article, and up to two high resolution photos. Of course, if your club or quartet has something particularly exciting to write about, please do contact me in advance

to see what space is available. If I can accommodate additional text and photos, I will.

In other news, we had superb representation at BHS this year with no less than EIGHT ensembles flying the flag (literally!) for the UK. Head on over to page 3 to find out what the LABBS Brit contingent got up to, as well as Amy and her globetrotting slug, Dave!

Mel Baber
VoiceBox Editor (Acting)

The journey to Denver

What a privilege for Amersham A Cappella

to join the best in the world at the Barbershop Harmony Society's International Convention in Denver in July. With fellow Brits Cheshire Chord Company and Lux A Cappella, plus five UK quartets, we flew the Union Jack high over the huge Colorado Convention Centre and its 5,000-seat Bellco Theatre.

It was our debut at the convention. Women have competed at the event since 2018 but not until last year did a LABBS chorus, The White Rosettes, land the chance to take part. Our Queen package, showcased at LABBS last year and at BABS in May, earned us 24th place out of 39 in the international chorus contest.

AAC Chair, Amanda Parker, ensured we could take on stage tucked-away photos of the 13 AAC members unable to join us. She said: 'I am so proud of all we have achieved, with so much hard, hard work at rehearsals and behind the scenes. It's been such a journey already and we're just at the beginning'.

That journey started back in 2023 when our winning score at IABS bagged us the BHS invitation.

Our fundraising efforts over more than 12 months were an achievement in themselves and included sea shanties, a Sing with Amersham Barbie Day, birthday and other celebratory singagrams, and even the publication of a recipe book.

Head of Performance, Flash Watson, conjured the vision for our two-song set, shaping the opening, the finish and everything in between. And with the help of coaches David and Sandi Wright, Nicky Salt, Alexander Koller and Kirsty Williams, we honed our showpiece to be totally 'Freddie Ready'.

In the driving seat was MD Helen Lappert, whose infectious will to constantly improve spurs us to push the boundaries.

Helen said: 'To have the chance to appear on an international stage alongside some of the most extraordinary and inspirational barbershop performances in the world was utterly mind-blowing and life-enhancing. We were thrilled and proud to perform our two specially commissioned David Wright arrangements for David, who was sitting in front of us in the judge's pit!'



Tenor Emily Blackwood ready for a very British interlude

Trip manager and PRO Justine Nye oversaw our adventure, and it was her mammoth efforts that smoothed our path to the stage.

Justine said: 'There was a great collaboration between everyone in the 200-strong British contingent and it was lovely to make new friends as we shared our tips and tricks to overcome various organisational hurdles to get across the pond with no major dramas. It really was no bother!'

Cath Harris
Amersham A Cappella



Amersham A Cappella on stage

Denver highlights

Denver was the first international convention

for any of us and it did not disappoint! Between squeezing in time for a baseball game and a trip to the Red Rocks we were blown away by the standard of barbershop from all the quartets and choruses. We loved being a part of the Varsity chorus and getting to know the fellow youth barbershoppers was a real highlight, alongside walking away with some shiny medals!! Our other big highlights were watching the final and the AIC show.

One of the things that really made our trip was seeing the success of the other affiliate groups: watching Lemon Squeezy win their gold medal, two non-American quartets in the top four of the Varsity Contest, and Pacific Connection who placed third in the chorus contest. This was

topped only by the success of the British contingent, and we were so grateful for the support we felt from the rest of the Brits, both from those that were in Denver that we saw at the Brit Bash and those at home watching on the livestream.

I think all four of us came off stage in a blur and only a couple of days later did anything really sink in about what we'd done. The stage was the friendliest we'd ever sung on and we were blown away by the enthusiasm for youth barbershop in America! It was an inspiring trip to hear and sing with such great barbershoppers from around the world. Congratulations to Radiant for winning the Varsity Contest, congratulations to Lemon Squeezy for winning the gold medal and congratulations to everyone who crossed the stage across the week!

Ami Quartet



Ami Quartet



Ami Quartet with their awards

Reflecting on Denver

As the voices recover, the sleep schedules revert to normal, and the altitude adjustment fades into memory, we reflect on Hot Ticket's week spent at BHS International 2025. To be part of such a huge group of British friends travelling over to represent BABS and LABBS was an honour that we don't take lightly, and we're proud to be part of this talented and historic

Whilst it was the quartet's second time on the international stage, having competed in 2023, it was of course the first time for our baritone Ben who joined us last year. It was so special to experience his first international with him, and we also had the distinct pleasure to cheer him on as he competed with his Australian friends in Vox Canvas chorus!



Hot Ticket

contingent. We brought our two current favourite charts, *She's Got A Way* and *Oh Lonesome Me* - both arranged by David Wright - and were proud to achieve 79.9% placing 43rd in the quartet competition.

As a quartet, we took advantage of many performance opportunities outside of the contest stage. Firstly, to represent the UK performing *God Save The King* with our friends The Light Fantastic, was such a joy; we shared this session with friends in Primer and Hillbillies who represented Sweden, and Ceoltóirí Canóla who represented Ireland. Open rehearsals are a great way to spend time at BHS International: we soaked up the rich chords and knowledge of Central Standard chorus who kindly let us sing two songs for them, and we spent time with the spectacular Parkside Melody chorus for whom we debuted a new arrangement that we had commissioned. Finally, a dream came true as we performed in the fabulous Rainbow Room during the Saturday



Hot Ticket and The Light Fantastic

night afterglow. We also caught up with Smoke Ring Quartet who were sporting Hot Ticket merch, and as you can see on the front page, they look fab!

We would like to congratulate our fellow Brits for all of their incredible and historic accomplishments throughout the week! From barbershop stalwarts to those who've recently caught the bug, the standard of British barbershop continues to grow and flourish, and we are so happy to be a part of it.

To everyone who has supported us on social media, sent us kind words or even donated to our GoFundMe which significantly assisted us financially, thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Bethany Southworth
Hot Ticket

Denver: Wow! What a joy!

On Saturday 5th July

2025, Cheshire Chord Company took to the international stage at the annual BHS Convention in Denver, Colorado. We represented LABBS as 2023 Champions and were **HUGELY** proud to do so. 45 of us made the trip, alongside a wonderful support network of family members and friends. Members arrived in the days leading up to the contest, having enjoyed many of the wonders that the Colorado area offers before assembling for the first time on the Tuesday evening of Convention week, for drinks on the 21st floor of the HQ hotel - how fancy!

The contest kicked off with 65 quartets crossing the stage including the UK's very own The Sharrow Vale Blues, Hot Ticket, The Light Fantastic and Fifth Element. It was great to support them and then celebrate The Sharrow Vale Blues making it through to the semi-finals - a groundbreaking moment!

The British contingent - including Amersham A Capella, Lux A Capella, the British quartets and delegates - got together for a 'Brit Bash'. A super party and a great opportunity to be together and share support for each other for the days ahead. We were entertained by many of the top class International and European groups who dropped by to perform for us, close-up and personal. Following songs from all the Brits, Cheshire Chord Company and Amersham A Capella performed One Day Like This and Bohemian Rhapsody together: what a special moment for all, especially directors Helen and Jo, with over 100 of us sharing the risers.

During the week, members attended fringe educational events and made the most of visiting the open rehearsals hosted by many of the competing international choruses, before embarking on our own final two rehearsals before our big day. We were pleased to welcome Alison and Gemma Thompson to one of our rehearsals alongside Sean Devine and Sandi Wright, who had coached us earlier this year in the UK.

Contest day arrived, and we had an absolute ball on stage! The atmosphere was electric with a full audience who showed their love for our performance with a standing ovation and rapturous applause. What a moment to remember. Those who couldn't be with us were in our hearts on stage and throughout the trip.

We placed 25th in the world out of 39, with a score of 82.5%, our highest in the last 15 years. It was a joy to take a slice of the North West to the USA, and we know from the comments afterwards that we brought back memories of the 1960's and touched the hearts of our audience. That was our intention, and what a place to do it.

Quotes from our members really sum up the experience for us:

"Denver, wow! What an absolutely amazing experience. Everyone was so friendly and supportive, and we had a ball at the Brit Bash!"



"It was amazing to witness quartets and choruses sing at a 90+ level, just brilliant, sincere, honest, high-level performances. What a joy!"

Thank you to all those who supported us with your kind words and wishes and of course financial donations as we fundraised over the last 18 months. We were proud to represent LABBS and felt the love from the UK from all those following our journey on social media and via the livestream.

Over and out for now.

Jo Braham, MD
Cheshire Chord Company



Bringing the 60s to Denver



MDs Jo and Helen

Denver Diaries from The Blues

After months of looming large in our minds, the

international convention in Denver finally happened. And my goodness, what a week! We tried to make sure that competing didn't feel all-consuming, so we crammed in lots of other cool stuff. If you head over to our [Facebook page](#), you'll find video diaries of what we got up to each day!

Regarding the contest itself, it really is difficult to know what to write! We ran off-stage buoyant, adrenaline-soaked, and feeling that we'd put a good representation of ourselves on the international stage. Leading up to Denver, 'making the twenty' felt such a lofty aim that we talked about it almost half-jokingly. But when we heard our names called in the results, we instantly caved into a four-way hug and screamed and cried. We couldn't hear any of the names announced after us, and probably neither could the people sitting nearby!

Singing in the semi-finals then brought an extra day of being on the ball that we hadn't planned for, so it was exhausting! But it was also incredible, and we felt weirdly relaxed about it all in the warm-up room, knowing we had nothing to lose. And we still can't quite fathom the

fact that we ended up placing 19th in the world. We truly couldn't be more thrilled!

To The Light Fantastic, Hot Ticket, Fifth Element, and Ami Quartet, we're proud to know each and every one of you, and of how we supported each other. We can all come home, heads held high, knowing that we nailed it. Special congrats to Ami Quartet for their 4th place medal in the Varsity Contest! The same goes for the wonderful UK choruses who competed: Lux A Cappella, Amersham A Cappella, and of course our Cheshire Chord Company family, with whom Becca and Hannah sang on Saturday.

We do need to finish with some special thanks.

Firstly, to Blair Brown, our sensational coach and the coolest friend we could hope to have, who put her finger on exactly what we needed from our final coaching session at T minus 24 hours!

Secondly, to Rob Stonewood and Jo and Tim Braham, for taking care of us throughout the trip, making sure we had everything we needed on contest days, and for your expert nerve-handling.



The Sharrow Vale Blues

Finally, to anyone out there who supported us with a spare pound or a kind word. Competing at international is expensive and daunting. It just is. But we've been blown away by the generosity shown by people in our communities who helped us make this trip. We do need to single out our dear friends Graham and Sujata, who've been a huge part of our journey. They contributed lots to our pot, let us put on fundraising concerts hosted from their lovely home, and even flew halfway around the world to support us live in Denver. We love you and we're singularly lucky to have you in our corner.

Becca, Hannah, Sam & Tim
The Sharrow Vale Blues

Special, magical and unforgettable

The Light Fantastic recently returned

from an unforgettable adventure in Denver, where we had the honour of competing at the BHS International Convention. Representing LABBS and the UK on such a prestigious stage was an absolute blast! From the moment we arrived, the energy in the city was electric. We were so proud to stand amongst the world's best, and it was even more special to cheer on our talented friends from other UK groups. What a joy to celebrate each other's successes!



Colin, Simon, Jenny and Emma

One of the most special moments of the week was the opportunity to sing the UK National Anthem alongside our friends from Hot Ticket Quartet. It was a privilege to share that stage and an experience we will cherish forever.

We were overwhelmed by the support from across the UK barbershop community both at home and in Denver. Your encouragement, cheers, and messages lifted us every step of the way. The atmosphere in the auditorium was both exhilarating and welcoming, and it lifted us to give our best performance yet. We're overjoyed to have achieved our highest score ever - 80.3% - a personal milestone that made the whole experience even more meaningful. Placing 42nd overall far exceeded our expectations, and we couldn't be prouder!

A huge thank you goes out to our incredible coaches, whose expertise, energy, and unwavering belief in us helped shape every note. Special thanks to Nick Bryant, whose brilliant arrangement of *All I Care About* brought something fresh to the stage and was a joy to sing.

Beyond the competition, what made this week truly magical was the sense of



The Light Fantastic

togetherness. Barbershop is not just about chords and tags - it's about connection, laughter, and belonging. We've returned home with full hearts, incredible memories, and deeper friendships.

There's no rest for the tuneful, though! We're already looking ahead and preparing for World Mixed 2026 in Germany. This is just the beginning of another exciting chapter for us, and we can't wait to keep sharing this incredible journey with you all.

With deepest love, harmony, and gratitude,

Jenny, Emma, Colin and Simon
The Light Fantastic

LUX LABBSers go global!

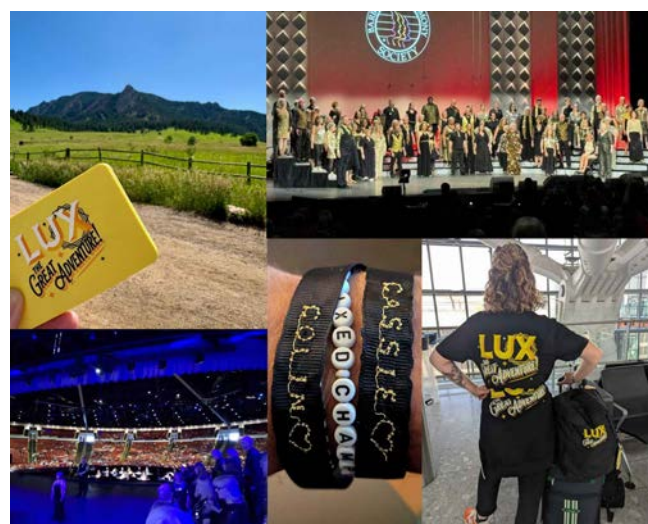
July saw the trip LUX had been waiting a year for - as we became the first UK mixed chorus (containing a number of LABBSers from choruses and quartets across the association) to represent British barbershop at the BHS international convention in Denver!

What an incredible week we shared with a whoppingly big UK contingent: Amersham A Cappella, Cheshire Chord Company, Hot Ticket, Fifth Element, Ami Quartet, and not forgetting The Light Fantastic featuring our very own MD, Simon! It was gorgeous to experience the whole event alongside so many talented folks from across our national 'shop family, especially when it came to The Brit Bash held on Wednesday night, wonderfully organised by Rachel Sheldon and MC'd by Alastair Lamyman. We sang up a storm and showed our Stateside pals how we party. Sleep? Who needs sleep??

Meeting so many international barbershoppers was incredible, and made

for some unforgettable moments: Pacific Connection's afterglow performances and haka; supporting every UK group with flags and as much whoopin' and hollerin' as we could muster (looking after the voices of course); watching European groups smash it in both contests with Lemon Squeezy taking the quartet gold in fine style; and, cheering on our lovely pals in Smoke Ring. Just a few examples from a whole host of fabulous memories.

And in true LUX fashion, we left no-one behind when we stepped on the stage on competition day - every single member who couldn't be with us in Denver was remembered and carried with us on ribbons as a vital part of our path to BHS.



LUX's Great Adventure

We're so proud of what we put on that stage and, as we always do, had THE MOST fun doing it - making Simon and Rhiannon's dreams of directing a chorus on the international stage a reality. What a buzz - can we do it all again please?

**Rachel Watson, PRO
LUX A Cappella**

Challenge Amy in barbershop heaven

This year's international contest in Denver had LABBS and BABS members buzzing with excitement, with an unprecedented number of UK entrants taking to the stage. So, when one of our own leading ladies announced she was joining the party the idea of 'Challenge Amy' was born: to become the ultimate groupie and be pictured with our Brits abroad plus any legends of barbershop she discovered along the way.

Amy smashed the challenge, but how was it travelling solo and what were her

favourite moments? Amy gave us a round up of her experience:

"I always wanted to go to International and with a friend living in Colorado that I could visit on the way it felt like the stars aligned".

"The trip was a kind of 'choose your own adventure' and so many kind people took me under their wing - from LUX, to Amersham and Cheshire Chords. I definitely would have preferred to have had a buddy with me but the 'Challenge Amy' photo bombs and my quartet Specs Appeal Bingo Card kept me connected with the best of barbershop royalty. Where else would I be asking Simon Lubkowski to hold my quartet's mascot - a rubber slug called Dave?"

"A Barbershop Disneyland with amazing sights and sounds on stage as well as around every corner. The most memorable moments were the afterglows and the corridors of the convention centre. It really was all a bit of a dream. I felt honoured to hang out with rising stars and legends alike; Tim



Waurick even wore one of my quartet's 'Giving Up Jogging' Ryvita badges!"

"Now I haven't even mentioned the first-timers briefing, the woodshedding, Harmony University, the brilliant open rehearsals and partying at the Brit Bash where I stood proudly on the risers representing my chorus Bristol Fashion".

**Debbie Trotman, PRO, in conversation
with Amy Ford
Bristol Fashion and Specs Appeal**



Cleethorpes Music Festival success

The sun shone brightly

as the day of the Cleethorpes Festival of Music and Words dawned and 27 members of the Abbey Belles Chorus boarded the bus. There was added cause for the celebratory atmosphere as birthday banners adorned the windows - our very own bass Bernice was marking her 86th year! She arrived with a placard announcing her age in case anyone didn't believe her - and who would?



Abbey Belles enjoying the sunshine

We arrived at our seaside destination without a hitch and after a VERY warm warm-up (it was an English summer's day at its best), the competition kicked

off. We were first up in the first category - Stage Musical Ensemble - with *Anthem*. And we were awarded first place! A great start.

Next came the Ladies Choirs category, with stiff competition from [Main Street Sound](#) and [Zero Degrees](#). Our pairing of *Somewhere Only We Know* and *Make Your Own Kind of Music* was praised by the adjudicator, who commented there were no weak links in our performance faces - our hard work was paying off! We achieved second place with Main Street Sound taking the top spot.

Our fabulous quartets, [Jabberwocky](#) and [Sic Note](#), along with [Noteworthy](#) from Main Street Sound, entertained us all in the next category and all earned excellent comments from the judge. The winners' trophy went to Jabberwocky (see front page), with Sic Note coming a very respectable third.

Abbey Belles came out on top again in the Barbershop Chorus section, taking first place with our Convention package: *When She Loved Me* and *Where The Lost Things Go*. With a clutch of trophies and

certificates in hand, we were delighted for Noteworthy who were awarded the Rose Bowl Trophy for best performance.

A welcome hour out in the sunshine gave us the chance to walk along the prom and have some much-needed refreshments, and then it was off to the pier for fish and chips (what else would it be!). With many of our fellow competitors also there, it became an afterglow complete with party hats and more singing, including of course, *Happy Birthday* to our Bernice.

Back on the bus we basked in the evening sun and in our achievements, a day of fun, friendship and fabulous singing success finally coming to a close.

Sally Benson
Abbey Belles



Happy birthday, Bernice!

Warming up for Convention

The Belles had a visit

from the fabulous Alison Thompson!

Who doesn't love a coaching session? Even if the coach tells you some of the same things your director has been saying, it seems to land in your brain in a different way from a new person! Alison gave us some new and different approaches to consider, some great teaching and some excellent new warm ups to learn and enjoy. We had fun with circular sirens and singing in a 'pointy' way (like Madonna's bra, said Alison!).

I love a new warm up but always think that it is sometimes difficult

to consolidate them into the chorus lexicon. I set myself the challenge to create a spreadsheet list of all the warm ups that we use regularly and any that we know or have used once or twice. It turned into quite an interesting exercise. So far on the list we have 84 titles, including about 15 that I have written

myself. If you had asked me to guess how many were mine, composed over my 25 years of Barbershopping, I would have guessed about 7 so 15 is awesome!

Such a fun hobby, barbershop has taken us to some great places. From the BIBA contest in Calpe to the LABBS quartet

prelims in our own home town where we sold our cakes and bakes, keeping everyone going through an amazing weekend of singing! We also got to show off our beautiful set of new t-shirts and hoodies, so soft and lovely in our great chorus colours of hot pink and black.



The Belles with Alison

Helen Sutton,
Bari Section

Golden spirit

Avon Harmony's 50th year celebrations

continue to connect our small but mighty group within our LABBS community, and in and around Bristol.

We were very pleased that 12 of our members could attend the LABBS education day in Exeter. Throughout the day we got the chance to mix with many other choruses. We enjoyed rehearsing and singing in a much bigger group than we are used to. It was a great opportunity for us as singers. A day of *Songbird* was a really moving one. A lot of emotion was present, and we learnt with thoughtful coaching how to experience this through the song.

We have also taken several singout opportunities over the past few months, from performing for patrons of St Peter's Hospice at a more formal event, to performing at a chorus member's street party. Singing at a variety of events is something we find rewarding as a chorus.

Most recently, we had a fun and fulfilling day welcoming The Barberettes (also a LABBS founder chorus) to join us in Bristol for a founder's workshop. Together we sang a LABBS polecat, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, and the four part *Friends* theme tune. We also supported each other's performance sets, did



LABBS Education Day

sectionals to unite the parts, and had plenty of cake! Both of our MD's, Mary and Emma, led the day with heaps of enthusiasm and a fair share of humour, which we were so grateful for. They even finished the day with their fantastic 'tag team' style directing of *Bohemian Rhapsody*!

Our committee worked very hard to plan and organise these events, and

we appreciate them creating valuable experiences for us all.

We won't stop there as we look forward to Convention, and our anniversary concert towards the end of the year. We are already giving it jazz hands!

**Sophie England, Baritone and PRO
Avon Harmony**



Avon Harmony and The Barberettes

What an amazing few months celebrating our 50th birthday year

On one of the hottest

days of the year (34 degrees), our new t-shirts, on white tarmac, surrounded by all of the buses, The Barberettes supported a community partner - Reading Buses. Definitely an interesting first singout for Bohemian Rhapsody and the many other songs planned for France.

Finally, 4th July was here and The Barberettes were en-route to the International Choir competition in Saint Raphael. Sadly, the French Air Traffic Control decided otherwise and we had reduced numbers for the first two competitions. Singing in yet more heat - 38 degrees minimum and massive humidity.

Competitions were held at the Palais des Congrès: an amazing indoor auditorium and impressive outdoor, 2000-seater arena with professional light and sound - you can see us at the venue on the front page. Representing the UK with 22 choirs from 14 different countries provided a real smorgasbord of musical styles. Taiwanese pop, an individual taste!

I'm delighted to report that The Barberettes delivered some remarkable performances, securing two second places and a fifth place in three different categories. We were also voted the friendliest and most energetic choir by the staff and audience members. As



The Barbs on tour. Check out our personalised Barberettes bus!

the panel of International judges said, "The Barberettes have energetic show performances in their DNA and should never change. You could teach the youngsters!"

The organisers asked us to showcase some favourites on the outside stage, with a full light show and professionally mic'd up. And such a response from the audience - wow! It was so great to bring our style of a cappella singing and performing to this competition.

10 days later, with the help of Reading Buses, we were off to Bristol to celebrate

our joint 50th birthday with Avon Harmony. Sadly, the third founding member club of LABBS, the Chordettes, weren't able to make it - we missed you ladies. We had a great day learning new songs with Avon Harmony, including the theme from *Friends* and performing our greatest hits to each other. It was so fab having a joint chorus of over 50 ladies. And of course, there was cake!

More celebrations to come!

**Joanna Poulter, PRO
The Barberettes**



Fun with The Barberettes

Always take the weather with you... and bring a little sparkle!

You know how the old

saying goes, you wait all day for a bus (or in this case, a coach) then two come along at once! Yes, here at Bristol Fashion we've been fine-tuning and honing our vocal and performance skills with some fantastic input from two coaches, all in the space of a month.

First to visit was long-standing friend of the chorus, Rob Mance, who flew into Bristol on the back of a tornado warning in Kansas. It was touch and go that he would actually make it but someone in the chorus must have worn their twinkly red shoes that day and wished for a miracle! We've worked hard with Rob over the last few years, tweaking and strengthening our vocal skills. He's really helped us progress by introducing some Stateside barbershop techniques and bringing a greater understanding of the form to the ensemble.

Whilst Rob has really helped with the more technical and theoretical aspects of our singing, we knew we had to look to improve areas of our performance, and work to create even more vibrant and engaging packages for the Convention stage. On what proved to be the hottest weekend of the year in the third heatwave of 2025, in flew - all the way from Buxton, UK - new friend of the chorus, LABBS musicality judge, Emma Shanks. With her own brand of musical wizardry, Emma had us riding metaphorical motorbikes, tackling tongue-twisters and over the course of a weekend,



BF with our new friend, Emma Shanks

encouraged us to be brave and embark on a new journey of choral discovery. We're excited to see what sparkly magic we can conjure over the coming months!

**Debbie Nichols, Lead Section
Bristol Fashion**



BF with long-standing friend, Rob Mance

News from Coast to Coast

Coast to Coast's fabulous MD, Angela Sanchez, who for 10 years has directed the chorus with such wonderful musicality, enthusiasm and good humour, has recently resigned from the position due to family, work and other commitments.

Angela has been a superb director, leading us to perform at Convention, BIBA and other competitions and festivals, running our annual retreats with guest conductors, and our Polecat Frenzies. A music judge, Angela has hugely improved our singing, breathing, projection and blending and has introduced us to a fantastic and varied repertoire. She will be greatly missed, and we at Coast to Coast would like to thank her most sincerely for her commitment and dedication over the years. We wish her all the very best for the future.

This, of course, means that we now have a vacancy for a Musical Director! Coast to Coast is well-established and extremely welcoming, and is uniquely important in being LABBS' only hybrid chorus. We meet online once or twice

a month and in-person in Leicester's Secular Hall a few times a year. We hold annual weekend retreats, usually at The Hilton Hotel in Leicester and which are open to all LABBS members. We also host annual summer Polecat Frenzies which are open to anyone from LABBS.

Coast to Coast is a lifeline for those who love barbershop singing but cannot manage to get out to join a local chorus. We have a large and attractive, varied repertoire and specialise in polecats. Our members have come from choruses all over the country, as well as from Club at Large, and we greatly appreciate polecats which are so very important in unifying barbershoppers and allowing the same great arrangements to be sung wherever they meet.

We would be thrilled to hear from anybody who would like the



opportunity to direct Coast to Coast. If interested, please contact our membership secretary at membership@singcoast2coast.co.uk

**Christine Kyriacou, PRO
Coast to Coast**



A busy summer for the GEMs

GEM Connection celebrated our 27th birthday back in May with a chorus meal together. And of course, we couldn't resist entertaining the other diners with our impromptu performance while we were there!

During the evening our Chairperson, Paula, presented Anita with her LABBS 25 year Long Service Award. Anita has been a valued member of our Lead section since joining us back in 2000.

GEM's Unsung Hero Award was also presented by last year's winner of the award, Helen, to our new recipient, Julia. This is an award that is given out on our birthday to a chorus

member who goes above and beyond duties behind the scenes.

The GEMs have been busy polishing up our repertoire for our summer singouts and learning new songs. We have also had coaching sessions from Sally McLean and are looking forward to seeing her again in September as we prepare our package ready for our return to the Convention stage.

We're looking forward to seeing you all there!

**Jenny Smedley, PRO
GEM Connection**



Chairperson Paula Wright presenting Anita Binch with her LABBS 25 year Long Service Award



Helen Gaskell presenting Julia Burns with our Unsung Hero Award

Junction 14's busy year continues

Our annual retreat this year was a little different.

Held in May, the first day was a full day of coaching with Simon Lubkowski, followed by a fun social evening with a buffet, entertainment and plenty of singing. On the second day we combined coaching with Simon with a 'Come and Sing Day'. We had quite a few ladies who came along to join us for the event and hopefully liked it so much they will join us as members.

We were very fortunate to have Simon coach us for the whole weekend. We were very thankful that he could fit us into his very hectic life!



Coaching with Simon

May also saw us sing in St. Laurence Church, Winslow, for their annual Church Festival Week. A lovely event

followed by tea and scones with jam and cream.

In June we sang in our favourite venue, the Concourse at Milton Keynes Railway Station. It's always such fun singing here and the commuters, day trippers and holidaymakers were very generous: we managed to collect £274 for charity in just an hour. The Mayor of Newport Pagnell was passing through and stopped to take photos and chat to us. He heard us sing *Sweet Caroline* and as a result he offered to donate

some money to our charity every time the Lionesses scored a goal at the Euros, if we would share our chorus singing the song on social media. Which, of course, we did! We finished the night with a cocktail or two at the nearby rooftop bar at Unity Place.

July was busy for us too. We sang at the Milton Keynes Community Choirs Festival in Campbell Park, along with 15 other choirs. A great event and the sun shone all day! We had another performance for a Golden Wedding Anniversary party and a garden party to attend too.



Junction 14 at St. Laurence Church

With another birthday party in August, it was a busy summer!

In sadder news, I'm sorry to share that our lovely lead, Christine Milner, passed away suddenly after an event that we were performing at on Saturday 19th July. More information will be given in the next edition of VoiceBox.

**Val Hutchinson, PRO
Junction 14**



Our favourite venue: the Concourse at Milton Keynes Railway Station

Norwich Harmony news

We've had a busy time over the past few months, with coaching sessions from Boo de Bruin and Kirsty Williams to get us on the right track for Convention 2025. A group from the chorus travelled to Cambridge to be part of the wonderful LABBS Education day, performing an emotional rendition of *Songbird*.

We were invited to sing for the residents of Hethersett Hall Care Home, including former long-time Norwich Harmony member Mavis. It was a hot day, but we turned up in our finest summer dresses and sang our hearts out. Repertoire included *A Million Dreams*, *My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean* (with audience participation), *What the World Needs Now* and *Bohemian Rhapsody*. To watch the emotion, recognition and joy in the residents' faces was moving and joyful all at once.



Hethersett Hall performance

Our members Carrie (celebrating her 50th birthday on the day!) and Vivienne took the ultimate adrenaline challenge and jumped from 13,000ft in aid of EACH - East Anglia's Children's Hospice. Beccles Airfield was the setting for the jump and they both had an amazing time, raising over £2300 between them. Carrie said of the experience: "At the door there was definitely a moment of 'Bother, is this a good idea?' before we

fell out, turning over to see the plane silhouetted in the sky, and having about a minute of freefall. This was the best bit - the silence and feel of the air."

Other fundraising activities for our chosen charity, Bone Cancer Research Trust, included a Sound and Vision quiz, with a maker's raffle and our regular 100 Club, plus monthly sales of plants, books and treats at rehearsal break time.

We have welcomed 7 new members (so far) this year. Moth and Jane (baritone), Sally and Vivienne (bass), Sue (lead), and Katherine and Marianne (tenor), as well as baby Jack, son of Katie and Brian.

**Vikki Nelson, PRO
Norwich Harmony**



Vivienne loving her skydive

A life in harmony: honouring Jean Dilloway

From wartime windows to centre stage - celebrating a beloved barbershopper's 97th birthday

As Britain endured the trials of war, a teenage Jean Dilloway quietly stitched resilience into every seam. In a shop window she repaired Lyle stockings, part necessity, part pride. That humble wartime job became a small venture with her sister, mending stockings until fishnet tights made the work obsolete.

But Jean never stayed still for long. After the war, she and her husband of 40 years ran a general store at Portsmouth Football Ground. She managed the counter and even drove the delivery van: always practical, always dependable.

Jean's love of music blossomed with the Purbrook Sweet Adelines, where she sang in both the chorus and quartets. Her rich baritone helped earn the group silver and bronze medals at Sweet Adeline conventions. In 2002, her performance journey continued with Reflections, an afternoon entertainment group where Jean lit up the stage.

When the Purbrook Sweet Adelines disbanded, Jean joined the Pitchpipers in 2008, bringing joy, flair, and a memorable sense of theatre whether dressed as Elvis, a witch, or even a skeleton! She also sang alto with Folks in Harmony, a mixed a cappella group, continuing well into her nineties.

In 2019, Jean became Musical Director of Reflections, guiding the group until the pandemic paused performances in 2020. Remarkably, she only retired in early 2025 - at the age of 96.

Now, as Jean turns 97 on August 4th, she's been awarded Honorary Membership by the Pitchpipers and named a Life Member of both Pitchpipers and Folks in Harmony - fitting recognition for a woman who's brought music and camaraderie to so many.

More than a performer, Jean is the heart of any rehearsal room. Sharp-witted, warm-spirited, and always quick with a cheeky schoolgirl joke. Though retired, she remains a beloved presence in the chorus community.



Happy birthday, Jean!

Here's to Jean Dilloway: a woman whose life has been stitched with laughter, harmony, and heart.

Happy 97th, Jean. Your song lives on in all of us.

Louise Berry, PR
The Pitchpipers



Jean receiving her Honorary Membership of the Pitchpipers

Red Rosettes summer roundup

I am not sure if other VoiceBox contributors

have a similar experience but when I sit down to write the quarterly article I sometimes think 'Hmmm! What am I going to write about?' Then I go back through our group page and by the end of it, I feel sorry because I have to leave something out. Never a dull moment in Barbershop World!

In the last article I mentioned we were heading off to SNOBS. We had a fantastic time, were made so welcome by everyone, and were delighted to represent LABBS and place fifth with a score of 84% - our highest yet. Breaking that 80% barrier twice in a year makes us feel all the rehearsals and efforts are paying off. We must pay tribute to the top placed choruses who produced some epic performances and were very inspiring.

On our return we celebrated our 45th Anniversary. We were joined by founder and former members, and our past MD

Linda Corcoran conducted us in her arrangement of *Songbird*. Two of our longest serving members, Patsy and Jo, were awarded Honorary Memberships. Needless to say, we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, singing, dancing and dressing up like the show-offs we are. It was a wonderful night.

Our Learn to Sing course attracted eleven ladies who learned *Songbird*. This was chosen in honour of the 10th anniversary of losing our MD Katy Phillips. They put their heart and soul into it and five ladies have subsequently joined the chorus which is always gratifying.

On a personal level we have had some wonderful achievements by chorus members. Lilly Nixon was awarded a First Class Bachelor of Arts Degree with Honours in Sociology from Liverpool University. Her dissertation was Investigating Community Identity and Tradition in Women's Barbershop which made it extra special.

Our wonderful bari, Diane Blackburn

and her husband Chris completed the Camino in May. This involved walking from St Jean De Port in France to Santiago De Compostela in Spain, a gruelling pilgrimage of 500 miles. Walking an average of 15 miles a day with their rucksacks, they endured some harsh extremes of weather, climbs of up to 5000 feet, and very painful blisters and other injuries. Diane and Chris were awarded their certificates and medals in the Pilgrimage Mass on completion of their journey. It was a profoundly moving and spiritual experience of a lifetime for them both and they made some lifelong friends. What an achievement. Of course, Diane being Diane, less than a fortnight later she undertook the MacMillan Mighty Hike. You can't keep a good woman down!

Enjoy the Summer. See you all at Convention! EEEK!

Life's a song. We sing it.

Ann Atkin
The Red Rosettes



Congratulations, Lilly!



Diane and Chris after their Camino



Founder members and Linda Corcoran celebrate 45 years of The Red Rosettes



The Red Rosettes at SNOBS

Second City Sound celebrates 35 years in harmony

Second City Sound

is proud to be celebrating 35 years of ringing chords and friendship, and what a celebration it's been so far!

We kicked off our anniversary year in March with a spectacular world class double-show weekend, sharing the stage with some incredible talent. MaleVox wowed the crowd, Ami Quartet brought style and sparkle, and we were honoured to welcome Lemon Squeezy - who are now World Champions with their gold medal win at the BHS International Convention in Denver.

It was a thrill to perform alongside the new number one quartet in the world, and to share the experience with barbershoppers from across the UK. What a way to start the celebrations! Our founder member Olive Ryder was able to enjoy front row seats, and the icing on the cake was her granddaughter Charlotte - who is our number one fan - shared her 35th birthday on the same day! So, plenty of celebrations all around.

Next came our fabulous Anniversary Ball: a joyful night of dancing, laughter, and of course, cake. It was



heart-warming to celebrate with both long-time members and new friends, reminiscing over the past and looking ahead to the future.

But the celebrations aren't over yet! At the time of writing we're soon to be heading off for a retreat weekend with the brilliant Six Town Sound, ready for

more coaching, more chords, and plenty of fun. With the expert guidance of our amazing coaches - Dan Wessler and Dave McEachan - we're excited to keep pushing our sound forward.

All this is building toward our next big milestone: Convention in Harrogate. It will be our second competition under the enthusiastic direction of our MD Rob Barber, whose passion and dedication keep us inspired. We're ready to work hard, sing better, and enjoy every moment of the journey.

We can't wait to reconnect with barbershop friends, cheer on the fabulous quartets and choruses, and soak up all the sublime chords and harmony that make this hobby so special.

Here's to 35 years of singing and sisterhood - and to many more to come. See you in Harrogate!

**Julie Cushion, PRO
Second City Sound**



Silver Lining are walking on sunshine

What are the reasons for a sponsored walk?

It's nice to complete a summer challenge, it's healthy both mentally and physically, it's a great team-building occasion and it's fun too. So, when Julie M, and Lynne W, two of our basses, discussed organising one, there were plenty of supporters.

The day chosen was Saturday the 12th July and it dawned fine and sunny, in fact it was more dry and very, very hot. With a top temperature of 30+ degrees the walk round Draycote Water was going to need stamina and lots of water if the Silver Lining group were going to complete it. We had walkers, supporters, first aiders and money collectors all braving the heat to raise money for our charity of the year, the Alzheimer's Society.

With all the sponsorships from friends, family and the rest of Silver Lining of course, we raised over £1,660 which was an amazing achievement and far exceeded our target.

The charity was chosen as tribute to one of our founder members, Jan Nielsen, who is battling this awful disease but continues to smile and recognises us when we visit her at Herald House as we did a few days ago. We always

make sure we sing something that she learned with us and regardless of everything else she can still sing along with us.

Now, as it is July, I am off to my sunny garden to dust off the Christmas

repertoire and get a bit of practice in before tonight's barbeque!

**Heather Morton, PRO
Silver Lining**



Silver Lining walkers



Silver Lining Support Team

Feeling on top of the world - in harmony!

It's not every day that an opportunity to sing with a choir from Down Under presents itself. A chance spot on social media piqued Spinnaker's interest, and we responded to a post from Melbourne-based choir, Men in Suits, who were seeking joint singing opportunities whilst in the UK.

Describing themselves as a 'musical men's shed', singing with an all female chorus was possibly not what Men in Suits originally had in mind as part of their UK tour itinerary, which broadly involved brotherly camaraderie and plans to visit festivals such as BlokeFest. However, dismissing this initial fleeting concern and following several international Zoom meetings, a plan was hatched to host a joint concert

with Spinnaker, Men in Suits, and Solent City Chorus, which would also celebrate Solent City's 50th chorus anniversary.

The concert took place on 26th June during which MIS treated us to beautiful renditions of Australian homeland song arrangements as well as more humorous songs composed and arranged by their director, Chris Blain; many reduced the audience to tears of laughter! The last song of the evening, *Sloop John B*, had been learnt independently by all three choruses and was sung for the first time together, with around 100 voices on the risers and some audience participation. It was a very moving experience and a perfect way to end an evening that showcased the power of harmony in community and what happens when passionate singers unite: an evening

with enduring memories of friendship, laughter, stunning vocal performance, and cake!

But the night was still young! Having managed to locate a local and amenable pub, the camaraderie continued with an afterglow of singing exchange. The night ended somewhat reluctantly on all sides, with MIS and their accompanying family members decanting from the pub to board their awaiting coach. With all present singing *Waltzing Matilda* – at full volume and perhaps in less than perfect vocal harmony – a warm farewell was bid along with firm affirmations that this would not be our last singing venture this side of the hemisphere.

**Nicolette Nason, Bookings Officer
Spinnaker Chorus**



Solent City Chorus celebrating their 50th anniversary



The three choruses take to the risers: Spinnaker, Solent City Chorus and Men in Suits, directed by Chris Blain

Sparkling Success

Our first performance of the summer

was the Marcham Big Weekend: a celebration of groups local to Marcham, some of which take the opportunity to perform in the outdoor space behind the hall where we rehearse. We were ably directed by Lisa, our Assistant MD, and as in the words of the song *Lazy Day*, we had 'blue sky' and 'sunshine' throughout. We were competing with some noisy attractions around the perimeter, but this didn't put us or the small audience that gathered off as we sang our way through several of our more well-known pieces of music.

The season highlight was our Summertime Harmony concert which took place at St Michaels & All Angels' Church in Abingdon in mid-July. It was our third invitation to sing there, having previously performed in a Christmas

and Spring concert, and again requested by the church to help raise funds.

Volunteers from Harmony InSpires threw themselves into organising the raffle, the proceeds of which helped to boost chorus funds, as well as



Harmony InSpires and In the Wings

providing refreshments which, on one of the hottest days of the summer, were gratefully received by the audience.

The church was full and the audience captivated as we performed for the first time in our new costumes which our Costume Team have sourced and

undertaken minor adjustments of in a relatively short space of time.

Special guests, In the Wings male quartet from Bristol, joined us in performing a number of songs, closing the first half and opening the second half. The entire audience joined us for our final song, a rousing finale of Abba's *Thank You for the Music*.

It was the greatest number of songs performed at one concert to date and included our new Convention package, never performed so early in the year before.

Preparing for this concert and in turn other performances lined up in the autumn, we are already feeling in a secure place as we head towards our final coaching weekend of the year in September, and Convention in October.

**Caroline Green, PRO
Harmony InSpires**

COAST TO COAST VACANCY

Coast to Coast is seeking a new Musical Director.

C2C is LABBS' only hybrid chorus, meeting online on Sundays once or twice a month, and in-person at Leicester's Secular Hall four or five times a year.

It holds annual weekend retreats in February or March, usually at The Leicester Hilton, and annual Polecat Frenzies in-person or online in June or July. Both events are open to all LABBS members.

If you are interested in directing this well-established and friendly chorus, please email membership@singcoast2coast.co.uk

LABBS and Beyond

UKTHB: Addicted to EQ!

With two fabulously bonkers UK Treble Harmony Brigades under my belt, I can honestly say I'm hooked - and I'm not the only one.

Over 70% of 2024's UKTHB addicts were back for more Extreme Quartetting adrenaline highs at this April's Brigade, and the total number of eager participants soared by nearly 50% with some absolutely fab feedback!

So, for everyone out there who can't wait to do it all again, 2026 is your year.

Not only is UKTHB confirmed and booked for 10th -12th July back in the Jubilee Conference Centre, Nottingham, but there's also an EQ stream planned for the triennial LABBS Harmony College from 24th-26th April at the same venue!

Can't decide whether to do one or both events? All being well, we'll be sharing songs across the LABBS Harmony College EQ stream and UKTHB so it'll be super easy to get your quartetting fix twice in one year!

Behind the scenes, the UKTHB

committee is already putting plans in place and working hard on choosing some great tunes to help you get the most out of your EQ weekends.

most encouraging group of people ever.

It's an amazing way to develop quartet skills, build singing confidence and

meet lots of new friends in the wider Barbershop world, and experience the most marvellous, musical high you can imagine!

Look out for the EQ Taster Sessions and Registration details

Whichever event you're interested in, look out for the fringe EQ Taster Session at LABBS Convention in Harrogate this October. There'll be scratch quartet demonstrations plus a chance for you to have a go at it, so why not bring some of your chorus along?

Registration for UK Treble Harmony Brigade opens at the end of this October, so watch the [UKTHB website](https://www.ukthb.co.uk) for details. And, remember to keep an eye on the [LABBS website](https://www.labbs.co.uk) for updates on LABBS Harmony College too.

[website](https://www.ukthb.co.uk) for updates on LABBS Harmony College too.

Hils Apicella
UKTHB 2025 Team



UKTHB 2026 will be following the same successful format as this year with around six months to learn either eight or twelve songs, ready to jump back in the Brigade bubble with the warmest,

Barbershop journeys: singing, service, and LABBS.

It was my pleasure to present our Assistant MD, Kate, with her 30 year pin, and our Chair, Gill, with her 25 year pin at a recent rehearsal. They both reflected on their interesting barbershop journeys which they shared with the chorus and which you can read below.

As two of our most dedicated members who have held numerous roles within the chorus over many years, we are so proud of their achievements and thankful for their service. In appreciation we had a special cake at rehearsal and presented the ladies with an invitation to afternoon tea at the wonderful Strawberry Fields in Lifton to celebrate.

**Jenn Southern, Membership Secretary
GraceNotes Acapella**



Kate was regretting her decision to let Gill drive!

I have been involved in music

since I was three years old and able to sit at the piano. I started to learn the violin when I was about seven or eight and of course at that time everyone learned to play the recorder. I continued with violin throughout my Junior and Senior years up to Grade IV, playing in both the local youth orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra. I really only started singing once I hit the Senior school and joined the school choir. I nearly joined Junction 14 whilst living in Milton Keynes in 1989, but I chose to go to a different group who met on the same night. In 1994 after moving to Saltash, an advertisement for Brunel Harmony, a ladies barbershop group, reignited my interest.

As their rehearsal venue was a quick walk from my house, I was able to

explore my interest in barbershop once more. I auditioned and was asked to sing tenor, and joined LABBS in January 1995. After suffering a virus whilst visiting Australia in late 2015, I had to accept that my vocal health had suffered and that my singing-in-the-rafters days were over. In 2016 I moved to lead, but (just when I'd learned all the rep in lead!) our MD, Heidi Walsh, asked me to move to bass for Convention, and I haven't moved back: I am now a fully fledged bass.

I have competed at numerous conventions and in quartet in Cardiff, placing tenth (out of ten, but who cares!). I became Assistant Musical Director in about 2010 and remain so, currently assisting GraceNotes' MD, Heidi. More recently I have dabbled with arranging a Cornish folk song, *The White Rose*, and *Oh Holy Night*. After reaching 30 years of LABBS membership my barbershop days are clearly not over yet - so long as the voice holds out that is! I look forward to the next 30 years - life expectancy allowing

**Kate Ansell, Assistant MD
GraceNotes Acapella**

I seem to have been singing

for as long as I can remember. I suppose coming from The Land of Song (Wales), that was meant to be. I sang when I was younger in a variety of folk groups and choirs in the local Eisteddfods.

After crossing the border into England my first experience of barbershop was 43 years ago: my late husband arranged through a rugby friend for me to visit Mayflower A Cappella Chorus in Plymouth. The MD at the time was Joan Willcocks who originally founded the chorus. I have to confess I wasn't too impressed with the choreography, but I loved listening to the harmonies. I was asked to sing baritone which I loved, and needless to say I was well and truly hooked. I sang with the Mayflowers for just over 19 years; eight years as a member of LABBS, and eleven with Sweet Adelines.

In 2001 I helped establish a new chorus with Sweet Adelines called Soundhouse Harmony. During this time I was converted to the low side and sang bass. In 2007 I joined Brunel Harmony, a LABBS Chorus, and it was so



Kate (L) receiving her 30 year pin from Jenn

lovely to be back with the organisation I had started with. The chorus changed its name to GraceNotes Acapella in 2015 and I have been singing with them for the last eighteen years.

Reflecting on my barbershop journey I have realised that I have competed in over 38 conventions, and attended too many education events to count. I have held every position on the committee that I can think of - some more than once - and if agony aunt was a position, then I covered that too.

Like most people, life has thrown many challenges along the way, but singing has always been my lifeline. The friendships made on my journey have been many and both inspiring and rewarding. GraceNotes has and continues to hold a special place in my heart.

**Gill Phillips, Chair
GraceNotes Acapella**



Gill (L) receiving her 25 year pin from Jenn



We enjoyed an 'ansom celebratory afternoon tea

Absent Friends

Remembering Sylvia Hyndes

The White Rosettes were saddened to hear that Sylvia Hyndes died recently. Her Celebration of Life was well-attended by current and former members of the chorus, and several of Sylvia's favourite White Rosette songs were played.

Sylvia discovered barbershop singing in 1988 when she attended a White Rosette jumble sale, and joined the bass section soon after.

Sylvia and her husband Peter lived and breathed The White Rosettes. The chorus was embedded into their lives in every way. Nothing was too much trouble for them. If they could help, they would.

Sylvia was a member of the committee for many years, and, in true Sylvia style, was a lynchpin in chorus fundraising. She organised car boot and jumble sales, and her garage was always stuffed full of goods in readiness. The White Rosettes' annual stall at Kirkstall Festival was pitched around Peter and Sylvia's family tent, and their sons, Stuart and Adrian, were often roped in to help with fundraising!

Sylvia was the proud owner of seven gold medals won with The White Rosettes, and sang with the chorus when they won Sainsbury's Single Voice Choir of the Year in 2000 and Coleraine International Choral Festival in 2007. She travelled with the chorus to New Orleans, Toronto, Columbus, Ohio, Ireland, Spain, Germany, and Holland, and sang in a variety of stage outfits. She loved every minute - except for moaning about practising the inevitable bass 'dum, dums!' Sylvia left The White Rosettes in 2007 after Peter's death and failing health, and was made an Honorary Life Member for her service to the chorus.

Sylvia's commitment to being a fantastic bass was undeniable, as was her support for all other chorus activities - a lovely lady and friend who is deeply missed. Our condolences go to her family and friends.

Louise Williams
The White Rosettes



COSTUME FOR SALE

Blue Tunic Tops

These fabulous, versatile tunic tops are comfortable and practical. They can be worn in a variety of ways to give your chorus a relaxed but co-ordinated look. Loose fitting, the sizing is flexible. We have 17 tops for sale, which will cover UK dress sizes from 10-22+. Price £3 each.

Stretch Lace Dresses

These stylish 'Joanna Hope' stretch lace dresses suit all shapes and sizes. Mid-length with long sleeves, they're comfortable to wear and give good coverage. We have 14 dresses for sale, UK dress sizes 10-20. Price £5 each.

Blue Jewelled Infinity Scarves

These gorgeous infinity scarves work with a variety of outfits (including the blue tunic tops above). We have 22 scarves for sale. Price £3 each.

Contact us at gsbsingers@gmail.com



**Deadline for next edition:
Friday 7th November 2025**

Please send all submissions to voicebox@labbs.org.uk

Articles can be up to 350 words in length and should be accompanied by up to two photos.

Photos must be 1MB or larger. Original images taken on a phone or camera should satisfy this requirement. Please note: screenshots, or images downloaded from social media pages, websites or message apps are not suitable.

More info can be found in the [VoiceBox Contributor's Guide](#).

2026 Deadlines: Friday 30th January, Friday 24th April, Friday 31st July, Friday 6th November