

Voice Box

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

Winter 2025 £4



CONVENTION SPECIAL!



Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers

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Chair's Foreword

Hello everyone.

I'm struck by how many happy memories there are to reflect on at this time of year and how much we have to look forward to in 2026. Our convention in Harrogate was an amazing success full of wonderful harmonies, friendships, fun and quite a few sequins! There were vocal and visual fireworks and too many highlights to list.

Huge thanks go to Kristina Mair, your Events Director, who leads her team with efficiency and kindness and works so hard all year round to plan, prepare and deliver events for us all to enjoy. And thank you to the army of volunteers who freely gave up their time over the weekend to support everyone and give such a warm welcome.

This year we re-introduced awards for divisions with a focus on improvement. We also provided a livestream,

access to the *WhosUp* app and successfully trialled the BHS Barberscore system. We also reintroduced *At A Glance* due to popular demand. We will continue to innovate and are always keen to hear your ideas of how we can make your experience even better.

Congratulations to your new Chorus Champions Steel City Voices and your new women's and mixed quartet champions Hot Mess and Ami Quartet. You are an inspiration to us all.

As a Board we believe that Convention is much more than a set of contests and aim to provide something for everyone. Thank you to everyone who led our Harmony College events and mass sings throughout the weekend and thank you to everyone for your generosity in donating items for our charitable causes this year.



No doubt you are all enjoying Christmas singouts and bringing festive joy to audiences around the country. In the New Year, our 50th anniversary programme will kick off, and we can't wait to join you all in the celebrations throughout the year. Have a look at Alison Liddell's article in this edition to whet your appetite for what is to come.

Meanwhile, I hope you have a peaceful time over the holiday period with your loved ones. See you in 2026 – I can't wait!

**Jill Cook, Chair
LABBS**

Update from your Editor

Bye for now!

It has been a joy to edit VoiceBox again this year while your regular editor, Victoria, has been on maternity leave. I've taken such delight in hearing about what you've all been getting up to, what your future plans are and seeing all your photos, and I will miss those of you who I've come to know through our email chats. All good things come to an end though, and I'm handing the reins back to Victoria from January.

And what a time for her to be coming back on board, with so many exciting things happening for LABBS and our members next year. As you'll no doubt know, in 2026 LABBS is celebrating 50 years of being at the heart of British women's barbershop, and we intend to

celebrate in style! From Harmony College to our anniversary Convention, and with grants available for clubs to host their own events, there are plenty of opportunities for members to get involved in marking this very special year. Want to find out how else we'll be celebrating our fabulous fiftieth? Head over to page 3, where you'll find a full update from our 50th Anniversary Coordinator, Alison Liddell, including what our anniversary polecat is and who our Convention special guests are!

Talking of Convention, what a year 2025 was! Congratulations to all our medallists and award winners, and to everyone who crossed the stage – you were all fantastic! Congratulations too, to all our hardworking teams and volunteers, on another successful

Convention weekend. A demonstration, if one was even needed, of how much talent, dedication, camaraderie and altruism exists within our association, not only at Convention, but across all our members, clubs and quartets throughout the year. Each of you make LABBS the thriving organisation it has been for the past five decades, and it will continue to be for many more years to come.

All that's left for me to do now is wish you all a wonderful Christmas season and a sparkly New Year. May your chords lock and ring, may your singout diary be full, and may your cup runneth over with barbershop joy.

Over and out!

**Mel Baber
VoiceBox Editor (Acting)**

Pitched into a LABBS Quartet Semi-Final!

What a whirlwind of excitement for A Pitch in Time! At Prelims this year we came 19th with our best score of our LABBS competing history. We were really pleased and very content with that achievement as our ambition has always been to just improve on the previous year. Then some weeks later, to our surprise, an email arrived notifying us of the unexpected withdrawal of the Quartet Semi-Final women's mic warmers and asking if we would be willing to fill the spot? What? Did they really mean us? We quickly accepted the offer, just in case it was a mistake and admin meant to send the request to another quartet!

Rehearsals began and all was going along nicely when another email popped into the Pitches inbox. OMG, a competing quartet had withdrawn and we were now catapulting into the SEMI-FINAL with all of those really excellent quartets! No pressure, eh? Never in a million years did we think this would ever happen to us, the little grey haired peeps, but what an amazing opportunity!

On the morning of the QSF we had a special get together and warm-up session hosted by our lovely Spinnaker friend and lead section leader, Liz Waddon, who, together with our room buddies, kept us calm and focused prior to joining the traffic pattern.

Standing in backstage hold in a quartet hug, we heard our Spinnaker family shouting support from the auditorium. With nervous excitement we stepped out onto that wonderful Convention stage, hearts pounding, legs shaking and smiles beaming, and with a slight sense of imposter syndrome too to be honest. We sang our songs under the bright lights and afterwards accepted our applause with humble gratitude. We

left the stage with a great sense of pride, reflecting on how lucky we were to have crossed the stage that day. What an experience to add to our quartet CV of achievements.

Thank you to LABBS for giving us the opportunity, and to Spinnaker Chorus for continuously showing your love and support.

Forever grateful,

Tracy, Mary, Elspeth and Jo
A Pitch in Time



Front row, L-R: A Pitch in Time (Tracy, Mary, Elspeth & Jo).
Back row, L-R: Our friends Wendy, Liz, Leona, Jan and Nicki.
Photo credit: Leona.

LABBS News

LABBS' Archive

As we approach our fantastic 50th anniversary celebrations in 2026, we are of course looking back at the incredible history of our organisation as well as looking forward to the next half century.

There is one person who has a more than passing knowledge of the records and history of our association, and that is Karen Searson. Karen has been the guardian of our historical records in DVDs, physical items, CDs, video tapes, newsletters and pictures. There are files of magazines and various items of memorabilia such as commemorative lanyards. She has worked hard on a task which has often been un-noticed, to digitise a lot of the materials and to record what has been done and where things are stored. Karen has now stepped down from this task and we give her our grateful thanks for all the care and time she has lavished on our historical library. She has done a vast amount of work to ensure that we can begin to get our records into good order and enable them to be available to us in the future. Thank you, Karen, from all of us for your generous gift of your time and expertise.

Looking forward to our 50th celebrations we are hoping to make some of this material available for viewing at the convention and afterwards online, maybe in a 'History Room' at the centre, but we are still working on the details of that. We are now looking for people to help us with the task of organising the History Room and to help us maintain this digital library when we get it all sorted into accessible online areas.

If you might be interested in helping with that, please contact our Anniversary Coordinator Alison Liddell, or our Vice Chair Alys Galloway for a chat. They can be reached at anniversary@labbs.org.uk or vicechair@labbs.org.uk.

Sue Ranson, Immediate Past Chair
LABBS

50th Anniversary update

Back in the spring I talked about the initial plans for LABBS' 50th anniversary party celebrations in 2026. It's exciting now to be in the final stages of this: the decorations are up, the guests are on the way, and we are about to head into our special anniversary year.

Since the last update we have made some announcements about plans and it's starting to come to life but before I recap those, I want to take a minute to mention what a positive place we are in as an association where we can fund all of our birthday celebrations out of our financial reserves. None of the extra things next year are coming out of member subscriptions. This is only possible because of our excellent financial management over many years to give us a pot to access now and is supplemented by a generous donation we have received for this milestone. As a member, I was pleased to realise the funding is separate from our current subscriptions and wanted to make sure everyone else knew that too. We come into our 50th celebrations strong and able to enjoy ourselves!

So, let's recap how next year will unfold. Firstly, we'll be kicking off by sending every LABBS member a commemorative 50th anniversary pin to wear through 2026 and beyond. This pin will replace the usual Convention themed pin, but fear not as Convention will provide a commemorative lanyard instead!

Our AGM on 28th March will be held in person for the first time in several years and council representatives will gather on behalf of clubs as we cut an anniversary cake. There will also be a traditional singing of 'Happy Birthday' to LABBS throughout the year so I will be asking everyone if they want to be on a list of groups who will film a birthday video that we can publish on LABBS social media throughout 2026. Watch out for how to sign up for this!

In April we have our Harmony College featuring our anniversary-themed polecat: Spandau Ballet's Gold. Info about how members can access the music and teach tracks will be available soon!

Over the year we will celebrate individuals who have contributed to LABBS past and present. We are so fortunate that there are a huge number of people who have done this whether musically or administratively, and we want to hear from YOU about who these people are so they can all be recognised. More to follow on how you can tell us this.

We also hope that every club will celebrate our anniversary in their own way and grants of £50 will be available for each club to help with this. Whether you do something as one club or group together with others to organise an event, we hope you will embrace the opportunity for a get together and welcome Club-at-Large members in your area to come along and be part of the fun too.

And then we get to the biggie and our 50th anniversary Convention to be held in Harrogate from 30th October to 1st November 2026. We are thrilled to have amazing guests with both [Parkside Harmony](#) (4th place International Chorus at BHS Convention 2024) and [Smoke Ring](#) (top 10 International quartet) joining us over the weekend. We plan to kick off proceedings with an optional 'pre-glow' on Thursday night for those in town to gather for a bit of socialising and singing. The weekend will be packed with the usual competitions culminating in a super show on Sunday morning with our special guests as the main feature. We will wrap up early afternoon as usual to allow people to travel back to their homes in good time, but take this as a hint not to leave too early: you won't want to miss the opportunity to experience the Sunday show and be bathed in top notch international barbershop to send you on your way!

Finally, as a keepsake for those who want to add to their barbershop clothing collection, there will be many opportunities over the year to purchase commemorative merchandise from the online LABBS shop.

Overall, the plans are coming together, teams are working hard, and we are almost ready to open the door and let the party begin!

**Alison Liddell, 50th Anniversary Coordinator
LABBS**



Parkside Harmony



Smoke Ring



Steel City Voices: Gold Medal Chorus and recipient of The Brighton Rose Bowl



HOT MESS: Women's Gold Medal Quartet and recipient of The LABBS Champion Quartet Trophy



Ami Quartet: Mixed Gold Medal Quartet and recipient of The Hannah and the Hurricanes Champion Mixed Quartet Trophy, The Indigo Blue Trophy, The Pzazz Trophy and The Crackerjack Trophy



The Red Rosettes: Silver Medal Chorus and recipient of The White Rosettes Trophy and The BABS Entertainment Trophy



London City Singers: Bronze Medal Chorus and recipient of The Harmony Incorporated Trophy



Rooftop Social Club: Women's Silver Medal Quartet and recipient of The Holland Harmony Trophy



Flat Mates: Mixed Silver Medal Quartet and recipient of The LABBS Mixed Silver Medallist Quartet Trophy



From the Top: Mixed Bronze Medal Quartet and recipient of The LABBS Mixed Bronze Medallist Quartet Trophy



Fifth & Madison: Women's Bronze Medal Quartet and recipient of The Guildford Harmony Trophy



Abbey Belles: 3rd Division - 3rd place



Avon Harmony: Recipients of The Millennium Award, The E&J Music Trophy, The Westering Trophy, and The Liverpool Trophy



Blackdown Acapella



Bristol Fashion



Cambridge Harmony



Capital Connection



Cheshire A Cappella: 3rd Division - 2nd place



Crystal Chords: Recipient of The Harmony InSpires Trophy



GEM Connection: 2nd Division - 2nd place



Harmony InSpires



Main Street Sound: Recipient of The Red Rosettes Award (3rd Division winner)



Mayflower A Cappella



Norwich Harmony: 2nd Division - 3rd place; Most improved chorus, overall - 2nd place; Most improved marks in Musicality - 3rd place; Most improved marks in Performance - 3rd place; Most improved marks in Singing - 3rd place



One Acchord



Rhapsody Chorus



Second City Sound



Sheffield Harmony



Silver Lining: Recipient of The Peter Caller Award (2nd Division winner); Most improved marks in Musicality - 2nd place; Most improved marks in Performance - 2nd place; Most improved chorus overall - 3rd place

Six Town Sound: Most improved marks in Singing - 2nd place



Spinnaker Chorus



The Belles of Three Spires



The LABBS Youth Chorus: Recipient of The Phoenix Trophy
(Small Chorus winner)



Welwyn Harmony



A Pitch in Time



Carousel



Crunch Time



Deviate



Equinox



Gen X



Hat-Trick



Jabberwocky



Noteworthy



Nova



Powerhouse



Sonic



Sound Wave



Steelettos



Wanderlust



Amersham A Cappella



Cottontown Chorus



LABBS Mixed Quartet Champions Chorus



LABBS Women's Quartet Champions Chorus



Lux Acappella



The LABBS Youth Chorus



The White Rosettes



Avalon



Lil Nik and the Pitches



Muddy Stilettos



The 1234



The BlueBelles



The Light Fantastic Quartet



Katy Phillips Young Barbershopper of the Year Award recipient, Emily Dearden, with Teresa Phillips



Jen Mills Award recipients, Noteworthy, with Sam Wallace



The Cheshire Chord Trophy recipient, Mary Williams (Avon Harmony)

Details of all awards and trophies can be found on [the LABBS website](#).

Club News

The name is Bond - Amersham Bond

How privileged were we at Amersham A Cappella to bookend a fabulous Convention chorus contest as the swansong to our year as champions.

Congratulations to the brilliant Steel City Voices and also quartet winners HOT MESS and Ami Quartet for their stunning performances and exceptional victory scores. The LABBS bars have been raised yet again!

AAC's champions year began in Bournemouth where we were chuffed to win all five chorus prizes and set a Convention record score – which was stylishly matched by SCV in Harrogate.

From then on it was all out for our debut at the Barbershop Harmony Society's International Convention in Denver in July. Two months before travelling we sang at BABS along with the incredible Ambassadors of Harmony – a magical experience and a highlight of our year. Denver was inspirational. To see, hear

and sing on the same stage as some of the world's best was an honour.

But it didn't stop there. Ahead was a performance for the local High Sheriff, another at Stoke Mandeville Hospital's Spinal Unit, and of course mic warming and cooling at LABBS. At Convention

Two more songs rounded off our farewell and set the scene for our next big event: our second Sing with Amersham day, *Live and Let Sing*, on Sunday 29 March 2026 at Sir William Ramsay School, High Wycombe, Bucks. The first song – a nod to that event – was a Bond

medley and for the second, Dua Lipa's *Dance the Night*, we invited on stage those who'd come along to our Sing with Amersham day this year. All things Barbie encouraged.

Our 2026 Sing with Amersham day will run from 11am to 5pm when we'll learn an iconic 007 masterpiece. Tracks and score will be provided in advance. Bond outfits will definitely improve your singing. As will the plentiful cake. Please register [here](#).



Barbie-themed Sing with Amersham Day 2025

we showcased our winning 2023 IABS package in the morning and the 2024 gold medal songs once this year's competition was complete.

Cath Harris
Amersham A Cappella

Five for fifty!

Avon Harmony are just about settling down from an unforgettable weekend and one year has made so much difference. In a year of fabulous new additions to our group, our 50th anniversary celebrations, and numerous regular public performances (including a railway, a castle, and a fundraiser), we are having a harmonious year together.

We are the proud recipients of the five most improved trophies in all categories: musicality, singing, performance, overall improvement, and director effecting the most improvement in their chorus. As a small chorus whose last LABBS award was in 1983, we are overjoyed with our massive achievements.

Our longest serving members have been with us for 25-32 years and so this year's awards are testament to the commitment of these great women alongside all of our enthusiastic members. Avon Harmony also give huge congratulations to Mary, our director. Mary has been crucial to our development and she brings knowledge, encouragement, commitment, and humour to everything we do as a chorus. Our chair Jenny has also seen us very well through two years of significant changes. Whether it is supporting chorus morale, recognising accessibility challenges, ensuring we make the most of AH at 50, or being a consistent friendly face, we are grateful for Jenny and her hard work. It was an overwhelming moment seeing Mary and Jenny collect our awards, and the

rest of us were shouting (and crying!) in the audience in celebration of our performance.

As a chorus we do deal with different accessibility challenges and we do this with respect for each other, acceptance and kindness. Every member is cared for regardless of their needs. This is something I personally wanted to express because Avon Harmony creates a safe and welcoming space for all. We always find our voice together. AH is a spirited team of women who appreciate each other and enjoy singing together. We are always open for new members to join our crew. After our hard work, there is no bad news here!

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



First rehearsal back



Post-Award celebration!

Harmony InSpires singing for success

At the beginning of the Autumn, we were invited

to perform at a very special event for BBC Radio Oxford's Make a Difference Awards which were held at Oxford Town Hall. This was our second time singing in this prestigious venue, and once again we were warmly received as we performed part way through the ceremony that recognises local heroes who go the extra mile to make a difference for others in their community.

Then followed our final coaching weekend of the year with the inspirational Sally McLean, where we added the finishing touches to our 2025 Convention package in preparation for our participation at this year's LABBS Convention in Harrogate.

From Harrogate we have just returned and now reflect on the most amazing weekend filled with music, friendship and laughter driven by a shared love of singing barbershop music.

We had one first-timer, Claire Page, joining us on stage this year and Claire thoroughly enjoyed the experience

although as most of us would agree, said the time on stage passed by so quickly.

Singing *A Nightingale sang in Berkley Square* and *Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend* for the second year running, we increased our 2024 score by 1.1% and ranked 12th place overall. A huge achievement for the chorus having ranked 15th place last year, and one we owe to our committed Musical Director Hari Birtles, who continually nurtures, inspires and drives us to progress to the level we now find ourselves at. Hari, we are so grateful to you for believing in us - thank you so much.

We would like to congratulate all the winners this year, most of whose performances, between us, we were privileged to see. We also extend our thanks to those involved in the organisation and of course the volunteers for yet another memorable Convention.

We look forward to seeing you all back in Harrogate in 2026.

**Caroline Green, PRO
Harmony InSpires**



This photo recreates the tongue in cheek hilarious ending to our second song, *Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend*. The front row singers were excitedly grabbing huge diamond rings from their lawyer's briefcase leaving no opportunity for our MD Hari to claim one. So, she ran off stage to collect her own secret stash - a diamond far superior to any the front row had claimed!

Belles fabulous first timers!

We were so happy to have our first timers,

Jo and Diana, with us on stage this year. Also to have our MD Lucy's daughter, Sophie, take to the stage with Youth Chorus for the first time. We are immensely proud of all of them!

Jo gives us impressions of her first LABBS Convention:

"One of the unexpected joys of 2024 was finding a group of like-minded ladies with whom I could share my passion for music. In July I joined the Belles of Three Spires, based in Coventry. 15 months later I had the privilege of competing at my first Convention in Harrogate.

From the outset it was clear that this is an event steeped in history and tradition: the fantastic mass sings, the 'doors closed and house lights down' (whistle – pop), and the great afterglow gatherings. But it is also current and vibrant, competitive yet good-natured. The atmosphere was permeated with laughter and chatter, people happy to mix and mingle, renewing old friendships and forming new ones.

For me this was a great opportunity to spend more social time with my fellow Belles. Meals out, late-night singing (we were privileged to entertain a wedding party on the Saturday night back at the hotel, who begged for more until we all gave up at about 1.30am!), and the chance to explore the finest of Harrogate's many charity shops (which are definitely a level up from our local ones).



Jo, Diana and Belles MD Lucy



Sophie at the first timers desk

I immediately felt part of the wider barbershop network, renewing friendships from the extreme quartetting weekend earlier this year and chatting freely with those around me.

While this was not my first experience of performing, it was the first as part of a larger chorus, and the camaraderie and support of my fellow Belles was fabulous.

Belles were first on – competitor number one. While this did mean an early morning start, we were spurred on by a rousing ovation from our fellow day-break competitors as we filed out to take the stage. And, being first on, we were gold medal winners for the first 10 minutes!

If you are new to barbershop or have not been to Convention, I would encourage you to get involved, sit back and enjoy the ride."

**Jo Bameberger, Lead
The Belles of Three Spires**

Why you ain't heard nothing yet

The PRO team at Bristol

Fashion are always looking for new opportunities to celebrate our craft, let people know who we are, and to celebrate what we do.



This year saw BF members zipping through quarries, sailing in the Italian lakes, climbing mountains, running triathlons, dancing at festivals, weddings, walks, and a romp around the beautiful city of Bath - neighbours to our home base of Bristol - and it all being compiled into a [video](#) featuring the

glorious Sam Hubbard arrangement of *You Ain't Heard Nothing Yet*.

Fresh from Convention 2024, the inspirational arrangement by Sam was winging its way to our inboxes. Renamed *The Ninja Song*, it stealthily took us through exciting chord changes, simmered with blues, and shimmied into a jazz hands finale.

Fast forward a few months, new songs for Convention, festivals in both Bath and Cheltenham, a workshop with BABS silver medalists Great Western Chorus, and we found ourselves with the delightful Ian 'Maz' Maslan ready to lay down a few tracks!

Meanwhile, possible footage was flying in via WhatsApp, and finally the video was complete. Whacky and wonderful and with guest appearances from Emma Shanks and Rob Mance, we shared our song on YouTube and other social media platforms. Mini clips of the main song were used on reels and were watched a thousand times over.

With 2026 just around the corner we are already thinking about what our next PR



event might be - whatever it is - it will be serious fun!

**Debbie Trotman, PRO Team
Bristol Fashion**

Convention maths

This year's LABBS

Convention was full of sparkle, song, and just a little bit of maths. Crystal Chords were absolutely thrilled to bring home The Harmony InSpires Novice Chorus Trophy - awarded to the highest placed chorus with the highest percentage of new members - although working out how it's calculated feels like it should come with its own GCSE paper. From what we gather, it's something to do with percentages, inverse rankings,

and possibly witchcraft. Whatever it is, it added up beautifully for us! We're still waiting to hear if our puppet counted towards our new-member percentage - he was very committed in rehearsal.

It's the first time Crystal Chords have ever won this award, and it means a lot. We've had a huge recruitment drive and welcomed a fantastic group of new members this year, all enthusiastic, talented, and brave enough to step onto the convention stage for the very first time and absolutely smash it. We couldn't be prouder of how they've thrown themselves into barbershop life (sequins and all) and helped lift the whole chorus to a new level.

Convention was an incredible weekend for us, full of harmonies, hugs, and maybe a few happy tears. We came away with not only this

trophy, but also a fourth-place ranking after surpassing the elusive 80% mark - our main goal for the competition.



If the formula for the trophy is complicated, the feeling isn't: pure joy. Watching our new members experience their first convention reminded us all why we love this hobby - the thrill of performing, the sound of ringing chords, and the shared chaos of getting 43 people into costume before stage time.

We're still buzzing, still singing, and hoping none of our new recruits have been scared off by the bright lights (or the afterglows). Here's to the next adventure - and to whatever mysterious equation makes it all add up!

**Laura Orton, PRO
Crystal Chords**



Crystals at their first LABBS convention L-R back row: Sara Jones, Ekene Young, Catherine Atherton, Roselyn Pearson, Emma Thomas, Abi Bearn, Rachael Ainsworth, Gill Howath, Sophie Gosling. Front row: Violet Owen, Andrea Sutcliffe, Mandy Man

100 Days that changed my life

I started singing barbershop in July 2025,

aged 62, having never really sung before! I knew I was ready for a change of direction in my life, feeling like something was missing. I was not only given the warmest welcome from a fabulous group of ladies but was also incredibly impressed by the sounds I heard that evening.

From there on in, my sole purpose was going to Convention, despite there being no expectations from the chorus that I would do this, and not being a naturally confident performer! Nevertheless, perform I did, and having just returned from Harrogate, I feel compelled to share my experience of this fantastic weekend.

I travelled down with three others and went to a joint meal with Crystal Chords, with whom a few of our members also sing. What a way to start my first convention! I had to get my head around there being absolutely no rivalry whatsoever, just pure warmth and friendship from these wonderful ladies! This in itself was a totally new concept for me. My heart was lifting as we all sang together and entertained the guests in the restaurant. Dinner and a show - who knew?!

The welcome feelings of warmth and inclusivity from there on in just kept increasing throughout the weekend.



The bass section, post performance (Gill third from right)

I spent Friday watching the quartets perform, which totally blew me away! By the end of the evening my jaw was aching from smiling and my hands stinging from all the hard applause. I learnt so much and loved every minute of it.

By Saturday, the adrenaline was well and truly pumping through my veins. The performance came and went by in a flash, I wasn't at all prepared for the overwhelming feelings that followed as we 'exited stage left' and I unashamedly burst into floods of tears. But oh, what pure tears of joy they were! So proud!

We ended with Coaching Under Glass on the main stage. I was there, exhausted but filled to the brim with sincere feelings of warmth, friendship, and inclusivity, plenty of laughter and of course, fantastic singing.

I feel reborn! 2026 - bring it on!

Gill Carr
Cheshire A Capella



Ready to get ready (L-R): Karen, Gill and Ann

Cheshire Chord Company: A busy autumn of music and change

It's been a full and exciting few months for

Cheshire Chord Company, with special performances, plenty of barbershop community spirit, and some big news for the future.



Recently, we had the pleasure of singing at Norton Priory and Gardens. It proved to be a beautiful evening in an equally beautiful venue. The setting and acoustics made it a real highlight of the season, and we enjoyed sharing our music with an appreciative audience in such a unique space.

Although we did not compete at LABBS' Convention in Harrogate this year, many of our members were still involved. Some were performing with other groups, others were volunteering

throughout the weekend supporting the wider barbershop community on reception, the First Timers Desk, social media and behind the scenes.

This season has also marked an important and emotional moment for us. After 15 years at the helm, Jo Braham has stepped down as Musical Director. Jo didn't just conduct the chorus, she shaped it. Under her leadership we have grown in confidence, ambition, and musical identity. She encouraged singers to trust their own voices, to support one another, and to take pride in their sound.

Over the years Jo has led us through countless performances, competitions, coaching sessions and laughter-filled rehearsals. She has given her time, her creativity, and her whole heart, and we are incredibly grateful. Her influence will be heard in every chord we ring for a long time to come.

Her final performance took place at our Cheshire Christmas Show in Warrington, which was both a celebration and a farewell filled with warmth, appreciation, and a few happy tears. It was a chance to say thank you - properly - for everything she has done.



Looking ahead, we are delighted that Emma Shanks will be joining us as our new Musical Director from December 2025. Emma has sung with Heartbeat Chorus for over 20 years and has taken on roles as Baritone Section Leader and Assistant Musical Director. She brings a great deal of experience, passion, and positive energy, and the chorus is excited for the journey ahead.

As ever, Cheshire Chord Company remains a welcoming and friendly group. If you've ever thought about trying barbershop singing, or would simply like to come along and listen, we'd love to hear from you. Find out more at www.cheshirechord.co.uk.

Julie Phillips, PRO
Cheshire Chord Company



Thirty years of friendship, fun, and harmony

Fascinating Rhythm marked a major milestone

on 18th October with a joyful celebration of 30 years of friendship, fun, and harmony – everything the chorus stands for. The evening was a huge success, thanks to the superb efforts of the organising team, who delivered a perfect blend of great food, music, dancing, and laughter. Guests enjoyed a lively band, a fun photo booth, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere that truly reflected the spirit of the group.

It was especially meaningful to be joined by three of the chorus's former directors and many past members – a wonderful reunion that captured the shared history and camaraderie of the Fascinating Rhythm family. During the evening, heartfelt thanks were given to former directors Wendy Elliott and Pete Nugent, both presented with gifts in recognition of their invaluable contributions over the years.

Honouring Jo Thorn

The celebration also offered a special opportunity to pay tribute to Jo Thorn, who stepped down after 16 years as Musical Director. Current MD Wendy Howse gave a moving speech, expressing the chorus's deep gratitude for Jo's exceptional dedication, leadership, and warmth. Jo was presented with a gift to mark her many years of service.

Music has always been part of Jo's life – from singing in her grandmother's

chorus at age 12 to competing with Bristol Fashion, winning gold with her quartet, Havoc, in 2007, and leading Fascinating Rhythm to new heights. Under her direction, the chorus consistently ranked in the top five at the LABBS Chorus Finals, achieving musical excellence while strengthening their bonds as singers and friends.

Jo's leadership blended humour, hard work, and heart. From retreats and conventions to the challenges of lockdown, she inspired everyone to stay connected and believe in themselves. Her legacy of passion, patience, and positivity has left an enduring mark on Fascinating Rhythm. As Wendy said, Jo will always remain a 'living legend' and part of the chorus's very fabric.

Celebrating Ali Jack

The final presentation of the evening was made by Lesley Beswick to Ali Jack, Fascinating Rhythm's long-standing chorus manager, tenor, and founding member. Ali has been the steady heartbeat of the group since its inception; a quiet force of consistency, kindness, and strength. Known for blowing the pitch pipe before every song, she keeps the chorus both literally and figuratively in tune.



Ali Jack

Ali's musical journey has included gold-medal success with Havoc and earlier quartet De-ja Vu. Though modest about her achievements, she has supported every director, welcomed new singers, and ensured the smooth running of the chorus behind the scenes. Her selflessness, humour, and musical insight have made her an irreplaceable part of the Fascinating Rhythm story.

As Lesley expressed, Ali's energy and devotion make her the bedrock of the chorus, and everyone feels immensely lucky to have her.

After a delicious meal, the celebrations continued with music from Ride the Edge, lively dancing, and plenty of laughter in the photo booth. The night concluded perfectly with chorus performances of *Happy Together* and *Thank You for the Music* – a fitting finale to an unforgettable evening. Fascinating Rhythm are also delighted to announce that they are now under the direction of Wendy Howse, formerly assistant director to Jo Thorn. With Wendy at the helm, the chorus looks forward to an exciting new chapter, and to the next 30 years of harmony, friendship, and joy!

**Chloe Roberts, PRO
Fascinating Rhythm**



Wendy E, Pete, Jo and Wendy H

Back on stage

Well, what a Convention!

We're sure you'll agree the standards seem to get better and higher every year.

GEM are absolutely delighted to be back on stage and were thrilled to score 2% more than when we last competed, placing us ninth in the chorus contest and having six GEM first timers on stage with us. We were delighted to be placed second in our division. It was fabulous to be back in Harrogate; it holds a special place in our hearts.

We'd like to say 'Well done and we're very proud of you' to our GEN XQuartet, who made their Convention debut and were rather surprised to make it through to the finals! We've now adopted Jen (Bari) from Affinity Show Choir.

Thanks to all at LABBS, who made this wonderful contest run so smoothly, both at the front and behind the scenes. You were all truly amazing.

Congratulations to Steel City Voices, Hot Mess Quartet and Ami Quartet for their

Gold-winning performances! Also, to our Silver and Bronze Medallists. They were all well-deserved and will be great ambassadors for LABBS.

It was wonderful to see old friends and make new ones, but now it's time to get brushed up on our Christmas repertoire. Phew!

See you next year!

Jenny Smedley, PRO
GEM Connection



Receiving our second place certificate



Our six first timers: Ange, Eve, Charlotte, Lauren and Jayne

Junction 14 receiving their best applause ever!

October was a lovely month,

and we performed at the annual charity fundraising event organised by the Mayor of Newport Pagnell, Paul Day. The event is known as his 'Mini Music Festival' and we performed along with five other singing groups. The mayor is a particular fan of ours and we love to support his

annual event. This year the charity was the Medical Detection Dogs and a fantastic sum of £972.87 was raised during the evening. We sang three new songs which were a great hit with the audience and our last song, and indeed the last song of the night, was Sweet Caroline, after which we received the best and loudest applause we have ever had. It was truly amazing.



Junction 14 and MK Acapella



Junction 14

Later in the month we had a joint social evening with MK Acapella, the men's barbershop chorus from Milton Keynes and a member of BABS. A lovely evening with a buffet, chatting and singing to each other and together. We were even invited into the bar area of the pub we were in to entertain the locals, who loved our joint performance.

Val Hutchinson, PRO
Junction 14

Retreat and more!

Chorus Iceni enjoyed their first ever chorus retreat in rural Suffolk back in October. Two amazing coaches came along - Owen Butcher and Jane Quinn - to work on two of our favourite songs. There was of course lots of singing but we found plenty of time to walk, swim, eat, drink and enjoy spending time together.

Many Miller
Chorus Iceni



Owen and Jane



Chorus Iceni at retreat

A flash-bang-wallop of an afterglow

Who doesn't love an afterglow?

For BF that is the joyful, albeit raucous, opportunity to connect with singers from around the country.

Quartets huddled in corners waiting for a break in the wall of sound, LABBS intermingled with BABS and even some Sweet Ads, chord worshipping, tagging, plus the trusty photo booth!

This year BF went 'old skool' - a delightful frame of fireworks. Much easier than last year's 8ft pirate ship, and who can forget the Barry Island Bus to Llandudno. How brilliant to have so many of our barbershop friends pose for a snap or two, too.

With a final squash-in of singing with the White Rozzers, Amersham A Cappella, and of course celebrating with our neighbours the multi award winning Avon Harmony (what a brilliant way to conclude the celebrations of their 50th birthday), we sang our up-tempo Melody Hine arrangement of the Eagles *Take it to the Limit* one more time! See what I did there?!

A huge thanks and 100 claps to the 100 volunteers that made this all happen. See you all next year.

Debbie Trotman, PRO Team Bristol Fashion



'Not all dreams are wrapped in gold'

After Convention 2023, Main Street

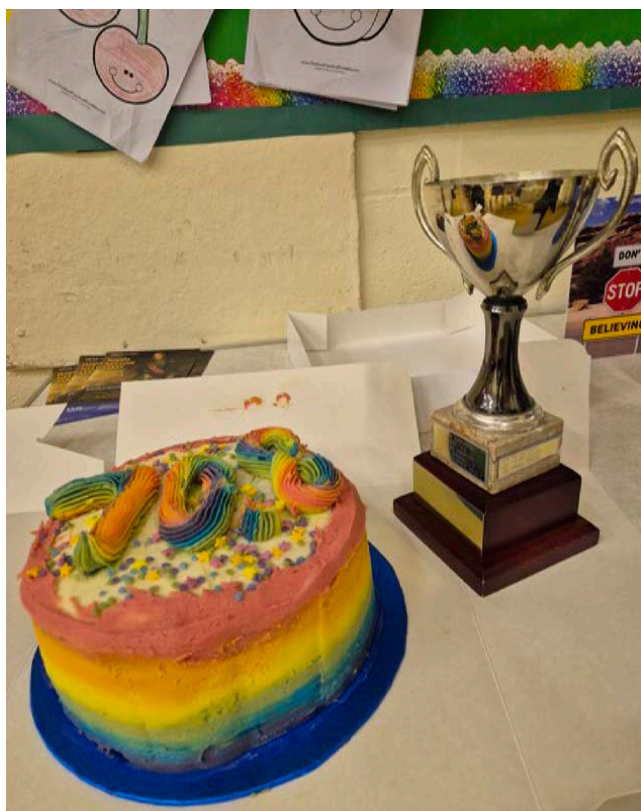
Sound sat down to decide our next steps. Firstly, we agreed we wanted to sing barbershop which was a relief. But more than that, we wanted to sing well and have fun doing it. So, instead of competing, we decided to focus on building our repertoire, refining our sound, and eating plenty of cake.

To say we worked hard doesn't quite cover it. Our performance team chose an empowering, bold repertoire (*Girl on Fire* and *This Is Me* being favourites) that helped our confidence grow. Slowly but surely, we became brave, bold, and who were meant to be. By Convention 2025, we couldn't wait to show the barbershop world who we'd become.

Our package reflected that new-found confidence. We channelled our inner showgirls with Patrick McAlexander's *Lullaby of Broadway* and were thrilled to perform *Only Love* from *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, arranged for us by Nick Bryant. It was a challenge, but we rose right to it with the support of our much-adored coaches Rachel Small and Emma Shanks, and our ever-patient MD Peter Bryant.

Convention 2025 was everything. We cheered on Noteworthy in the semi-finals on Friday and were so excited to see them on stage at Harrogate. When it got to Saturday we had a long wait before our performance, but the overriding feeling was not one of nervousness; this year we were just so excited to share our hard work. Our stage time went by in a blink of the eye, as it always does.

We had already achieved our goal: singing our best and sharing our love of barbershop. But suddenly, a flurry of exciting things! We are so proud to have won The Red Rosettes Trophy, our division, and achieved our highest ever LABBS score of 70.8, over six percentage points higher than 2023.



Our 70.8 cake, and trophy

A wise MD once posted on Facebook 'Not all dreams are wrapped in gold'. We got our best ever score, yes, but along the way we learned, laughed and loved, and through it all we discovered there are just some things you can't put a number on.

Libby Speechley
Main Street Sound



Main Street Sound

Norwich Harmony news

We had a very successful Convention

and were delighted to receive so many commendations. Our member Pen shares her thoughts on the new system:

"I would like to congratulate LABBS on the re-vamp of the awards system. Giving Performance, Singing and Musicality awards for improvement rather than top score is an excellent way to spread the reward a bit more broadly through the Association. After all, the gold medallists know they got the best score, don't they! The certificates for second and third place in these categories are also encouraging—my chorus can be proud that they were the second Most Improved Chorus, without it taking anything away from the Most Improved Chorus, and so forth. Next year, there will be a different set of choruses sharing those certificates. And, the awarding of Top of Division prizes also means that the many choruses who are never going to be in contention for medals still have something to aim for. It's nice to get a prize, once in a while".

Here are some comments from our Convention first timers. We had eight this year! Marianne, Sally, Jane, Maya, Sue, Moth, Katherine and Vivienne.

Jane: "Still buzzing from my first LABBS Convention! What an amazing weekend it was - I loved every second. The strong sense of family was unmistakable, the support for each chorus from all the others was there throughout the weekend - wonderful!"

"I loved performing our package, but that was such a small part of a big weekend. I loved the mass sing so much - the sound from so many voices together was breathtaking".

"I look forward to filling up my lanyard with more pin badges in the years to come. Let's get together again!"

Sally: "I had heard so much about the 'convention experience' from fellow Norwich Harmony girls and I had high



Jill Cook, Alison Thompson, and Carol Logan

expectations. It didn't disappoint. I thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience, from singing for the first time on the risers on the stage, to chatting to fellow attendees, and being mesmerised by some of the amazing performances. I can't wait until next year!"

**Vikki Nelson, PRO
Norwich Harmony**



Norwich Harmony newbies

Convention: Boy oh boy oh boy!

The Red Rosettes had a great time in October, being coached by Aaron Dale who is the arranger of one of our Convention songs, *Little Patch of Heaven*.

We had a wonderful day with this lovely and inspirational man. It was quite daunting to perform for the arranger, but he was wonderful. We took him out for a curry that evening, and I think he was somewhat bemused by our Northern hospitality but took it all very well!

And then it was on to Convention...

A 5am start to get in a coach with over 60 ladies of varying ages was not the most glamorous of starts to Convention weekend. One of us (no names!) didn't hear her alarm and had to do the walk of shame to the coach while we waited for her! Avoiding alcohol and dairy all day in Harrogate on Friday was also a great sacrifice for many of our gin-loving chocolate monsters! Throw in another 5am start to have breakfast, rehearse for two hours and be on stage in full make up and costume by 10.30am, and many people would think you were mad. Barbershop is a 'hobby'; it's supposed to be fun!

Boy oh boy oh boy, was it worth it though!

All those months of rehearsals, repetitions, coaching, learning, practising and costume changes all came together under the direction of our amazing MD Emma McManus, and we were rewarded with a silver medal and shield in the Chorus Competition with 82.5%!

We were also awarded the BABS Trophy for Most Entertaining Chorus. This was such an honour as engaging with the audience and bringing them into our performance has been one of our key aims this year.

The icing on the cake was when our lovely Emily Dearden won the Katy Phillips Young Barbershopper of the Year award and bursary. It is the tenth anniversary of Katie's death and so it was such a lovely tribute to see the award go to her niece Emily, and for it to be presented by Katie's mum and Emily's grandmother, our beloved Teresa Phillips. It was also so fitting and poignant to sing *Songbird* - arranged by Linda Corcoran especially for Katie - in our Silver Aftershow spot.

We were very conscious of members who could not be at Convention due to ill health and family bereavements: Pam Ambrose, Christine Vaughn Evans, Andrea Jackson and Hazel Johnson. A special mention to Michelle Hartley who lost her mum the week before but still performed. They were all on that stage with us and in every note we sang.

The Red Rosettes was formed 45 years ago. We won bronze at IABS last year, but nothing compares to your first medal at LABBS. It's amazing to think that some of us have been in the chorus for all those years and have finally won a medal, and our 12 Newbies won a silver at their first Convention! Dreams do come true!

Congratulations to everyone who crossed the stage and to the wonderful backstage staff, stewards and volunteers who ensured another wonderful Convention for all.

We can't wait for next year and the 50th celebrations.

Life's a song. We sing it.

Ann Atkin
The Red Rosettes



Aaron and the Red Rosettes



Pure joy! MD Emma McManus and Chair Helen Jones, celebrating our results



Red Rosettes newbies



Even more newbies

A happy homecoming for Sheffield Harmony

We all know the feelings of elation that a performance at Convention brings for a chorus, but LABBS 2025 proved a particularly poignant experience for Sheffield Harmony.

It was our first contest after a break in competing, and it also marked a return home to LABBS after an absence of 28 years.

"It felt like a happy homecoming," said Janice Jardine, who has sung with the chorus for forty years and has notched up 39 conventions. "The warmth of the reception and the generous welcome we received, particularly from the Sheffield barbershop contingent, is indelibly etched upon our hearts", she continued.

Chair of the chorus Janet Eyre added: "It meant the world to us to hear the whooping and hollering of support as we trooped onto the risers at Harrogate, and this helped enable us to put in a good representation of ourselves on stage. We had a ball!"

The 46-strong chorus is particularly proud of the rich seam of barbershop singing in our home city. Sheffield Harmony's uptune *Sunny* was arranged by gifted Sheffield resident Sam Hubbard, who gave us some invaluable coaching on the piece. MD Ros is a member of Sheffield-based Steel City Voices, who rocked the stage with their astounding gold medal-winning contest performance. We are thrilled at our city's achievements on the national stage.

"Sheffield certainly feels like an exciting place to be a barbershopper right now," said Ros, who has been Sheffield Harmony's Director since 2018 and directed the LABBS Mixed QC's chorus in the contest's Saturday night Gold show. "We all benefit from that, we are part of that, and we will build upon that" she added.

Launched in 1978, under the name Sweet and Low, Sheffield Harmony was the first female chorus to form in the city. The chorus joined LABBS with 25 members in 1980 and a year later won the Novice Chorus Award.

By 1995 Sheffield Harmony had adopted its current name and moved to Sweet Adelines International. In 1997 they won third place in the small chorus section and scooped bronze medals in 2009 and 2016. A further bronze was bagged in 2018 at the Spanish Association of Barbershop Singers' contest in Benalmadena.

Many of the chorus members sing with the award-winning Sheffield-based Crucible Vocal Project, a joint endeavour with Steel City Voices and Hallmark of Harmony, which gained the gold medal for Mixed Chorus at the 2024 British Association of Barbershop Singers' Convention.

The chorus has featured on television and radio including performing a cameo singing role in a 2012 documentary film about iconic local band, Pulp, and we continue to play an active role in the community, with a host of gigs lined up to finish the year including



Janice, who has sung with Sheffield Harmony for 40 years

a performance at Chatsworth in Derbyshire.

But the high point of our year has been Convention, in which six members competed with Sheffield Harmony for the first time.

First timer Lorna Culloden said: "It was so exciting to compete at Harrogate. And I know I speak for us all when I say that it was just thrilling to see and hear the amount of talent on that stage throughout the weekend, especially from our very own city!"

**Penny Baddeley, Community Contact
Liaison Officer
Sheffield Harmony**



Sheffield Harmony Convention first timers,
L-R: Loti, Sophie, Rachel, Lorna,
Becky and Gill



Sheffield Harmony at Harrogate Convention Centre
after our performance

A look back at 2025

Harrogate 2025 was the icing on the cake for Silver Lining's 25th Anniversary! Our trip to BIBA in Calpe was a good start, winning the bronze medal award in April. Our first overnight 'boot camp' with David Sangster and lots of exciting social and fundraising events have all contributed to our year and it's not over yet with a night out to see Gareth Malone for two thirds of the chorus!

Our weekend in Harrogate started off well with a number of us joining the mic warming chorus on Thursday evening - it's a great experience, try it if you can! Our meals together out and about, and

of course the afternoon teas at Betty's and Mama Doreen's, meant we had time to catch up with one another and share some laughs.

Some of our members discovered that volunteering is another way to enjoy Convention. Meeting people, and chatting to friends old and new, is an experience we participated in enthusiastically.

Being last on in the Chorus Competition was a different experience - a leisurely breakfast and singing to a crowded auditorium is to be recommended! We enjoyed the mass sing with Helen Lappert while we waited for the results,

and it was such a thrill to hear our chorus name called out four times! Improving in three categories and top of Division 2!

Our thanks go out to our MD Sara Jackson and the music team who worked so well with this year's coaches to improve our performance. A big thank you to the Convention teams and we look forward to a big celebration next year in Harrogate for LABBS 50th Anniversary!

Judith Medlock
Silver Lining



When Six Town met Second City – the sound collided!

What a weekend! Second City Sound and Six Town Sound joined forces for a fantastic retreat at the beautiful Ingestre Hall, and we're still buzzing. With not one but two world-class coaches – Dave McEachern and Dan Wessler – we soaked up wisdom, tips, and techniques in sessions that flew by faster than you could say “ring those chords!”

The days were a golden opportunity to dive deeper into our barbershop craft – exploring vocal technique, ensemble unity, and how to make those chords lock and sparkle. Every nugget from our coaches was another gem to take home, and the thrill of discovery kept us singing long after class ended.

And what a backdrop! Ingestre Hall, a stunning 17th-century Jacobean mansion steeped in history, gave the retreat an extra layer of magic. With its grand architecture, sweeping grounds,

and artistic heritage, the venue was more than just a place to stay; it was an experience in itself. Every rehearsal felt elevated in those elegant rooms, and every break was a chance to soak in the beauty of a setting that has inspired creativity for centuries.

Evenings? Pure magic. From Second City's hilarious and unforgettable pantomime sketch (“I am a tree” – never forgotten!) to a side-splitting Saturday Night Live-style comedy sketch where Second City Sound's MD Rob surprised everyone with his twinkle toes, and even a ‘synchronised swimming’ routine that had everyone in stitches. The night rolled on with tagging into the wee hours – because when two choruses collide, the harmony never stops!

Sharing dorms added that nostalgic ‘school trip’ vibe, with late-night laughter and impromptu harmonies echoing down the corridors. It was the

perfect setting for bonding: swapping stories, sharing tags, and building friendships that will last far beyond Convention. Behind the scenes, Andrea from Six Town Sound kept everything running smoothly with faultless organisation, making sure the weekend flowed without a hitch.

For Six Town Sound, a chorus just three years young and growing fast, this was a fabulous chance to experience retreat life and share the joy of learning alongside seasoned singers. For Second City Sound, celebrating its 35th anniversary, it was a chance to refresh, recharge, and embrace new ideas. Together, we built friendships, shared laughter, and strengthened our craft in ways that will echo long after Convention.

Julie Cushion, PRO, Second City Sound
Lizzie Tomkinson, Marketing Manager, Six Town Sound



Singing for Joy – rediscovering what matters most

A huge thank you to everyone involved in

delivering a fabulous 2025 LABBS Convention. The White Rosettes had a wonderful weekend, and we're so grateful for the planning, preparation and behind-the-scenes work that makes Convention happen each year.

This year looked a little different for us. After decades of competitive success, we made the perhaps slightly unusual decision not to compete in the national Chorus Contest. Instead, we entered the Sing for Joy category: a space to perform without scores or rankings, simply for the love of singing.

It was a choice we made collectively as a chorus. After an extraordinary milestone year in 2024 when we became the first female UK chorus to compete internationally, we recognised the need for rest, reflection and renewal. Cleveland 2024 was exhilarating and demanding in equal measure, and 2025 felt like the right moment to regroup,

recharge, and rediscover the joy of making music together.

Our Sing for Joy set featured two uplifting pieces from *West Side Story*, *Something's Coming* and *Tonight* - songs full of hope and anticipation. We extended this spirit visually too, choosing a 'Black and Bling' dress code that let each member express their individuality while still sparkling together as one chorus.

Traditionally, Sing for Joy has been seen as a category for developing choruses. We wanted to gently challenge that perception and show that joy, artistry and connection are at the heart of barbershop at every level.

And regrouping certainly didn't mean standing still. Throughout 2025 we revisited core technical skills, explored fresh performance ideas, learned a new tag each week, sang in octets and sectional duets, experimented with new repertoire, and mapped out our roadmap for 2026. Welcoming new members also gave us all the chance to revisit the

basics and rekindle good habits.

We were overjoyed by the response to our performance. Singing without scores reminded us why we began: for friendship, harmony, and the magic of voices blending with shared purpose - especially special on our home turf in Yorkshire.

We also extend huge congratulations to Steel City Voices, our new Gold Medal Chorus. Formed in 2019, their achievement is a brilliant example of what dedication and collaboration can produce in a short time.

As we now look ahead to returning to competition in 2026, we do so with gratitude, renewed purpose and a deep belief that excellence and joy aren't opposites – they're partners.

See you next year!

Rachel Flower, PRO
The White Rosettes



Remembering Doris and Imogen

Amersham A Cappella has lost two beautiful friends:

Doris Baker, our oldest member, and one of our newest, Imogen Osborne.



Doris and Cecil Baker, on Doris's birthday

Doris helped found Chiltern Harmony, which later became Amersham A Cappella, in January 1982. She sang bass, held several committee roles, and was involved with costume, choreo and publicity.

She had a sharp wit and a flare for poetry. She would write poems about her time singing and often read them to chorus, making us all laugh. If given the first line of other poems she could immediately recite the rest.

Doris worked for a florist and delivered flowers locally, and when chorus numbers needed a boost she would tell her female customers about us and invite them to a rehearsal or performance. The lemon drizzle cake she'd bring along was legendary.

Once Doris had stepped off the risers she and husband Cecil, to whom she was married for 73 years, watched every rehearsal and most shows - from the front row.

They travelled to New Orleans to support one of our quartets and would often be up early to wave us off on another adventure. Doris would always be the first to know how we'd done in contests. She was an auntie to many of us and is much missed.

An extract from Doris's 'Pome' to a chorus friend in hospital:

*Will you suss out all the patients,
recovering in the ward.
Just go and chat them up, just in case
they're feeling bored.
Then, when the moment's getting right
And on your words they cling,
Just jump right in and ask 'em
If they'd like to come and SING!*

Imogen joined AAC as a bari in March 2024. She was a talented actor and played many leading roles locally. Her on-stage skill was clear from the moment she stepped onto the Amersham risers.



Imogen Osborne on becoming a full member of Amersham A Cappella

Imo helped us win gold at LABBS in 2024 and that evening threw herself into the afterglow, dressing head to toe as a Viking warrior. Days later she was diagnosed with an incurable cancer.

She had a wicked sense of humour and is also remembered for her spirit and kindness. She leaves husband Oz, son James, 21, and daughter Yvonne, 19, and rescue dog Cookie, who was a great comfort to her.

We have created the Imogen Osborne Memorial Award for Performance in her memory. It will be for members in their first year.

Cath Harris
Amersham A Cappella

Remembering Christine Milner

It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden passing of our lovely Lead, Christine Milner.

On the 19th July, Christine had been warming up with us ready to perform when she was taken ill. She died later that evening in hospital with her family around her.

Christine was a much-loved chorus member and lived life to the full, singing, dancing, cruising and always looking fabulous. She will be greatly missed not only by her Junction 14 family but also by everyone who knew her from LABBS.

Christine was the longest serving member of Junction 14 having been a founder member in 1987 when the chorus was then known as Keyne

Harmony, before changing its name to Junction 14 soon after. Christine was a member of LABBS for an impressive 38 years this summer. She attended many Conventions over the years and never forgot a face. She was also a member of Coast to Coast and in 2008 managed to accompany their MD and her chorus, Brunel Harmony, on a trip to Canada along with our Bari, Grace Morrison. They had a fabulous time.

Christine was always willing to dress up and join in with lots of events and always had a tale to tell. We will miss her.

Our condolences go to all her family and friends.

Val Hutchinson, PRO
Junction 14



Christine Milner

Remembering Vo Webb

The Chordettes Acapella Chorus are very sad to share the news that one of our longest serving members, Vauldene (Vo) Webb, has passed away. Vo has been an integral member of the Chordettes - and a member of LABBS - for over 35 years, during which time she served as chorus Chair, Committee Member, Baritone Section Leader and for many, many years as our trusty pitch pipe blower.

Vo's sense of humour is legendary within the chorus, especially her ability to create the funniest poems, ditties and party pieces for our afterglow parties and retreats. Vo's love of singing and passion for barbershop were second to none, and she will be missed not only

by everyone in the Chordettes but also the huge number of friends and singing companions from across the LABBS family who knew her.

RIP Vo, you were one of a kind and we will miss you greatly.

Amy Hedger
Chordettes



Vo Webb

A tribute to Jo Moore

All of us here at Mayflower A Cappella Chorus are deeply saddened at the loss of our beautiful Jo, who passed away on 27th August after losing her battle with cancer.



Jo Moore

Jo was part of the chorus for over 30 years. She absolutely loved singing and, during her time with us, was a confident member of the Baritone Section, a whirling dancer on the front row, and a supportive and sensitive Assistant Director. Jo was a gentle person with an instinct for those who might need that extra little bit of support. She absorbed information around her and often made astute observations in her own quiet and unassuming way.

However, this was in contrast to her colourful and mischievous side! Jo loved bright colours, crazy hats and owned many pairs of vibrant shoes. She tried out different hairstyles in shades of purple, red and blue. She loved cocktails with a curious kaleidoscope of liquors!

We will remember Jo as the lovely, funny, mermaid-loving musician that she was. She so missed singing these last few years. We are fortunate to have learned so much from her, and to have known the passion that she showed in

everything she did. It was so lovely for Jo that some of us were able to bring the joy of singing to her bedside in her last couple of weeks. Her face lit up as she listened and she couldn't help but wave her arms. We will miss her so much.

She leaves behind a legacy of happy memories, funny stories, and a wicked sense of humour which we will continue to embrace as we find ways to celebrate the joy of Jo being in our lives.

We send our condolences to her family and our sisters from One Achord Chorus, who Jo directed with such patience and devotion. We will remember the Jo we knew as we reach out to everyone with our Mayflower love.

Sarah Gill, Musical Director
Mayflower A Cappella Chorus

Deadline for next edition:
Friday 30th January 2026

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.