

# Voice Box

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

Winter 2022 £4



## LABBS 22: A jubilant return to Convention!





**Ladies Association of  
British Barbershop Singers**

**Chair:**

Natalie Feddon  
[chair@labbs.org.uk](mailto:chair@labbs.org.uk)

**Vice-Chair:**

Sue Ranson  
[vicechair@labbs.org.uk](mailto:vicechair@labbs.org.uk)

**Secretary:**

Hannah Barber  
[secretary@labbs.org.uk](mailto:secretary@labbs.org.uk)

**Finance Director:**

Alys Galloway  
[financedirector@labbs.org.uk](mailto:financedirector@labbs.org.uk)

**Membership Director:**

Jill Cook  
[membership@labbs.org.uk](mailto:membership@labbs.org.uk)

**Events Director:**

Kristina Mair  
[events@labbs.org.uk](mailto:events@labbs.org.uk)

**Education Director:**

Alison Thompson  
[eandjchair@labbs.org.uk](mailto:eandjchair@labbs.org.uk)

**Marketing and Communications  
Director:**

David Kitchenham  
[marketing@labbs.org.uk](mailto:marketing@labbs.org.uk)

**Youth Director:**

Lamorna Hooker  
[youthdirector@labbs.org.uk](mailto:youthdirector@labbs.org.uk)

**Director of Diversity & Inclusion:**

Natasha Nickson  
[diversity@labbs.org.uk](mailto:diversity@labbs.org.uk)

**VoiceBox Editor:**

Melanie Baber  
[voicebox@labbs.org.uk](mailto:voicebox@labbs.org.uk)

# What a wonderful Convention weekend

**I have just arrived back home** and I am reflecting on a wonderful Convention weekend, full of jubilation and celebration. How exciting it was to be back together again after such a long three years. Huge congratulations to our new champions, The White Rosettes, IN HOUSE and Met44, on earning themselves new shiny gold medals which were so very well deserved, and to everyone who crossed the stage - what talent we have!

Congratulations also to Natasha Nickson from Bristol Fashion who received the Katy Phillips Award and Bursary and to Sonic who were the recipients of the Jen Mills Award.

There is so much preparation and hard work that goes into Convention and I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who volunteered over the weekend. You all helped Bournemouth 2022 be one

of the best Conventions ever, making it so special and successful with your endless good humour and dedication.

I would also like to thank all the choruses and individuals who supported the Bournemouth Churches and Housing Association. There was a mountain of gifts for this worthy cause, which will make a massive difference to the recipients. The charity was overwhelmed by your generosity.

Councillor Nigel Hedges, Chair of Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch Council was so impressed with our Saturday show. He said it was the best entertainment he had seen in the last ten years! LABBS has definitely got the best members, choruses and quartets - you are all amazing.

I can't believe that we are coming to the end of another year. It has been such a pleasure to meet so many of you over the last twelve months and I



will always treasure the memories of the times spent with you. I have still got some more choruses to visit so please drop me a message if you would like me to come along.

All that remains for me now is to wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year, with lots of singing, of course!

In harmony,

**Natalie Feddon  
LABBS Chair**

## Update from your Editor



**Wow, what a weekend!** Convention was simply wonderful from start to finish, wasn't it? Between competitions and shows, fringe and afterglows, it's really hard to choose my best bit, so I'm going to choose all of it! It was so lovely too, to finally get to meet so many of you, and put faces to names.

I'm really looking forward to doing it all again in Harrogate next year, but before then, Harmony College! Are you going? I sure am, and I'm looking forward to another weekend of all things barbershop, and getting to meet even more of you. I can't wait!

Until then, have a wonderful Christmas and New Year, and I'll see you all again in '23!

**Mel Baber, VoiceBox Editor**

# LABBS 2022 Quartet Champions!

## To say we are delighted

to be your new LABBS Quartet Champions is an understatement! After an extremely turbulent few years, we couldn't have asked for a better event in Bournemouth. Finally, being able to sing again with friends from across the country, was a very special experience. Covid hit everyone hard, but for IN HOUSE Quartet, we didn't let it stop us! Our gold medal is a culmination of hard work over the last four years; singing on Jamulus, continuing to make videos and weekly Zoom meetings. Alongside this, LABBS events were (and still are) of huge importance to us. We attended an online session for a virtual prelims and participated in LABBS Unconventional Convention. What we can say is, if



you're a new quartet, please take any opportunities LABBS offers. We are part of a fantastic organisation; an organisation of extremely hard working volunteers!

We have so many thank-yous to make, as we've worked with many talented individuals! First of all, Dale Kynaston, our pretty awesome coach who tells us exactly as it is and keeps us on our toes! Nancy Kelsall for sharing her amazing singing toolbox and all-round performance advice, and finally Kirsty Williams for sharing a wealth of theatrical knowledge to make our performance come alive and for encouraging us to be more daring.

Huge congratulations must also go to Barberlicious for their silver medal performance and Nightfall for bronze. With all of us being members of Cheshire Chord Company, the weekend was a busy one, but how amazing it was to have our chorus buddies there to cheer us on! The White Rosettes did an outstanding job – congratulations on your gold medal and to Amersham on your silver medal.

Many, many congratulations to everyone that crossed the stage in Bournemouth.



We're so excited to be able to represent LABBS as your ambassadors for the next 12 months! What a year it's going to be! We'd love to meet as many members as possible over the coming year at the usual events and at LABBS Harmony College too! If your club is considering having a show or educational event, please don't hesitate to get in touch to see if we can help you or perform on your show. We'd love to get out there now that we can!

Please contact us through our social media channels @INHOUSEquartet or by email on [INHOUSEquartet@gmail.com](mailto:INHOUSEquartet@gmail.com).

**Julie, Jo, Jane and Rachel  
IN HOUSE**

## Good to be back!

### I don't think I will be the only PRO

to mention this, but what a fabulous weekend The White Rosettes had in Bournemouth and how grateful we were to be back performing, afterglowing, and laughing all together with our barbershop family after a three-year hiatus.

For The White Rosettes, it was a long trip down from Yorkshire, longer for some who circumvented Sheffield and Oxford a few times to avoid traffic jams or find refreshment, but to hear the audience singing On Ilkley Moor Ba'Tat as we waited apprehensively back-stage was well worth it: we knew we were back home. Thank you, LABBS, for organising such a great Convention.

Like other choruses we have sadly had some members retire from the chorus during the pandemic, many of whom were long standing members. So, it was fantastic to catch up with them again at our Friends & Family Rehearsals prior

to Convention. Once a White Rosette, always a White Rosette.

But as they say, as one door closes another one opens and we have been overjoyed to welcome seven new members (Amy Lynch, Tracey Spencer, Lenneke Van der Linden, Sophie Hosker, Pam Scarborough, Louise Hough, and Natascha Allen-Smith (returning)) to the chorus, and even more so that they were able to join us on stage at Convention. Prior to us crossing the stage it is tradition to present new members with a good luck card decorated with a hand painted picture of a White Rosette in their stage outfit drawn by a former White Rosette, Barbara Lewis. This time was no exception for this lovely memento.

Finally, we are delighted to have won gold at Convention, and as your Chorus Champions we hope we make the Association proud. We know that everyone puts so much hard work, love, and soul into their performances, but



New members with their good luck cards

this year we felt it even more so, given the difficulties that Covid has thrown at everyone. So, for us the winner is LABBS, that as an Association we have overcome, and we are all the stronger for it.

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a joyful New Year.

**Ruth Kirby, PRO  
The White Rosettes**





**University of Nottingham  
Jubilee Campus  
28th to 30th April 2023**



**Accommodation packages  
to suit every budget**

**Read all about it and enrol at  
[www.labbs.org.uk/harmony-college](http://www.labbs.org.uk/harmony-college)**

**Education Streams**

- Choruses
- Directors
- Quartet coaching
- Personal Development
- New! Extreme Quartetting**

**Guest Educator**

**Kim Newcomb  
(The Ladies)**



**Feedback following Harmony College 2019:**

The venue was fantastic and the programme was downright inspiring - we'll be back next time!

It was a triumph. I have had my barbershop batteries thoroughly recharged.

I haven't learnt so much, sung so much, laughed so much or had my musical nourishment topped up so much for a long while...

**Quartet Corner**

**Quartet Silver Medal success**

**We are over the moon** to have won the Holland Harmony Trophy for the Silver Medal placed LABBS Quartet for the third time after an extended break from competition. We would like to congratulate IN HOUSE and Nightfall quartets for their gold and bronze Medal awards, respectively. We were absolutely stoked for Hat-Trick on reaching their first ever finals at LABBS 22, and we wish them tremendous success in the future.

It was SO good catching up with lots of quartet friends. There is a certain camaraderie associated with being



in a quartet that enables special bonds to be formed with fellow barbershoppers, so we would like to congratulate all the mixed quartets, quartets and choruses who crossed the stage over the weekend in the three contests that took place.

We would like to thank everyone who came running up to us or stopped us in our tracks at Bournemouth International Convention centre to tell us that they enjoyed 'THAT TANGO SONG!' Some people felt like they wanted to dance after we had sung our performance in the Quartet Finals, and this feedback truly warmed our hearts.

We had the pleasure and privilege of performing with Crystal Chords on Saturday in the Chorus contest, winning the Mid-Size Chorus trophy for fourth place. We would like to thank all the Crystals for their support and love over the weekend and throughout the year. We are humbled and blessed to be part of



this wonderful community celebrating singing and friendship, and we cannot wait to entertain you some more next year.

As we look ahead to 2023, we will be competing in the International Quartet Competition in Holland Harmony, so if anyone else is making the trip in March 2023 then we hope to see you there. If not, we'll be back for LABBS Prelims in 2023!

**Anna, Anne-Marie, Beck and Bushy Barberlicious**



# Pulling seventh place out of the hat

## Not many of you will have heard of Hat-Trick

- 2022 was our first year competing at LABBS. We came 17th in Prelims, so were due to mic-warm the quartet competition.

About two months ago, we received an email from Jax Mumford, head of Contest Admin, telling us a quartet had to drop out, and so we were IN! We were so excited that we were in the main competition, not least because it meant we would get a lie in on Friday morning.

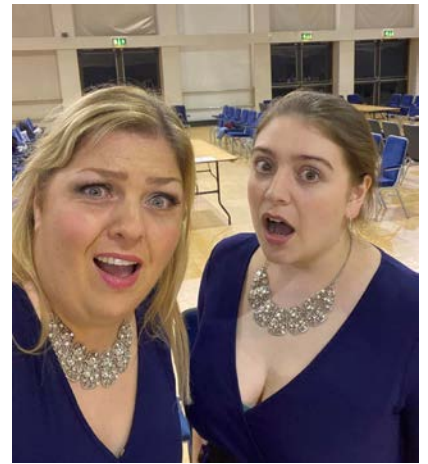


Hat-trick - Sophie, Helen, Alison and Laura

We had the two songs we were due to sing as mic-warmers and our aim was to beat our Prelims score. All competitors in the quartet competition are required to submit a song sheet for both semi-finals and finals, so we followed the rules and submitted a finals package that we had never actually sung, but that didn't matter since we wouldn't need it - or so we thought!

Gobsmacked doesn't even begin to cover the feeling when our names were read out as finalists. If you were in the audience at this point, you will have

heard the shrieks of Crystal Chords members and you'll have seen the shock on our faces. What on earth were we going to sing? Massive shout out to Debi Cox who allowed us to swap songs and helped us work out what we were able to sing that all four of us actually knew, to Lorna Scouler who ran around finding us some tea to eat while we learned our two songs in two hours, and to Gill Irwin who gave us some crash coaching 30 minutes before we went back into the system.



Laura and Sophie - a shocked and confused treble clef

Our Crystal supporters were screaming when we came back out (in the same frocks as before - because obviously we hadn't packed a second) and despite having the world's shortest rehearsal schedule we loved our finals set! And to top it all off - beautiful Barberlicious are our chorus sisters, our friends and an inspiration to us. So, to see them get the silver medals made Friday at Convention a truly wonderful day.

Sophie, Helen, Alison and Laura Hat-Trick

## Wow, wow, wow!

### What a fantastic (but exhausting) weekend at

**LABBS 22.** So many highlights and lovely moments, but I'll just go ahead and name a few of my favourites.

First, my beautiful quartet, Northern Soul. This was our very first year competing together and we were chuffed to pieces to come fourth overall

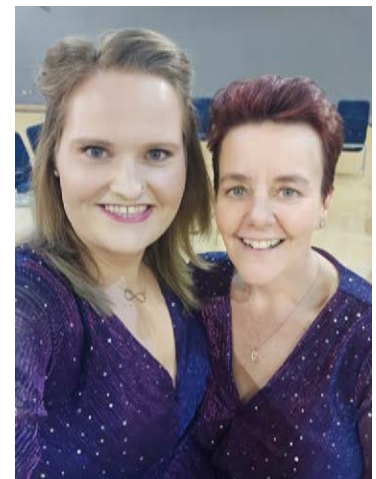


in such a high standard competition. Every single quartet on that stage was amazing. A special mention must go to our absolutely fantastic tenor, Anne Marie Cooke, who stepped in at short notice and had just nine rehearsals with us. We are all so proud and thankful to her for enabling us to compete, and for making us a very happy and complete quartet. We love you so much Anne Marie, and will be forever grateful. Don't think you're escaping now, you're stuck with us for good!

Congratulations to our friends in IN HOUSE, Barberlicious, and Nightfall on your well-deserved medals.

Another highlight for me was the fabulous Meantime chorus from BABS. I think I sat through the whole set with my jaw on the floor. Just wow - what fabulous entertainment and talent!

Finally, I would like to say on behalf of Sarah Cole and myself, a special thank you to every single person who asked how Sarah (my beautiful partner) was,



Thank you, from Sarah and Karen

how I was, and took the time to give us a hug and just let us know you are there if we need you. This means so much to the both of us having had a terrible few years, and latterly, few months. You are all so wonderful and I hope you know how much we appreciate your friendship.

Karen Adamson Northern Soul

# Twice on Ruby Tuesday

**Well, WOW!** What an amazing weekend, reconnecting with the Convention buzz and friends old and new. Ruby Tuesday had the honour of mic-warming for the quartet semi-finals – which for our first year in competition just blew us away!

Although we've been singing together for a while now, it's seemed like the universe was conspiring against us actually getting to throw ourselves into competing, and not only because of the Covid pandemic.



Rita (bari), Paula (tenor), and I (lead) want to shout from the rooftops about our amazing, beautiful, velvety bass, Rach E. She's been living with Stage 4 ovarian cancer for some years now, and treatments, trials and major surgeries have interfered relentlessly with what she loves to do most – singing. Recently, dealing with the cancer has become especially difficult, and following our first ever prelims in June, an unforeseen but unavoidable break of nearly three months meant we doubted we'd get to Bournemouth at all.

But you can't keep a good barbershopper down, and so we made it. Rach's tenacity, talent and sheer force of will swept us all along with a fierce determination to get up on that stage. What we didn't expect was the fabulous privilege of being asked to perform our set twice (thanks, sound issues!) – who ever gets that chance!?!?



We loved every second of performing for the gorgeous LABBS audience – and being part of the whole weekend was every bit as special as we'd hoped. Needless to say, we've now got everything crossed that we get the chance to do it again.

If you'd like to support fundraising for essential research and support for those living with ovarian cancer, please head to [www.ovacome.org.uk](http://www.ovacome.org.uk) or [www.targetovariancancer.org.uk](http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk) - both amazing charities that need your help. Thank you. x

**Rach Watson**  
**Ruby Tuesday**

# Fairytales can come true!

**Once upon a time, long, long ago** - well February 2019 to be precise – because, as we all know, EVERYTHING pre Covid seems like a lifetime ago - four hardworking lassies from the old shire of Bristol had a bit of a bump on the head and decided to form a barbershop quartet.

They didn't really have time for messing around - that really would have to wait a while - thanks to the real life priorities of working, looking after children, dogs and families and of course the mysterious time warp that descended thanks to the evil nasty Covid pandemic (Boo! Hiss!) – but, my goodness, when they did meet, they worked real hard! They followed the magical advice of their coaches - The King of Sing from Kansas (Mr Rob Mance) and The Prince of Fudgewittery (Mr Craig Kehoe) – and they discovered that they could make a super sonic sound that could wake up any sleeping princess – (probably from about a mile away actually!!). And so, SONIC competed in 2019



and had a ball! Coming 10th at prelims earned them a place at the semi-finals in Llandudno 2019 and the dazzle of the spotlights of the contest stage was an experience not to be forgotten. They were blessed that their friends travelled from far (far away) and wide to support them and BOOM! the spell was cast – Sonic wanted MORE!

So, many years later (well three to be fair) they donned their silver shoes and made the journey to Middle England for Prelims 2022 and gained eighth place and a place in the semifinals – again! Could this really be true? Well it was.

And do you know what? They only went and made it to finals, and to their astonishment and delight, came fifth!! So, what next? We know what to do to make our dreams come true and we're almost there! See you next year where hopefully the story will continue!!

**Lisa, Debbie, Elena and Caroline**  
**Sonic Quartet**



## Long Service Awards



Emma Shakespeare, receiving her 25 year LSA. Em was a founder member of Gem Connection, after beginning her barbershop career with Amber Valley Ladies Chorus.



Jacqui Beard, receiving her 25 year LSA. Jacqui began her barbershop career and joined Gem after moving into the area.



Mary Hurt, receiving her 25 year LSA. Mary also sang with Amber Valley Ladies Chorus before joining us at Gem



Paula Allison, receiving her 30 year LSA. Like Em and Mary, Paula also began her singing career with Amber Valley Ladies Chorus



Congratulations to Capital Connection's Naidene White, on receiving her 25-year Long Service Award



**Joan Curtis** has been an invaluable and much-loved member of our chorus for the past 30 years, as a lead then an excellent bass. Also as a Committee member and later Chair, as an amazing choreographer and member of the wardrobe team, and is one of the most lovely and cheerful people we could ever wish to meet.

She excels on stage with her sunny smile and is a very caring member of our chorus community. When on retreats she would always take charge of the kitchen and be full of fun ideas – not least

when she went down snowy Dartmoor hills on a tea tray one year! Joan was part of the Gold Medal winning chorus that went to America, and has always been a very good organiser who likes a well-run chorus! Sadly, ill health has kept Joan from rehearsals of late, but we are very much wishing her a speedy recovery and hope that she will be back amongst us very soon.

**Amy Hedger, PRO, The Chordettes Acappella Chorus**



# Once, twice, three times for first-timer Amy!

**Some might say I threw myself in at the deep end** for my first LABBS Convention. Singing with both Crystal Chords and the LABBS Youth Choruses meant I crossed the stage three times, making my Saturday resemble a ride on the Bournemouth Wheel as I rotated through rehearsals, dressing rooms and performances. But I wasn't alone – over half of the over-18s LABBS Youth Chorus competed with another chorus that day!

Not only that, but having joined Crystal Chords a mere three months ago, I passed my final audition just three weeks before convention! And as the LABBS Youth Choruses each rehearse four times a year, a combination of lockdowns and illness meant I'd only had one full chorus rehearsal and two over-18s rehearsals before the weekend.

So, it would be fair to say that I was a teeny bit stressed out, not helped by my soft-shell suitcase (containing everything, including all my stage outfits and electrical hair stylers) falling face down in a deep puddle in the dark early hours of Friday as I battled through the rain and wind towards my coach. Thankfully its contents survived and when I arrived in Bournemouth seven hours later, I was able to watch the quartet contest rather than frantically try to save my contest outfits! The contest included incredible performances from Crystal Chords' very own Barberlicious and Hat Trick, who



placed 2nd and 7th respectively. Quartet success continued in the BinH Mixed Quartet Contest on Sunday, with LABBS Youth Chorus members Bethany and Sophie coming 2nd and 4th in their quartets, Hot Ticket and Happy Sundays!

Early nights were in order on Friday for LABBS Youth as we needed to be stage-ready for our 8:30am rehearsal the next day. It seems we were too excited to be on stage as we accidentally ended up in our dressing room an hour early, but

then before we knew it, it was really time! All nerves dissipated as soon as I started singing – performing was so, so fun! When I came off stage, I just wanted to do it all again – which, luckily, I would be, twice.

I'm so proud of my chorus performances, which saw Crystal Chords come fourth and win best mid-sized chorus, and LABBS Youth win best small chorus. Two trophies!

The afterglow was predictably crazy and fun, a highlight of which was Crystal Chords' somewhat 'jubilant' performance on the stairs. I really felt part of the barbershop family and loved making memories with friends, old and new. I'm already counting down to LABBS 2023!

**Amy Bowers**  
LABBS Youth Chorus and Crystal Chords

# Singing with Mum, and my whole Spinnaker family

**I've been to LABBS Convention** and crossed the stage before with the full Youth Chorus, but this was my first time competing, as I joined Spinnaker Chorus after my birthday in August.

Spinnaker is a much larger chorus and I love that we get weekly rehearsal time - it's the best part of my Wednesday!

I've had a lovely time in the chorus in the two months since I joined, though it's hard work, and crossing the stage with my new Spinnaker family was exhilarating, as well as a chance to sing with my Mum who is also a Spinnakerette!

**Rosie Auckland (aged 13), Lead Spinnaker Chorus**



Three generations of barbershoppers: Rosie with her Nanny, Sue (from Norwich Harmony), and Mum, Helen



# What do volunteers, rats, maypoles and talented young singers all have in common?

## Junior Fascinating Rhythm of course!

In May this year, Junior FR held a very special 'Red Carpet' launch of their film, *The Piper*. This was the culmination of over a year's work, which gave rise to new opportunities that the girls and staff took on gladly and soon mastered!

MD Wendy Howse commented 'I honestly think Project Piper saved Junior FR from going under during the second lockdown. We'd had six months on Facebook Live and three months socially distanced in two groups, and then we had to go back onto Zoom. Introducing *The Piper* allowed us to bring the girls together again with some acting, silly accents and learning new songs. We had a lot of fun.' Fellow founder member, Kitty Davies, had composed additional harmony lines to make it both more interesting and to match the capabilities of this very special group of girls, and these were taught in break-out rooms on Zoom.

It became clear, however, that the pandemic was not going to allow a live performance, so the team came up with the ambitious alternative of filming it (outdoors of course). Kitty took on the direction of a rigorous shooting schedule and the whole team coordinated costumes, face painting and choreography.

The next big challenge was sound recording, but help was found for this in the very capable hands of Pete Nugent who arranged a professional recording day with multiple microphones, mixing desk, and huge amounts of experience. Kitty did some serious up-skilling to take on all the post-production of the audio and video, to make the absolute most of this wonderful experience. Wendy insists that 'none of



Pete on recording day

this would have been possible without the vision, drive, and passion of our one and only Kitty Davies! The film includes a rich musical soundtrack, interesting visuals, and both real-life (human) and animated rats!

Audiences at the premiere were absolutely delighted by the show, saying it was a fantastic souvenir of a very special time.

The 40-minute show may be enjoyed [here](#).

**Kitty Davies**  
Junior FR



FR Junior rats!





# JUBILATION LABBS CONVENTION 2022

## A fabulous Convention!

### This was always going to be the best Convention

**for me.** For a start, I would know so many of the members participating, having visited them on chorus nights. How privileged am I to be Chair of the Association, and be able to watch all the talent we have in LABBS, and open the competition? My own club, Velvet Harmony, was taking part in the 'Sing for Joy' category, a first for us and for LABBS.

I arrived early on Thursday evening and managed to convince Debi Cox that I should join in with the scratch chorus to check the sound in the BIC. The chorus was made up of about fifty singers representing about 25 of our clubs. What a great opportunity for me to film one of my vlogs from Bournemouth, I forgot I had the mic on when I started to join in with Anthem! It was so much fun singing all through the pole cats with these women.

Donn Roberts our wonderful Stage Manager was unable to be at Convention due to illness, so we created a video especially for him.

The girls on the front desk were kept continually busy. The introduction of a desk for first-timers where they could pick up their lanyard and have their photo taken was a huge hit.

The quartet competition was so exciting and the standard so high - what a pleasure to watch fantastic performances. I was very pleased to give the Katy Phillips Young Barbershopper of the Year Award to our own Diversity and Inclusion Director, Natasha Nickson, and to give the Jen Mills Award to Sonic.

Saturday saw the chorus competition, and it was such a pleasure to see everyone, in both the competition and the Saturday show, giving their best. Councillor Nigel Hedges, Chair of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, was overwhelmed by the sheer talent on show. He said it was his best



Natalie and Councillor Hedges

night in ten years! He was very impressed with the generosity of our members in donating so many things for Bournemouth Churches Housing Association.

It was so fabulous to catch up with many familiar faces, all beaming with happiness. How much we have missed being together, and what fun there was in singing together in the afterglow.

**Natalie Feddon**  
LABBS Chair



Natalie, flying high with Amersham Red Arrows



# The Katy Phillips Young Barbershopper of the Year Award

**This convention was really like no other**, especially for me as it was only my second ever! Since joining the LABBS Board in early 2021, I have been delighted to get involved in areas of barbershop wherever I can. Lockdown was hard for all of us, and I found that my position on the LABBS Board and working towards singing together again gave me the sense of purpose I had been missing. I have been so motivated seeing LABBS members from so many different choruses show interest and understanding of diversity and inclusion, and I hope this journey continues even after my time on the Board.

I'm so grateful to my home chorus, Bristol Fashion, for all the support

and love they give. Seeing the video back of us looking so fabulous was so rewarding and made all those last-minute wardrobe checks worth it. I can't even describe how proud I felt on stage with the amazing LABBS Youth Chorus knowing every one of our fantastic singers gave their all in the performance, and I can't wait to get started on what's to come for us next year. Being surrounded by such talented young singers for our first time back on the Convention stage since 2019 was an absolute ball!

I have taken on various roles within LABBS and my choruses over the last 18 months and my heart was so full to have that work recognised. I feel so proud to have been honoured with the Katy Phillips award and truly humbled by all the kind words and nominations



people have shared with me. I'll try to stop gushing now but just want to say a HUGE thank you to the people who nominated me, to Natalie for being the most supportive mentor to me as a Board member, and to Craig, Ros and Bethany for being such incredible and empowering MDs.

**Natasha Nickson**

## The Jen Mills Award

**Sonic had the most amazing fun** at Convention 2022. We were both overwhelmed and overjoyed to have made it through to the semi-final AND the quartet final.

We were quietly having a drink in the bar reflecting on our journey so far before heading back in for the Jen Mills announcement, when our quiet contemplation was suddenly disrupted by the auditorium doors being swung open and shouts of 'Sonic!', 'Has anyone seen Sonic?', 'Where are they?! They need to get down to the stage ..... NOW!'

We ran through in a daze - passing beer glasses, phones and handbags to anyone who would take them - and we raced towards the front not quite knowing why we were doing so! The announcement was being made early! To hear that we had been awarded

the Jen Mills Award was yet another cherry on our already overloaded cake! We were sorry not to hear SoundHouse perform their beautiful arrangement of Silver Lining but we were absolutely honoured to receive the award from the LABBS Chair, Natalie Feddon and Jen's Mum - Janet Mills - in front of a full house of spectators.

Jen was a beautiful soul who never missed a chance to encourage and praise singers at any level. Our quartet has developed a great sense of fellowship and togetherness where our trust in each other is implicit. We take praise and critique together; we sing as one and we are grateful that we as individuals, and our wider association, have been fortunate to have had the all-embracing influence of people like Jen in her lifetime, and that of so many



others in LABBS today who encourage so many.

We are very much looking forward to having a brand new piece of music arranged by one of our talented UK arrangers, and hope that when we perform it next year, we, in our own small way, may encourage others to sing in quartet too.

**Lisa, Debbie, Elena and Caroline  
Sonic Quartet**

## Thank you from BCHA

I would like to thank you so much for the fantastic, generous donations. We dropped a large amount of toiletries and the clothing and towels to St Pauls in Bournemouth, which has 40 rooms and accommodates people experiencing homelessness. To say they were over the moon is an understatement, and will go towards making a lovely Christmas.

There was some cat food in the donations. We have a customer who used to live in a tent, then moved to St Pauls, and is now in his own flat. That journey was made with his furry friend, so Tinkerbelle will be enjoying the cat food. The wrapped boxes will be going to the refuges and the other toiletries to customers in the local area.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you in 2024.

Best wishes

**Michelle Lewis  
Bournemouth Churches Housing  
Association**



# How to build a Convention

## Do you think Convention started on Friday

with an opening ceremony, and ended on Sunday with a closing ceremony? Think again! Our new Events Director, Kristina Mair, already has thoughts about 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 going round in her head. The 2022 Convention isn't really over for the events team until their 'wash-up' meeting when they will look at how things can be done better next time.

However, this article is really about how all the things needed to build Convention arrive, are put together, and are packed and taken away at the end. Many people are involved, but I'm not going to include names because I will doubtless miss some! In a small way this included me as some of the LABBS items such as lanyards, banners, reception items, the judges' lights, the backdrop and handbag trollies are currently stored in my garage. This means that in common with the team bringing the truck with all the main technical gear, we arrived on Wednesday ready for an early start on Thursday.

When we arrived at the centre, the artic was parked and being unloaded. A team of 16 experts was busy getting the main rig in place and setting up the lights and screens. They had started work at 6am that morning, missing hotel breakfast and being provided with a sandwich and a yoghurt to see them through. The [timelapse video](#) shows the work that went on during Thursday through to the scratch chorus that evening. We arrived at about 8.30am and started to set up the reception tables, the banners, the handbag trollies and the first timers' table. During the day another van arrived with the risers and members of the backstage team

lifted them bodily onto the stage for setting up. As Thursday wore on, more people arrived with various items in their cars - the things for the re-set room, the bra bins, the contest admin resources, the reserved labels for chairs, the frame for selfies and the BinH banners. The judges' tables, contest admin and social media were set up at exactly the distances noted in the detailed plans. Phew. Then Convention opened on Friday morning. Hurrah!

In all, a team of about 64 people were working on Convention on Saturday, plus volunteer door stewards and reception helpers probably making over 100 people contributing in total, many of whom were also competing. Thanks are due to all of them from all of us who enjoyed the fruits of their work.

On Sunday after the mixed quartet competition finished, and the audience dispersed, the teams again sprang into action. The hall became a hard hat area again very quickly and the rig started coming down. People with items in their cars collected them up and disappeared, my husband and I collected up the things we had brought, and the risers were lifted bodily off the stage and back into a van. When we left the centre at 7.05pm having videoed part of our walk round, the only people left were the team de-rigging the main auditorium, and they messaged me at 11.01 that night to say they had just finished. They drove away on Monday morning, finally leaving Bournemouth.

I cannot end this without saying how much we all missed working with Donn Roberts, our stalwart stage manager and how glad we are that he is now well. Same time next year?

**Sue Ranson, LABBS Vice Chair**



Hard hat station



Reception in a box



Riser lifting



Windsor Hall, Thursday



Home at midnight



## Champs and Awards



Gold Medal quartet, IN HOUSE

Recipients of The LABBS Champion Quartet Trophy, The Indigo Blue Trophy, The Pzazz Trophy, and The Crackerjack! Trophy



Silver Medal quartet, Barberlicious  
Recipients of The Holland Harmony Trophy



Bronze Medal quartet, Nightfall  
Recipients of The Guildford Harmony Trophy



Four Crying Out Loud  
Recipients of The Blue Chords Trophy





Gold Medal chorus, The White Rosettes  
 Recipients of The Brighton Rose Bowl, The Peter Caller Award, and The Liverpool Trophy.



Silver Medal chorus, Amersham A Cappella  
 Recipients of The White Rosettes Trophy, The Music Trophy,  
 and The Westering Trophy.



Bronze Medal chorus, Cheshire Chord Company  
 Recipients of The Harmony Incorporated Trophy



Crystal Chords  
 Recipients of The Red Rosettes Award



LABBS Youth Chorus  
 Recipients of The Phoenix Trophy





GraceNotes Acapella  
Recipients of The Millenium Award,  
and The Cheshire Chord Trophy



Steel City Voices  
Recipients of The Harmony InSpire Trophy

For full details of all results and awards, please see the [LABBS website](#).

## Choruses



Black Sheep Harmony



Blackdown Acapella



Bristol Fashion



Capital Connection



Cascade



Cheshire A Cappella



Chordettes Acapella Chorus



Chorus Icenii



Fascinating Rhythm





GEM Connection



Green Street Blues



Harmony InSpires



Junction 14



Main Street Sound



Norwich Harmony



Rhapsody Chorus



River City Chorus



Silver Lining



Spinnaker Chorus



The Belles of Three Spires



Velvet Harmony



Welwyn Harmony



Winchester A Cappella



# Quartets



Flamingo Road



Hat-Trick



In Cahoots



Instigate



Northern Soul



Ruby Tuesday



Shenigans



Sonic



Tempest



The Firebirds



The Rolling Tones



The SongSmiths



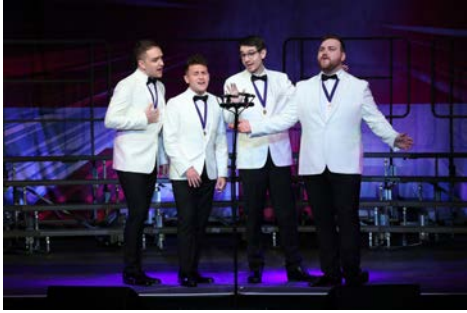
Treble in Paradise



Yorkshire Blend



## Shows



Awesome Foursomes: Limelight



Awesome Foursomes: Sound Central



Awesome Foursomes: SoundHouse



Jubilation Show: Avalon



Jubilation Show: Meantime Chorus



Jubilation Show: Quartet Champion Chorus



Jubilation Show: Venus Effect



Sensational Sunday: The Bristol Mix

## Legless at LABBS!

**How lovely it was** to be back on the big stage at Bournemouth International Centre for LABBS Jubilation 2022 Convention.

I have Spina Bifida and am an amputee as a result. Three days before Convention I had a problem with my prosthetic leg, which meant having to use my wheelchair again. This wasn't an issue as most modern venues are very accessible, and the BIC was no exception.

Within my chorus, there are several people with mobility issues – one fellow baritone, Kathryn, was using a wheelchair for the first time and was concerned about the logistics of getting on and off stage. We needn't have worried as we were very well looked after, and all of our needs accommodated by the extremely courteous and friendly staff behind the scenes. We were escorted to the stage from the warm-up room at the

five-minute warning, to enable us more time to get into position. My wheelchair was then taken behind the stage in preparation for our exit (I was able to walk on and off for our performance).

Nothing was too much trouble, and everyone was so friendly and helpful over the whole weekend. I am sure the many fellow LABBS members in similar situations will concur.

I love singing with my Spinnaker family, and being at LABBS, listening to choruses and quartets was awesome. It really is the most wonderful hobby, and the camaraderie is palpable.

My positive experience of the 2022 convention gives validation of the LABBS commitment to diversity and inclusion.

**Jo Larkham, Baritone  
Spinnaker Chorus**



Kathryn and Jo



# Chance encounters

## At 6.50am on Convention

**Friday** I was standing in rainy Bodmin, with my fellow chorus members commenting on how efficient I was with my clipboard and printed passenger list, when along came our coach.

Swish-swish went the doors. 'Hi, I'm Mel. I have a clipboard.' said I. 'Hi, I'm Adam. I have a bus.' said Adam. And that set the tone for the rest of the weekend.

While loading our suitcases, Adam-with-the-bus made the usual polite conversation about where we were going and what we were doing.

'We're competing at a barbershop convention.' said we. 'What, like hair-cutting?' said Adam-with-the-bus.



Adam-with-the-bus and Gill-from-the-Valleys wearing The Feathers of Shame, awarded for bad behaviour on the bus

Now, I'm not sure what competitive hairdressers get up to over a long weekend, but I suspect you won't find many of them hanging around in small-town Cornwall at that time on a wet Friday morning, carrying evening dresses and excessive quantities of red lipstick and false eyelashes.

A quick explainer ensued as he loaded our remaining suitcases into the hold. I'm not sure we did a great job of describing our amazing artform to be honest, because he just looked perplexed. We

soon fixed that after we'd picked up our MD, Heidi-with-the-pitchpipe, and Vice Chair, Gill-from-the-Valleys, suggested we sing for him.

That was when the penny dropped. He'd seen Pitch Perfect, and so the image in his mind from our description was of US-style collegiate a cappella, and as you know, that includes rapping and high energy choreo, complete with twerking, backflips and cartwheels. Seeing as he'd picked up quite a few 'women of a certain age', I can appreciate why he was so confused (although, shoutout to Met44's Sophie, who did do a cartwheel, and is most definitely not a 'woman of a certain age!').

We sang Anthem and Can You Feel the Love Tonight, and I think that's when we hooked him. Although it's fair to say he hadn't yet been bitten by the barbershop bug, it had most definitely had a nibble.

By the time we got to BIC, piled out of the coach and rushed inside, eager to see the quartets, Adam-with-the-bus was right there with us, buying his ticket to see the chorus comp.

I was walking through the foyer a few hours later, and there he was behind the front desk, handing out pin badges, chatting away to barbershoppers like they were old friends, and wearing his lanyard proudly – complete with first-timers ribbon.

Adam-with-the-bus stayed with us for most of Convention. He danced and sang lead for the mass sings, wore one of our flowery, colourful Jubilation headbands (with flashing lights) for the Saturday show, and whooped, cheered and clapped along with the rest of us throughout the performances. He also promised he'd give a good ol' Cornish Oggy Oggy Oggy when we were announced onto the stage, and I can't tell you how much hearing that made us smile and calmed our nerves as we were walking on.

By Sunday, Adam-with-the-bus had made plans to attend one of our



Celebrating: Sandra-who's-the-Chair, Adam-with-the-bus, and Heidi-with-the-pitchpipe

Christmas singouts with his partner, was going to talk to a friend about her joining our chorus, and has made us promise to message him when we book our next Convention trip, so he can ask his boss if he can take us. He also wants an introduction to Kitch-with-the-computers next time, as he fancies a crack at Vox Pops! For our part, we encouraged him to have a look at the BABS website and think about joining a men's chorus (Ocean City Sound, brace yourselves!). He's still not completely bitten, but barbershop definitely got under his skin, so much so that he came to our post-Convention celebration the following week, and wants to become an affiliate member.

Adam-with-the-bus was a superstar all weekend, and we can't thank him enough for all the support and encouragement he gave us. There is a message in this story though: barbershop can come to you in strange ways, and through chance encounters. We should take every opportunity to share and talk about our fantastic hobby, and spread the barbershop love, because we never know who might be listening, and who might find joy in this amazing thing we do, that they never even knew existed. Just ask Adam-with-the-bus!

**Mel-with-the-clipboard**  
GraceNotes Acapella



# THANK YOU!

**To every volunteer, whatever your role, for helping to make our return to in-person Conventions a year to remember!**



# Barbershop in Harmony

**Wow! Twelve mixed quartets** crossed the stage on Sunday afternoon in a great competition, and on behalf of Barbershop in Harmony I send congratulations to all.

Met44 (Alex Sanctuary, Sophie Hasson, Sophie Sanctuary and Laurence Hassson) finished in first place, and received the Hannah and the Hurricanes Mixed Quartet trophy and a bursary of £500. Hot Ticket were in second place, with Crown Derby placing third.

Sophie Sanctuary who sings

baritone in Met44 said 'We were over the moon to be the gold medallists at this year's BinH competition! Singing in Met44 is the BEST, because we get to sing with our husbands, wives, and best friends - that's why we think mixed barbershop is so special! We're excited to see what the coming years will bring for the quartet, although we're sure there will be more silliness, cartwheels, and maybe even successful fire... we'll see!'

**Nancy Philbin, Co-ordinator  
Barbershop in Harmony**



Met44



Hot Ticket



Crown Derby

# BABS Harmony College

**Although I've been lucky enough** to be BABS' Social Media Manager for over three years, due to lockdown, and like a lot of our members, I had to wait three years to attend my first in-person Harmony College. So, it was very useful to see how the college experience was from a newcomer's perspective.

With any event of this size, August's Harmony College wasn't without an early set-back or two, including our overseas educator, Theo Hicks, falling foul of Covid. You would never have known about this hiccup though as

Region 31's David Sangster stepped seamlessly into his shoes. David was an immediate hit with our attendees, and formed great partnerships with our other educators, including Tim Briggs, Neil Firth, Sean Bui, Linda Corcoran and Boo De Bruin, to name but a few.

As well as our usual chorus streams, we offered a vast selection of classes to our members, which even included a Ukulele session! What was really evident to me from the offset were the varied ages of our attendees, including a good number of Youth Members. Not only did our attendees leave Nottingham with vastly more knowledge than they came with, but new memories and

friendships were forged over late-night tag sessions in the campus bars. Next year's event is already in my diary!

**Simon Miskin, Social Media Manager  
British Association of Barbershop Singers**





# IABS Convention

## It was with great relish

that the Irish Association of Barbershop Singers' Convention Team descended once again upon Killarney, Co. Kerry in early October. With two non-convention years behind them, we looked forward to the contests and meeting the Irish members, and the many guests who had registered to attend from countries all over the world. Killarney is a beautiful part of Ireland, often used as a launchpad for tourists exploring the Ring of Kerry and the Wild Atlantic Way, but it is rare for the town to play host to 600 barbershop singers!

On Friday, IABS hosted a youth barbershop event for interested schools in the region called 'Here to Harmonise'. Facilitated by Douglas Carnes, over 200 secondary school students learned and recorded The Greatest Showman anthem 'A Million Dreams' with the help of quartet Lady Barbalade. Music teachers from the schools and interested parties from the visiting associations also observed this event, which was enabled by a grant from the World Harmony Council. By Friday afternoon, it was time for the Open Youth competition – the first of its kind for IABS! Carrigtoohill's ABC's won this competition under the direction of Lorena Gillard.

Hot on the heels of the Youth awards, the National Quartet competition opened, with eight competing quartets.

This showcased some brand-new quartets as well as some more seasoned competitors. The standard of this competition was impressive with some of the highest scores to date in any IABS contest. Guys and Dolls, a mixed quartet from Cork, took home the gold medals with a score of 76.2%.

Next on the agenda was the International Quartet competition, showcasing a diverse range of barbershop groups from seven different countries! From a field of 14 quartets, the egg-cellently named Loose Chickens from the UK were awarded the first prize with a score of 74.1%! The audience was treated to mic warming and cooling sets from 20/20, HusAar and Vocal Zone during the many competitions on the day.



Building Bridges, Supreme Champions IABS 2022

Some people's plans for an early night were a little waylaid when awards were announced and some celebrations were required, but this did not prevent the choruses from bringing their best to the stage on Saturday! Day 2 opened

with the National Chorus contest, with mic warmers Cottontown Chorus entertaining the early audience before the Irish choruses took to the stage! First prize here went to Blingmasters from Dublin with a score of 76.5%. This was followed by the International Chorus contest where a fantastic variety of choruses demonstrated the depth and breadth of barbershop entertainment and emotion. This contest was won by Building Bridges Chorus (79.6%) who were also awarded the title of 2022 Supreme Champion of IABS.

In a Gala Concert that evening, gold medallists, guest quartets and choruses entertained the audience with many moving performances. It was exciting to bring so many barbershoppers together from the US and Europe after so many years.

Before departure on Sunday, there was an opportunity for some coaching under glass by judges Steve Scott and Mo Field with chorus The NotaBelles and Danish quartet, HusAar. This left the attendees full of enthusiasm for returning to their next rehearsal with lots of ideas and inspiration – all of which will be put to good use in preparing for the next IABS Convention which will take place in Killarney once again, from

6-8th October 2023.

**Ailbhe Hayes, Chairperson  
Irish Association of Barbershop Singers**



Gold medal National Chorus, Blingmasters, under the direction of Becky Gilbert



Guys & Dolls, gold medal winners of the National Quartet Contest



# Amersham bring the party to Convention!

## We were dancing in the streets

on the escalators, in our hotel rooms - all around Bournemouth, in fact. It was just so awesome to finally be singing together at Convention again; we felt like winners just for making it onto the stage! So, to actually come away with the Chorus Silver, plus the Music and Performance trophies, was another level of awesome altogether!

With no holds barred, we celebrated all through the Afterglow and beyond as a (Dancing In The) Street Party! Then somehow, we managed to get up and sparkle in time to join our MD at the Sunday Morning mass sing AND perform our package along with THAT wonderfully wacky Liz Garnett arrangement of 'Grace Kelly' on the Sensational Sunday Show!

Like every chorus, our road back to harmony happiness after Covid has been challenging, but we've managed to get back on track this year thanks to some very talented and special people:

Let's hear it for our hard-working Committee and Convention Team, our

fantabulous Performance Team, our Music Masters, and our Costume and Make-up Queens.

Team Wright through a real game-changer of a Retreat.

Finally, a standing ovation has to go to our indefatigable MD, the phenomenal, Helen Lappert, who has helped us find our singing souls, and has given us the confidence not just to be performers, but to BE.

We've loved every second of this year's Convention. Many congratulations to everyone who performed, and especially to the 2022 Champs, The White Rosettes, on their well-deserved Gold, and to Cheshire Chord Company on their excellent Bronze medal-winning package.

Lastly, mahoosive thanks to all the people who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to put on such a great, jubilant weekend.

Now we're ready for a brand-new beat. So bring it on - it's time to get 2023's party started!

**Hils Apicella, PRO**  
**Amersham A Cappella**



We'd also like to show our appreciation for the brilliant David and Sandi Wright. Not only were we totally blessed to perform David's arrangements of Dancing in the Street and You Don't Bring Me Flowers, but we were also fortunate enough to be mentored by

# Crystal Chords bag mid-size chorus trophy

**How awesome was it** to be back in person doing the thing we all love together again? We are incredibly grateful to all the volunteers and staff that made Convention 2022 one to remember. Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU to everyone who contributed their time, energy and skills. Teamwork makes the dream work!

Our very own Kristina Mair is the new LABBS Events Director, which makes us extra proud of how strong the weekend was. Like most choruses, we had a lot of first timers with us, and the feedback from them has been

incredible. We also had not one, but two quartets in the quartet final. We are incredibly proud of Hat-Trick coming in seventh and Barberlicious lifting the Holland Harmony silver trophy. Our chorus celebrated their successes as much as the girls did themselves. Gaining the best mid-sized chorus trophy as well was the icing on the cake.

**Laura Orton, PRO**  
**Crystal Chords**



Crystal Chords members, Gabbie Forte and Alaka Prodhan, with the mid sized chorus trophy



# The Belles, back doing what they love

**We had waited excitedly** all year for this Convention, our first since 2019. We had all been missing the buzz and positive vibes that singing together gives us all. It didn't disappoint.

All the Belles were even more excited this year as our directors, Lucy Guess and Chesca Cocks, along with two of our newest members, Holly and Beth - who had never been to convention before - had formed a quartet, Tempest, during lockdown. They had made it into the semi-finals of the ladies Quartet Competition.



Jubilant Belles

The coach journey down to Bournemouth from Coventry started early at eight o'clock, as we didn't want to miss them performing. Thankfully we got to Bournemouth early and dropped our suitcases at the hotel and made our way down to the Bournemouth International Centre. We managed to get there early and we were able to see the whole quartet competition. Tempest started the show after the two mic warmer quartets. As it was the first time they had performed, we couldn't have been more proud of their singing and performance skills.

On Saturday after an early breakfast, we prepared for the Chorus Competition, warming up, and applying our make-up and styling our hair. Then we made the journey to the convention centre, by coach. We had miraculously acquired new members in lockdown - Vickie, Christa, Becky, Holly and Beth - and they were buddied up with experienced members to support their first convention experience. Another exciting fact for this year is that we had acquired new red dresses, which dramatically changed our look from previous years. It had been two years since the last Convention and we were



Tempest

very excited to get on stage. We also felt calmness and relief come back as we went on stage. We were back doing what we all love.

We were pleased with our performance, and we got some of our best scores. Afterwards we soaked up the atmosphere in Bournemouth - the day was glorious, and many people were dressed up for Halloween. Finally, we got dressed up for the Jubilation evening and enjoyed the show and the afterglow in the bar.

**Linda Nicholson, PRO**  
**The Belles of Three Spires**

## A story, a song, and a warm glow

**Every convention song tells a story** and for us it was the journey from Lockdown to the stage at Bournemouth 2022.

'Til I Hear You Sing, a beautiful ballad from the musical Never Let Me Die by Andrew Lloyd Webber, had been shared with the chorus just before rehearsals were moved to Zoom in March 2020. How ironic to be singing on mute about longing to hear voices once more, and indeed it being over a year until that dream was realised. During those rehearsals we turned to the advice of David Brunetti - 'Acting Songs', and considered how every song happens at a pivotal moment in its story. The beat - the moment just before the song is sung - helped set the scene of quiet, reflective longing, and the conclusion as the dream is realised and you did indeed hear us sing once more.

Our up-tempo provided the realisation of the dream as we told the audience

that you Never Go Wrong with a Song. This song was such a treat to sing, and we had great fun exploring moves and dynamics with 'melodramatic intention'.

However, after being thrilled with our seventh place, the ultimate singing was surely at the Afterglow. We were delighted to be joined by other choruses, judges, and the odd gold medallist, to sing polecats and some of our repertoire favourites.

We can't wait to do it all again next year.

**Debbie Trotman, PRO Team**  
**Bristol Fashion**





# Celtic Chords do the double – two trophies at Camborne Music Festival!



Celtic Chords celebrate winning the Barbershop class at Camborne Music Festival, under the direction of their new MD, Sian Netherton.



Sing'nTonic celebrate winning the Barbershop Quartet class at Camborne Music festival. L-R, bari Pam, lead Lori, coach Isabell, bass Anne and tenor Julia.

## Tea, cake, and almost fourteen miles

**Once upon a time** some members of Cheshire Chord Company decided to do a long walk for charity. Almost two years later, following Covid and various difficulties including broken bones and hip replacements, a few hardy members and partners managed to complete almost 14 miles - a long half marathon distance. Sue Ranson, Brenda Rothwell and her husband Alan, Una Woodhouse and her husband Tim, Kath Whitehouse, and Jude Dadswell all completed the distance, with Caroline Rushton in support in her car, and Charles Ranson following the towpath route along the canal in his boat which provided a mobile toilet and tea making facilities. They were not roughing it! The walk took place on a nine-mile stretch of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal which is flat with no locks, so it is ideal for a long walk.

At the furthest point the boat moored, and tea and cake was consumed by all parties. This went down very well! However, the walkers then found that they were sharing the path with another sponsored walk, and these walkers had a gazebo on the towpath, with helpers giving out gin and tonic! This nearly caused a mutiny in the Cheshire Chord Company ranks, but a visit to an ice cream parlour en route cheered everyone up and despite their misgivings, all the walkers completed the full distance. The group raised £737 for Cancer Research and the NSPCC, and they are already planning their next challenge - maybe a full marathon walk next year? We shall see.

**Sue Ranson**  
Cheshire Chord Company



Cheshire Chord Company tea and cake pit stop



Cheshire Chord Company walkers, ready to set off along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal



Cheshire Chord Company walkers, recovering with a plate of Shepherd's Pie after their 14-mile achievement



# Another successful Convention for Fascinating Rhythm

## Fascinating Rhythm enjoyed a jubilant weekend

at Convention! We sang a package of two contrasting songs, originally from Broadway musicals and re-arranged in the traditional barbershop style. We opened our set with the heartfelt ballad All The Things You Are written by Oscar Hammerstein and Jerome Kern for Very Warm For May, skillfully arranged by [Liz Garnett](#), and the humorous Cole Porter number Let's Do It (Let's Fall In Love) from Paris. After a three-year break between Conventions, we returned to a strong, high standard competition. Fascinating Rhythm maintained their position within the top ten of national LABBS choruses, finishing in 8th position.

Jo Thorn, Fascinating Rhythm's Musical Director said 'What an absolute thrill to be back on the convention stage. Those 10 minutes go so quickly but they do form part of an incredible journey of learning, laughing and hard work in the preceding months. Such a joy to catch up with all our sister choruses too, watch their incredible performances and rejoice in the fact

that despite the trials and tribulations that the pandemic placed on us all, we have all come back with a stronger song in our hearts.'

Fascinating Rhythm was pleased to have five new members join us for their first convention experience, who said it was a great experience and they felt very well looked after.

Fascinating Rhythm sends congratulations to all the choruses who competed and especially to those who won trophies at this year's convention, in particular the gold-medal winners The White Rosettes and IN HOUSE quartet.

Fascinating Rhythm is pleased to announce our Love to Sing Workshop on 28th January 2023. Click [here](#) for tickets.

**Kate Bishop**  
Fascinating Rhythm



Fascinating Rhythm's Convention first-timers



Fascinating Rhythm, on their way to Convention

## New experiences for newbies



Harmony InSpires newbies, Barbara McDonald, Lynda Taylor, Ness Chatterton, Donna Prayag, Michele Steele and Rachel Buglass

### Harmony InSpires' troupe of newbies to Convention

were unanimous in their enjoyment of the event. All enjoyed the friendship and camaraderie, and commented on how beyond our immediate HI family, other participants were also very kind and welcoming.

'A big plus for me was having the opportunity to get to know the members of Harmony InSpires better – it was lovely to have the time to sit and chat about all kinds of everything. I think the shared experience of Convention will make us a closer group going forward – which can only be good for the chorus!' said one. While another added 'It was a completely new and unique experience, and I felt privileged to be there. I loved feeling glamorous in a sparkly dress and I

enjoyed listening to other choruses and quartets.'

Members were also complimentary about organisation, both by the chorus and at the convention centre itself: 'It was very well organised, everything was done to ensure that we enjoyed ourselves and that we had lots of fun. The stewards were really friendly and helpful. I loved meeting the other choruses and listening to them. It was great!'

It was a fabulous Convention. We really enjoyed our 10 minutes in the spotlight and couldn't believe how quickly it was over! Thank you to all involved.

**Rachel Buglass, PRO**  
Harmony InSpires



# Barbershop style like never before!

**What. A. Weekend!** After a three-year blip, with no face-to-face Conventions, how good was it to get back on that stage!? With a productive couple of years behind us, on Zoom and in person, what a wonderful feeling it was to finally get to Bournemouth and see our barbershop friends from far and wide! Back at the start of 2020, we had a Learn to Sing course, so this convention was extra special, as newer members were finally able to compete in a LABBS event and win a BRONZE medal!

The build-up to Convention is always a little crazy, but don't we just love it!? We had some great coaches support us over this time - Dale Kynaston, Peter Kennedy and Rob Mance you are just awesome! Rob joined us at our retreat weekend, and what a weekend it was! As is Cheshire Chord tradition, we worked hard during the day and even harder at night! It's amazing how much talent we have in our chorus and this year, the baritones gave our bass section a run for their money with their fabulous performance! Roll on next year; the bar has well and truly been raised - barbershop style like never before!

The start of October was a great opportunity to 'get out there' and perform our Convention package to an audience in Wigan. St Michaels and All Angels Church was the venue,

where we supported the church in raising funds for their chosen charity. The audience was very complimentary, and it was good to get those pre-Convention nerves going!



We'd like to congratulate everyone who crossed the stage in Bournemouth, especially to all the newbies out there! LABBS is a fantastic organisation, and it really is the best hobby ever! A huge congratulations must also go to The White Rosettes for their gold medal performance and our very own, IN HOUSE quartet! A very special congratulations also go to our very own Four Crying Out Loud quartet – first time out and they won the novice award! Amazing achievement! Well done to

Powerhouse for competing in the mixed quartet competition on Sunday and congratulations to our friends in Sheffield, Steel City Voices. Your first time out and what a set it was!

We look forward to lots more events over the coming months, but for now, Christmas is on the horizon so new playlists are being devised as we speak!

Don't forget; you can keep up with all our news on our website [www.CheshireChord.co.uk](http://www.CheshireChord.co.uk).

**Julie Phillips, PRO**  
Cheshire Chord Company

## Thank you!

**It was an absolute pleasure** to have Harmony InSpires sing at our wedding in July. It had always been an idea of mine to have the chorus sing me in and they ended up doing just that, as well as singing us out! Everyone there said that the chorus was fabulous, and really made the service memorable and unique. As you can see, I was so happy with their rendition of Everything for my entrance, that a bouquet pump was needed!! We can't thank the chorus and Hari enough; it truly was magical and an unforgettable memory from our wedding day.

**Vicky Berry, Bari**  
Harmony InSpires



Vicky and Harmony InSpires



Vicky giving a bouquet pump



# First-timer thoughts

## Wow, what a fantastic weekend

we all had! The standard of competitors each year continues to rise, leading us all to a nail-biting finish. The GEMS send huge congratulations to all our medal winners this year - you have certainly left LABBS standing on the highest pedestal.

GEM Connection chose not to compete in the main competition this year; it was the right decision for us. However, we are so proud to have had five first-timers crossing the stage with us. We thought you would like to hear some of their thoughts:

**Dawn Kelly:** 'How do I describe my first LABBS Convention experience? Well, it's very difficult to put all the different emotions into words. But emotions such as excitement, trepidation, happiness, and pride are the front runners as some of the emotions I felt, both leading up to and to taking part in convention.'

'The journey leading to Bournemouth was filled with excitement and trepidation. Being a newbie in my chorus, I felt under pressure to play my part well, so as not to not to let GEM down.'

'The actual experience of crossing the stage was a little nerve-racking, but I was so very happy to be there. And walking off stage, I felt an overwhelming sense of pride, at being a member of GEM Connection and this wonderful organisation we call LABBS'. 'The quartet and chorus competitions provided a great opportunity to see and hear others, and it was absolutely spine-tingling at times to hear those barbershop chords ringing! The whole weekend was absolutely fabulous and I'm already looking forward to next year!'

**Helen James:** 'How do I put into words something that turns out to be even more wonderful than I had ever anticipated? Being in the company of the most passionate group of ladies who share the wonder and pure delight of singing. I will treasure the memories I have of my first LABBS Convention for a long time.'

**Emily Garrud:** 'I have been in the barbershop world for under six months. I'd been looking for a new vocal challenge, and it's safe to say LABBS has certainly offered that! The calibre of



GEM's first-timers, Helen James, Dawn Kelly, Emily Garrud, Lucy Barber and Diane Lane

singing at Convention was remarkable. I especially enjoyed watching the Chorus Competition and the mass polecat sing. I also found it a unique bonding experience with my chorus. It made me realise how important the chorus has become to me. I feel convention gave me a much-needed boost on an emotional level after a difficult couple of months. It's also put fire in my belly to keep improving my vocal and performance skills.'

**Jenny Smedley, PRO**  
GEM Connection

# Coaching, competition, and Christmas

**It has been a busy summer and autumn** for the Red Rosettes. Having decided not to compete at Convention this year, we have focussed on widening our repertoire and improving our skills.

To that end, we were coached by the wonderful Rob Mance, the irrepressible David Sangster and the inspirational Sally McLean. We had the added bonus of Sally joining her SoundHouse European Gold Medallist colleagues, Laura Phillips, Emma McManus and Hannah Barber, to perform a preview of their performance for us, which they presented at Convention. They were amazing!

We are delighted to say that we have reached the final six in the Lancashire Choir of the Year competition and are rehearsing and preparing for what we hope will be a winning performance at the end of November. Fingers crossed for us!

Our 'Learn to sing a song at Christmas' initiative starts in November and will hopefully mean we can add more new members to the wonderful newbies who have enriched our Chorus this year. At the end of the four-week course we will be entertaining family and friends of the new members, accompanied by Coppull Parish Church School.

As with all the other choruses up and down the country, we are also revisiting the Christmas repertoire for our many singouts over the festive season. The highlight will be a guest appearance with the award-winning Leyland Brass Band, fresh from their performance at the Albert Hall.

Best wishes to all. Life's a song. We sing it!

**Ann Atkin**  
The Red Rosettes



The Red Rosettes and David Sangster



The Red Rosettes and Rob Mance



# Back at last

## GraceNotes Acapella had such a wonderful time

at Convention. What a joy too, to jump from eighteenth place last time to ninth this time, and win two awards, too! Our congratulations to all quartets and choruses who crossed the stage: you were incredible.

The last three years have been long, and we couldn't wait to get back on the stage, meet up with our friends from across the UK, watch the performances, and introduce our newer members to the thrill of a full weekend of barbershop. Here's what some of them, and our MD, had to say:

**Heidi** 'I am absolutely over the moon that we received the Most Improved Chorus award! We worked our socks off applying previous feedback from judges, as well as getting extra coaching so we could compete to the best standard possible. However, lockdowns and ongoing Covid concerns kept putting barriers in our way so we could only dream of achieving a 7.7% improvement! I am so chuffed at our

result, and it has energised us to keep setting ourselves even higher targets!' **Sianie** 'A multitude of emotions were whirling around in my mind, but I did it! It was amazing!' **Chloe** 'My first time competing was amazing. Everyone was so friendly, and I can't wait for next year!'



Glow-in-the-dark GraceNotes

**Clare** 'As a first timer, the main thing that struck me was the mutual respect and support amongst all the choruses. The atmosphere during the mass sings was amazing!'

**Jade** 'I had the most surreal weekend.

Looking back now, I can't believe I performed on the same stage as such talent from across the country. I feel so lucky to sing with GraceNotes; such a talented, kind and supportive group of women, under the direction of such a strong, gifted and inspirational MD.'

**Lily** 'I've been watching my sisters and my Mum for years and always wanted to compete with them. I really enjoyed the whole weekend, and it was made even more special by coming ninth. I love how welcoming everyone is at LABBS and am super proud of the whole chorus for getting Most Improved Chorus and my Mum for getting Most Improved Director! I would happily do it for the rest of my life.'

**Hazel** 'As a LABBS first timer I really enjoyed myself. Everyone was so very friendly and supportive. A well organised convention.'

**Jamie** 'My first time singing with LABBS was amazing. So friendly and exciting! I can't wait for next year.'

**Sandra Matanle, Chair  
GraceNotes Acapella**

# Spinnaker Chorus fundraiser for air ambulance

## Spinnaker Chorus is an a cappella four-part harmony choir

of 65 members based in Portsmouth. Every year we nominate a charity to support with our fundraising and this year we chose the Hants & IOW Air Ambulance service. Despite restricted opportunities due to the pandemic, we were determined to raise as much as we could to help this life-saving charity. We hosted a barbershop 'Unconventional Convention' last October on behalf of the Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers and invited member choruses from our local region to come and showcase some songs with

us. We sold refreshments and had a raffle during the event which was well supported. Through the year we've had a Bring & Buy Sale, cake sales, sold items on eBay, and received generous donations from performances locally.

We were delighted to present Judith Stephens from HIOWAA with a cheque for £815.00 at a recent rehearsal. The presentation was made by Spinnakerette Hazel Smith, who was instrumental in our decision to support the air ambulance. She explained that "HIOWAA is so very special to me since it hugely contributed to saving my son's life when he had to be flown to St George's hospital in Tooting for urgent heart surgery following a car accident. It was a very scary time, but he survived to tell the tale and as you may imagine, I'm indebted to HIOWAA"



We're delighted to be continuing to support HIOWAA for a second year, helping this



invaluable emergency service - which relies totally on donations - to secure the £15,000 per day it needs to bring immediate critical care to patients when they need it most.

For further information about HIOWAA visit [www.hiowaa.org](http://www.hiowaa.org), and for Spinnaker Chorus visit [www.spinnakerchorus.co.uk](http://www.spinnakerchorus.co.uk)

**Tracy Daniel, PR Officer  
Spinnaker Chorus**



# Silver Lining zips down to Bournemouth

**What a weekend we've had!** It was so great to get back to Convention, meet all our friends from across the UK, and we were super proud to achieve our best score ever.

After three long years we got up to all sorts with midnight paddling, a group zipwire challenge, and a scavenger hunt to calm us down after the excitement of returning to the stage. From pictures with ice cream, sand and chips, to those in our team colours ready for the Jubilation show, Team Silver made the most of our time together.

**Heather Morton, PRO  
Silver Lining**



The bras were delivered



The Pink Team went pole dancing



The Purple Team masqueraded



The warm up team, warmed up!



The zipwire was conquered

## Show me where the good times are!

**They were definitely at the BIC!**

As with all other competitors, Welwyn Harmony was delighted to cross the stage once again in Bournemouth. The three long years of separation just melted away as soon as we entered the auditorium - how wonderful it was to all be back together again to enjoy our favourite hobby!

We were delighted to bring nine newbies to perform with us – Cath H, Emma, Gillian, Helen, Jacki, Linda M, Parvaneh, Rachel and Theresa – and to welcome back Jill B. Ladies, you did us proud!

Some of the comments received from our newer members:

'It was an amazing opportunity for me to be a part of a wonderful group on stage. Also had a great time with the ladies, getting to know them more. Feels

like I had a new family around me while I'm far from mine.'  
'Having heard so much about it, it was great to finally experience Convention. To have the opportunity to perform on

better and to have a shared experience.'  
'I will never forget the joyous atmosphere of Convention. It was such a pleasure to sing in harmony with so many others, to participate in a competition where the singing and performance was of such a high standard, and to experience the well-organised intensity of a weekend of ladies' barbershop.'

Several members tried out Extreme Quartetting for the first time, and proudly earned their badges. So good was the experience that Cath D, Jules and Linda V have already signed up for the EQ Stream at Harmony College in April!

Grateful thanks to LABBS and all involved in making the 2022 Convention a real JUBILATION!



Welwyn Harmony newbies

stage as well as seeing and learning from all the other amazing choruses and quartets. It was also great to get to know the other ladies in my chorus

**Julie Jones, PRO Team  
Welwyn Harmony**



# A sensational return to jubilation

## Oh, what a joy to be back

at LABBS Convention after a three-year hiatus! The thrill of packing a suitcase filled with sparkling costume, jewellery, and stage make up, and a roadtrip to Bournemouth provoking such excitement.

A super hotel filled not only with Spinnakerettes but a wedding party AND the Tottenham Hotspur Football Team, no less! Suddenly bumping into famous footballers as lift doors opened was quite a novelty, and singing for them as they loaded onto coaches for their match with Bournemouth was great fun.

The BIC was alive and bustling with barbershoppers reacquainting, and the atmosphere electric. The auditorium and stage stirring butterflies in tummies, and sending pulses racing in anticipation of performing competitively again. The cheers walking out on stage, the lights reflecting on beaming faces, the feelings of pride and gratitude, the sense of family and togetherness, overwhelming. In performance mode, we presented our much-loved contest set with great enthusiasm, putting into action our well-rehearsed plan. And then in a flash,

our stage time was over. But what a blast! We had 11 members singing with us for the first time - Jan, Maria, Ciara, Hazel, Rosie, Helen, Kat, Liz, Tracey, Claire and Josie - five of whom were also convention first timers. Achieving joint fifth place in a competition with an amazing line up of fantastically talented choruses was the icing on the cake.

Thank you, LABBS, for a most wonderful Convention which was truly a jubilation. Can't wait to see you at Harrogate '23.

**Tracy Daniel, PRO  
Spinnaker Chorus**



Jan, Maria, Ciara, Hazel, Rosie, Helen, Kat, Liz and Tracey

# New adventures with my Spinnaker family

**After much nagging** from my Spinnakerette daughter, I rocked up at a Spinnaker rehearsal, not knowing what to expect. Within half an hour, I felt I'd found something that had been missing for a very long time! Something selfishly for me, but also something my daughter and I could share! Weeks passed, auditions passed, and a whole new repertoire was being learned for Convention. In my rookie status, I had no idea what I was letting myself in for! We were drilled, perfected, choreographed and coached, and as the date drew nearer, nerves that I expected to feel took on the guise of good old-fashioned excitement!

Convention weekend arrived and we

made our way to Bournemouth, checked into our hotel, met up with other Spinnakerettes, and made our way to the BIC! Listening to the quartets, I was ever so slightly in awe, but still, for some reason, not nervous!

Performance day arrived. We rehearsed, helped each other with nails, hair and make-up, then made our unified entrance at the BIC to join the traffic pattern, and settled in the dressing room, chatting and laughing with the girls who have become like another family to me. And still no nerves. Stepping out onto the stage, with my walking stick in hand, it suddenly dawned on me! I was not nervous because we had been directed by an

absolute expert, our MD, John Palmer, and supported by each other. We knew exactly what we were doing and when to do it! A newfound confidence took over as I sang my heart out for those two, so important songs, fully relishing my six minutes on stage. Coming off stage and nervously (for the first time) waiting for the results, saw us come together as a tight knit family - my Spinnaker family.

I thoroughly enjoyed every moment of what can only be described as an EPIC weekend, and I cannot wait to see where my Spinnaker family and our adventures take me next.

**Liz Nutland, Bass  
Spinnaker Chorus**



# 'There ain't nothing gonna stop us now, we're almost there!'

**What a weekend.** It is hard to put into words what a fabulous time we all had. From watching a wonderful array of barbershop to singing on stage, on stairs and in the bar. Every moment was pure magic.

We know that we have worked hard practising together and apart but coming fifth and winning the Novice Trophy was more than we could have dreamt of. We felt so encouraged by everyone we met, by people's kind words, good luck messages, cheers, and congratulations, which made everything even more special.

It was so nice to be able to spend more time together as a chorus, getting to know one another better, supporting each other on stage and celebrating each other's successes.

Here are a few of our members highlights -

**Leanne:** 'The biggest highlight has to be simply performing on stage, knowing every single SCV member was doing exactly what they needed to do to give the audience the experience we'd worked towards. Hannah's face told us everything we needed to know about whether we'd been successful or not. The hand-made bracelets she'd made for each of us clearly did the trick!'

**Chloe:** 'The support from the audience! I was so nervous every time I went on stage but hearing how excited people were to see us gave me the confidence I needed.'

**Amy:** 'Mine was being terrified in the warm-up room, but then getting behind the stage and hearing 'COME ON SHEFFIELD'. I immediately was like, let's do this!'

**Jane:** 'I loved the Stair of glory when we could sing with even more joy at our achievement!'

Finally, from our wonderful MD Hannah Briggs, who without her hard work and dedication, SCV would not exist: 'It's a cliché, but the moment I announced our placing to the group. One of the happiest moments of my barbershop life.'

**Rachel Finnigan, Social Media Rep  
Steel City Voices**



How many people can we fit in a lift, with a trophy?!



Celebrating in the bar afterwards



Our novices with our Novice trophy



# Anne Louise Bickley

## 4th April 1968 – 12th August 2022

We were so shocked and saddened to hear of Anne's passing on 12th August, after a short but sudden illness. Anne had been a member of Tudor Roses, now Winchester A Cappella, for over 20 years. She had been a Lead for all that time and also spent a few years as our efficient Chorus Manager.

Outside the chorus she was a much-esteemed librarian at Peter Symonds College, and a long-term member of the Woodland Trust. She was quiet, very modest, calm and reliable, and she loved singing with the chorus. We will miss her very much.

**Liz Livingston**  
Winchester A Cappella



Anne Bickley

## Junction 14's tribute to Carol and Mary



Carol and Mary

### Carol Gidlow and Mary Wilkinson

both joined Junction 14 in 2013 after attending a Love to Sing course in November 2012. They were great singing pals. Both had a great sense of humour and even though Carol had Parkinson's disease it didn't stop her being on the top row of the risers.

Their first Convention was at Llandudno in 2013. Our chorus could not get a hotel for us all to be together, so we were split between different B&Bs. Carol and Mary had a few problems in their accommodation but typically, they laughed it off and didn't let it spoil their first Convention experience.

Carol and Mary both loved attending all J14 events and our chorus was an important and valuable part of their lives. They attended Harmony College, as well as all our retreats and conventions. Sadly, Carol passed away during lockdown in 2020 from Parkinson's Disease, and by then Mary had been diagnosed with Motor neurone disease. Mary passed away earlier this year.

They were both superb advocates for our chorus, and we were proud to count them as part of the Junction 14 family.

**Val Hutchinson, PRO  
Junction 14**

**Deadline for next edition:  
Friday 27th January 2023**

Please send all submissions to [voicebox@labbs.org.uk](mailto: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, images downloaded from social media pages, websites or message apps will usually be less than 1MB.

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

**2023 Deadlines:** Friday 27th January, Friday 28th April, Friday, 28th July, Friday 3rd November.