

LINCOLN BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB

CHORUS STARTER PACK



WELCOME !

As a new or prospective member of the Lincoln Barbershop Harmony Club you may have a number of questions, or may be wondering what barbershop is all about. This introductory pack is designed to answer some of those questions, but inevitably it will not answer them all - but don't worry, there are enough guys around who will be more than pleased to help.

At LBHC we encourage all men, of whatever age, to join us in singing in harmony and we will make every effort to develop your voice and your musical knowledge. The emphasis is on active participation - because once you have listened to us and then tried it for yourself, the chances are that you will be hooked!

Once you have decided that you would like to join us, then you will have an initial voice assessment. This is nothing to fear or to be apprehensive about, the purpose is to find which of the four voice "parts" is best suited for you. You will then be allocated to a section and an existing member will be allocated to act as your "buddy", to help you settle into the chorus.

After four weeks you will be expected to start paying the monthly subscription, currently £10, by standing order. A form is included in this pack and all you have to do is to complete the shaded sections of the form and then take it or post it to your bank. Any member under the age of 18 years pays 50% of the normal subscription, and this can be paid in cash at £1.25 per week. The subscriptions help to pay for the rehearsal room, for music, teach tapes and CDs and other costs that the club incurs. At times there may be other costs for stage uniforms, but these will be discussed when the need arises.

Who's Who In Harmony Lincs

Many new members have mentioned how confusing they find their first few weeks at Harmony Lincs, with so many different people rushing around doing so many different jobs.

There's never enough time for any of us to do as much as we want to help you feel at home - but here's something that a lot of people have said would be a help, a list of some of the Chorus Members and the jobs they do.

The list is by no means complete - because everybody gets roped in for something sooner or later - but it may help you to start to get to know who deals with what.

Hopefully, if there's anything you want to find out about, the list will help you to get in touch with the right person.

Chorus Director	Tony Chapman	01522 791015
Deputy Director	John Mould	01522 801347
Club Chairman	Chris Farrar	01522 789125
Vice Chairman	Steve Rose	01673 858795
Club Secretary	Bert Gibson	01400 279191
Membership Secretary	Derek Seller	07739 144738
Treasurer	Alan Goldsmith	01673 860366
Sing-out Secretary	Derek Wood	01522 800607

Harmony Lincs - Barbershop Terms

“OK guys, let’s start off with a couple of **Polecats** on the **risers!**”

You may well be puzzled at first by some of the terms that barbershoppers use - but you’ll soon get to know them and start using them yourself.

Here are a few to start you off -

RISERS They are the tiered staged staging on which we stand to sing in our allocated places – called **CHORUS STACK**

RISER DISCIPLINE This means complete focus on the job in hand and *silence* on the risers when the **PITCH PIPE** sounds.

PITCH PIPE A small blown pipe or electronic instrument which sounds the key note for any song we sing.

POLECATS These are the simple, traditional songs which form the basic barbershop repertoire. Every barbershopper knows them, so you may find yourself singing them with barbershoppers you met ten seconds ago - a great way to make an instant pal at an **AFTERGLOW**.

AFTERGLOW This is what barbershoppers call an informal get-together after a competition or a **SINGOUT** - usually held in a pub or hotel bar and accompanied by the odd pint or two! Whenever barbershoppers get together they try to finish the evening off in this way.

SINGOUT A performance. We perform under the name of “Harmony Lincs” for a wide variety of audiences, from a small audience at a village hall to events such as the Lincoln Christmas Market.

CONVENTION This is a major competition and the high spot of the barbershop year. There is the National Convention organised by BABS, a European Convention and international conventions in several other countries. The granddaddy of them all is the American International, held in the USA and organised by SPEBSQSA.

BABS This is our national organisation - The British Association of Barbershop Singers. All members of Lincoln Barbershop Harmony Club become members of BABS and are then eligible to sing in the National Convention.

SPEBSQSA This is the original barbershoppers organisation. The initials stand for “Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America”. Barbershoppers always refer to it as “The Society” It was founded in the USA in 1938. In 2004 the name was changed to the simpler “Barbershop Harmony Society”

Harmony Lincs - Barbershop Terms (continued)

PRELIMS These are the preliminary rounds of our annual competition which is held at CONVENTION. PRELIMS take place in November each year.

STAGE GEAR/WALKOUT GEAR These are our two basic Chorus outfits. We wear our STAGE GEAR for all competitions and most SINGOUTS. We wear WALKOUT GEAR whenever we are out together. It gives us a group identity and gets us noticed. Many members also wear WALKOUT GEAR at rehearsals - no bad thing.

PARTS These are the different voices that make up a barbershop quartet or chorus. The **LEAD** is a middle-range part and generally sings the melody of the song; the **BASS** sings harmony in the lower range, the **TENOR** in the upper range. The **BARITONE** moves up and down the range in order to complete the chords sung by the other parts.

DOTS Another name for notes in music - we all sometimes struggle to learn our dots!

TAG The final bars of a song. These are sometimes learnt and sung by themselves, just to ring the chords. Ask Tony Chapman about tags - if you've got an hour or so to spare!!

SAUSAGES Barbershoppers are encouraged to sing smoothly and to aim for continuous sound - just like sausages coming out of a sausage machine. Take a breath now and again though!

VOWELS You'll hear a lot about vowel sounds in barbershop singing - we concentrate on vowel sounds in order to help us sing smoothly.

BREATH SUPPORT Good singing is produced when the singer supports his breath to give a controlled, consistent sound. You will practise breath support at rehearsals to avoid the sound dying away.

SWIPE Sometimes one or more voice parts will hold their notes while other parts slide to a different note. This movement is called a swipe.

FIFTH WHEELING It is an unwritten rule of barbershop that when listening to a quartet you **do not sing along with them** - however tempting this might be -(unless of course they invite you to do so !)

Twelve Steps To Using Learning Tapes

For the novice Barbershopper, having to learn an entire repertoire can be a daunting challenge. Here is a system that helps to simplify and speed up the process.

This is a 12-step program to assist you in learning new music. It is only a suggestion until you learn a system that is best for you. The success of this program is contingent upon the effective listening skills of the learner -- much more than upon one's music background or the ability to read music. Any of the 12 steps may be repeated before continuing to the next step. But remember, each step is important to the overall results of learning all the right notes, words and timing of the song. Do not eliminate any of the steps because it appears to be insignificant.

The Twelve Steps

Listen to the music on the master tape with your eyes closed. (This will familiarize you with the notes, timing and general flavour of the song.)

- Watch the notes on your music while you listen to the tape. Do not sing yet!
- Again, watch the notes on your music while you listen to the tape. Do not sing yet.
- Watch the words on your music while you listen to the tape. Please, no singing yet.
- On a separate sheet of paper (or on the back of your music), write all the lyrics to the new song. Now, watch your own paper while you listen to the tape. No, not yet ... don't sing, please.
- Watch the notes again while you listen to the tape. Remember, no singing.
- Watch the words on your music while you listen to the tape. Be careful, not a sound.
- Try to write down all the words again on another sheet of paper without looking at the printed music. If you have trouble, listen to the tape again. Watch the words and then again try to write them without looking at the music. Stay on this step until you can write down all the correct words without looking back at the printed music. Now, proceed to Step 9.
- Hurray! Finally you can add your voice. Watch the notes on your music while you HUM along with the tape. Hum ... hum. Singing is next.
- Watch the words on your music while you sing along with the tape. Can you believe this? You're really going to SING this song for the very first time. If you have any difficulty, circle the spot(s) on your music as you go all the way through. Then go back and listen (don't sing) to those parts again.
- Put a clean practice tape in your tape recorder. On this tape, record as you sing the new part all the way through without looking at your music. (Bet you can hardly wait to hear this step!)
- **VERY IMPORTANT STEP** Watch the music as you listen to your own tape to see if you sang the notes correctly. You should be wonderful. But, should you have any doubt, go back and check your part again on the master tape. Concentrate on listening to the parts you circled earlier to be sure you have made corrections.

SO WHAT IS BARBERSHOP?

American Barbershop Harmony

By the end of the 19th century, a new style of performing popular songs had developed in America it ultimately captured the fancy of the nation. The new style, which featured four male singers, was informal and did not require instrumental accompaniment. Indeed, it seemed to be most at home at church socials, in family parlours, in saloons, and even on street corners. It was a style that invited participation, and thousands of amateur warblers joined in. Whenever a few singers who loved to blend their voices together gathered, this musical style flourished.

The style was so popular that songs were written specifically for these quartets. The song, "Mister Jefferson Lord, Play That Barber Shop Chord," appeared in 1910 Thereafter. the singers were labelled "barbershop quartets" and the musical style was called "barbershop harmony." Hundreds of new "barbershop songs" were written for the close, four-part harmony of barbershop quartets, The musical structure of these quartets became well established: the lead usually sang the melody, with the tenor harmonizing above. The bass sang the lowest harmonizing notes and the baritone provided the in-between notes, either above or below the lead, completing the chords that gave barbershop harmony its distinctive sound.

Part-singing had been enjoyed in America long before the heyday of barbershop quartets. Before the revolution, William Billings set up singing schools in New England for the purpose of teaching the principles of group singing. During the early 19th century, church hymnals provided the major source of part-singing, blending both male and female voices. In 1842, one of the most famous family quartets gave its first performance.

Known originally as the Aeolian Vocalists, this quartet was made up of Judson, John, Asa, and Abby Hutchinson (brothers and sister). The Hutchinsons sang popular ballads and sentimental and dramatic songs. Their voices blended so perfectly that listeners were amazed. and their performances over several decades stimulated interest in and enjoyment of quartet singing.

In 1843, Dan Emmett, Frank Bower, Dick Pelham, and Billy Whitlock combined their musical talents and organized the first successful minstrel troupe, the "Virginia Minstrels". This began a type of entertainment that soon became one of America's favourite forms of amusement. Other minstrel companies were organized, and the size of the cast in some grew to as many as 40 members. Part-singing became a bigger and bigger part of these shows as they travelled throughout the country. In the 1870s or 1880s, quartets began to be featured as a regular part of minstrel programs.

Another proponent of part-singing was the travelling tent show. In 1874, the Lake Chautauqua Assembly was begun and generated the travelling chautauqua. Originating in Iowa in 1904, these programs of lectures and dramatic readings often were performed in tents and the performances usually included a male quartet. Until radio and the early motion pictures killed the circuit chautauquas in the early 1930s, barbershop quartets played a

prominent rôle in travelling tent shows.

Barbershop quartets were also part of the form of popular entertainment known as vaudeville. It is significant that the golden days of American vaudeville - the 1890s to the 1920s - coincided with the most popular era of barbershop harmony. The most famous barbershop quartets of the period appeared on the vaudeville stage. And, in keeping with the vaudeville atmosphere, many quartets were four-man comedy groups. Such "four-acts", as they were commonly called, combined barbershop harmony with slapstick comedy and achieved overwhelming success from coast to coast.

Near the turn of the 20th century, barbershop harmony entered the American home by way of the newly established record industry. While the recordings themselves helped increase the popularity of barbershop harmony, the barbershop quartets gave the studios a popular medium to record.

In 1897, a recording studio, named the Universal Phonograph Company, was set up in New York City. The company's first recordings featured a barbershop quartet and chorus. The Edison Studio's early recordings featured many quartets that were particularly renowned, such as Premier Quartet, The Criterion Quartet. The Edison or Hyden Quartet, organised in 1896, toured England and also recorded for several European companies. The Victor Talking Machine Company recorded the American Quartet, The Avon Comedy Four, the Peerless Quartet and the Imperial Quartet. The American Quartet became one of the most popular groups on the Victor label.

Barbershop harmony reached its peak from 1900 to 1925; then its popularity began to decline. With prohibition, the form became connected with the raucous, off-key singing associated with overindulgence of "bathtub gin". World war 1 disrupted all phrases of American life, as Americans moved from the farms and rural communities to the cities. The automobile and new forms of communication, such as the radio and the movies brought changing life styles. The "Charleston" became the dance craze, and many Americans went in for the musical stage, which produced the popular tunes of the era. Song styles changed and the new styles were difficult to harmonize. The new exuberant times were in direct contrast to the slow, harmony atmosphere in America that had popularized barbershop harmony.

In 1938, two men in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Owen C. Cash and Rupert Hall, formed a local singing club, "The Society for the Preservation and Propagation of the Barbershop Quartet Singing in the United States". The name was later changed to "The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America" (SPEBSQSA). Men in other cities, reading a national news-service account of this novel club, began forming similar societies in their own towns. Today, SPEBSQSA is the world's largest singing organisation for men, with more than 36,000 members, 800 choruses and 2,500 quartets. In 2004 SPEBSQSA changed its name to the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS).

The enduring popularity of improvised part-singing by Americans in all parts of the country has never really abated. It remains a participatory form of music making, intrinsic to our culture associated with community life and open to all those who respond to the balanced blend of voices raised in song.

British Barbershop

The birth of British barbershop singing can be traced to 1960, and to the enthusiasm of one Harry Danser who, having heard the legendary Buffalo Bills quartet sing in the Broadway show "The Music Man", determined to find out as much as he could about the style of singing. To cut a long story short, Harry formed a quartet, The Barbershop Four, in November 1960 in his home town of Crawley, and British barbershop had arrived. Four years later the first chorus, again at Crawley, was formed.

It took a few years for other clubs to develop, the initiative for which was a visit to the UK by the Executive Director of SPEBSQSA, Barrie Best, in 1971. The new clubs, Tyneside, Brighton & Hove, and Bournemouth joined with Crawley for the first get together of British clubs in 1973, and this was followed the next year with an event hosted by the Tyneside club. This club, one of the original four, grew to have 114 members in 1976, the largest club in the history of British barbershop; such are the fluctuations in clubs' fortunes that the Tyneside club folded in 1985.

Since those early days, and a British Association was formed in 1974. Such was the growth of barbershop that by early 1975 there were 13 clubs and 370 members in the Association.

Today there are over 50 clubs and the enthusiasm for barbershop singing continues, with ups and downs, to inspire singers and delight audiences.

Lincoln Barbershop Harmony Club

Lincoln Barbershop Harmony Club was formed in October 1993 when two existing BABS members, Tony Chapman & Colin Russell, both having recently moved to the area, got together to get the ball rolling. Tony had moved to Lincoln from the south coast where he was a founder member and director of the Worthing Chorus and latterly Director of Solent City Chorus based in Portsmouth. Colin, who was still a serving member of the RAF, was at that time still singing with Hallmark of Harmony in Sheffield.

With the help of publicity from the Lincolnshire Echo and BBC Radio Lincolnshire the first meeting was attended by 9 prospective members, but over the next few weeks we achieved more than 20 singers attending weekly rehearsals.

Over the years the membership numbers have fluctuated quite dramatically but we have still managed to compete in both local and national competitions promoting our style of singing to both the general public and dedicated Barbershop audiences.

Over the years Barbershop has grown in popularity across the UK and we would like to think that Lincoln is doing its bit to encourage and promote close harmony male-voice singing.