

Harpenden Barbershop Harmony Club (HBHC)

Newsletter December 2023

We've just finished our free 6 week course entitled 'Sing 4 part harmony with a smile on your face' and it was both very enjoyable and a resounding success. The intake this year was based on quality rather than quantity and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Singing in harmony really is a great hobby. Many thanks to all who attended, plus Graeme and Sheila who made a welcomed guest appearance!



The above picture shows new HBHC graduates David Warren, Phillip Jeffery, Peter Lipman and Kelvin Thomas with their certificates.

The members of the course learnt 2 songs : 'Do You Hear the People Sing?' from the musical 'Les Miserables' and 'Let it Snow,' as sung by Dean Martin amongst others. The timely introduction of this second song is perfect for our Christmas singouts and we intend to work further on 'DYHTPS?' over the coming months in time for the competitive festival season during March 2024.

During the course we sang many tags which are a very quick way of learning harmony, even if some had a problem with the spelling of Mickey Mouse! The 4th week saw the renowned vocal coach Linda Corcoran once again make an appearance at a HBHC rehearsal. She made some excellent suggestions as to how we present Let it Snow which we have thoroughly taken on board. We love these evenings with Linda and it won't be the last we see of her.



Members of the course relaxing with Linda (centre) after a tough session!

The final week saw friends and family attend the evening for a live rehearsal where we sang the 2 songs from memory (almost!) This was followed by pizza and an open bar, which was enjoyed by all.

What Else Have We Been Up To?

-HBHC Summer Open Evenings

The Summer break finally arrived and Harpenden Barbershop Harmony Club (AKA The Kings of Herts) hosted a number of relaxed open evenings throughout July/August at the following venues: 27 July - Queen's Head, 59 Southdown Road, Harpenden; 3 Aug - Plough & Harrow, 88 Southdown Road, Harpenden; 10 Aug - Chequers Inn, St Albans Road, Redbourn and 17 Aug - Queen's Head again as above. All started at 7:30pm with only a slight drop of rain on the 3rd August – otherwise the weather was warm so we were able to sing in the lovely gardens of all the hostelrys. The chorus really likes these evenings. Roll on (next) Summer!



-Gigs in the Gardens Saturday 19th August (picture above)

A fine sunny Saturday once again welcomed HBHC at the Gigs in the Gardens event on Saturday 19th August. We were delighted to be asked back after the previous event in June and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves once again! A lively



crowd joined in with some of our songs like Sweet Caroline and Amarillo. As something entirely new, everyone joined in with communal singing of the sea shanty 'The Wellerman,' which was made famous on TikTok. Thanks must go to all the people who made this event go so smoothly and of course, to the audience for turning up and enjoying themselves!

-Redbourn Christmas Market Sunday 3rd December

Well we must be doing something right in Redbourn because we were invited back to sing there for the 3rd time this year. A cold and wet December morning saw us singing a selection of Christmas carols and classics like Silent Night, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer and Jingle Bells. The latter 2 most apposite as we followed the immediate arrival of Santa!

Looking Ahead

-Make a note of the evening of **Thursday December 21st** in your diaries, on your phone or however else you remind yourself. We will be singing at one of our favourite venues, the **Queens Head pub, 59 Southdown Road, Harpenden** from 8pm. As well as favourite sing along classics such as Sweet Caroline and Amarillo we will be performing all the Christmas songs and carols from our repertoire. Everyone will get the opportunity to join along.

-For the first 3 months of next year (starting back on Jan 11th,) we will be practising 'Do you hear the people sing?' and 'To make you feel my love' (the Bob Dylan classic recently covered by Adele) - as these are the 2 songs we've entered for the **Watford, Milton Keynes and Bedford festivals** - all in March!

-Also looking further ahead, before he retired Jim Hoblely reminded us that we will be **40 years old next year**, something definitely worth celebrating. We have set up a special team to consider how best we can do this. The first event though will be our **Honorary Members evening at 7:30pm on February 15th** at another of our favourite venues, the **Plough & Harrow** in Harpenden.

-And finally, something very exciting. Over the first 6 months or so of the New Year we expect to be hosting a special guest as we have been chosen to take part in a national music scheme. That's all I'm allowed to say for now until it is officially announced in January 2024 – **so watch this space**, along with our website and Facebook pages!