



The Kentones

The Kentonian



Acafellas

THE BROMLEY BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB MAGAZINE

Let's talk Frankly!

A conversation with a founder member



Bromley Barbershop Harmony Club

Formed in 1975, **Bromley Barbershop Harmony Club** is an umbrella organisation comprising a number of male groups specialising in four part unaccompanied close harmony singing. The Club has approximately 50 members, who form the main chorus, **The Kentones**. A smaller chorus, **Acafellas**, exists primarily to fulfil singing engagements at smaller venues. We also have a quartet, **Sound Alliance**.

In 2016, **The Kentones** were winners of the **Kent Choir of the Year** competition.

Whilst we take our singing seriously, we also believe making music should be a joyous pastime! We like to have fun and laughter along the way, and the Club is a great way to meet new people and make new friends. At the same time we have also raised thousands of pounds over the years for various charities.

Interested in joining us or hiring us for an event or function?

We are always glad to welcome new recruits. No previous choral experience is necessary, nor is it essential to be a music reader, as you will be given expert professional tuition backed up by learning aids. For full details of our activities and how to join, please visit www.thekentones.co.uk or just Google **The Kentones**.

From the Chairman

So, Convention has been and gone. It wasn't a great result, but the fact that we got close to our score from 3 years ago, especially after everything that has happened since, is a major achievement. So well done and thanks for all the hard work and effort which enabled us to go. Despite the result I hope you enjoyed the weekend, as enjoying what we do is important and often overlooked.

We are now back to rehearsing our repertoire, and getting it up to scratch. Not an easy task, but with Rita's help and direction and a lot of hard work from the chorus at rehearsal and at home, I'm sure we will get there.

We are planning to introduce new songs, or re-introduce some old favourites from the past. These will be discussed with the chorus first, so that we choose songs that we want to sing, which will hopefully make learning easier.

Recently, **Acafellas** had their first singout since Covid. It was great to get out in front of an audience again and although not a perfect performance, it was enjoyed by everyone. We have a couple of other singouts booked in for later in the year, and hopefully more coming along.

Socially, the Strawberry Tea is back on at Denis's place on 10th July. Pat and Denis have a wonderful garden and the cream tea is to die for. There may also be some impromptu singing! If you haven't been before it's a lovely day, so make sure you get your tickets before they all go.

Finally, I want to bring up again the issue of 'volunteering'. I've had no response from anyone for the position of Vice Chairman or Social Secretary. These are important positions within the Club and with over 40 members, this is very disappointing. We need everyone to do their part to get the Club back on its feet.

It's your Club, get involved!

Kevin

It was with deep sadness that we heard of the passing of previous Kentones member Mike Byrne. His funeral was held at Putney Vale Crematorium on Friday 27th May and was attended by some members of the chorus, tributes from whom follow:

Mike was born into a showbiz family. A family of very well-known entertainers who played summer season, variety and pantomime all over the north of England but especially at the **Victoria and Pavilion Theatres** on Blackpool's famous North and South Pier, where they were an institution.

He was always surrounded by music. His mum Joyce was a saxophonist and singer who performed under the stage name of Joyce Terry. His dad Leonard was one of the greatest banjo players in England. His grandad



was the great Billy Fishwick – a circus acrobat and singer who ran away with the circus at the age of eight, and his gran Elsie was a fortune teller on Blackpool pier. His aunts, a singing troupe of sisters, were known as the **Seven Lancashire Lassies**.

Mike was very active. He loved playing football, and when his legs wouldn't do what his head was telling him, he teamed up with brother-in-law Pete to play competitive bowls, where they went on to win national awards.

But singing was his true vocation, and he was just so delighted when he found **The Kentones**. He was

blessed with a voice and sang all his life. He sang everywhere - in the house, in the car and to his beloved wife Trish on the morning she died in 2020. After Trish died he made the decision to move to a retirement village called Abbeyfield. Apparently, when the family helped him move, the only things he insisted on taking were his **Kentones** music — his sheets to practise and his recordings to listen to. He never stopped singing.

Sadly, the singing finally stopped when he died peacefully on April 24th. **Acafellas** sang 'Shenandoah' and 'Over the Rainbow' at his simple funeral service which was led by his son, from whose tribute this is taken.

Avril Sydee

I'm so sorry to learn of Mike's passing. He and I spent many happy times over the years exchanging insults - as only true friends can! He usually referred to me as the 'Midget Kentone' and I would return the compliment by pointing out that he bore a strong resemblance to Warden Hodges of 'Dad's Army' fame.

At Conventions, he and I would usually pair up in search of the best fish and chips restaurant- and he invariably managed to find it. Naturally, I always told him that that was his only useful contribution to the event. In the interests of good taste, his response cannot be recorded...

I shall miss him greatly.

David Tindall

The Harrogate Conventions were always special to Mike and Trish as there was time to visit the RHS Harlow Carr Gardens. Avril and I often bumped into them before all adjourning to **Betty's Tea Rooms** for lunch or a cream tea. I was often next to him on the risers, and used to point out that he sometimes knew the words to the songs, as well as some of the correct notes. It was a bit of a running joke and he gave as good as he got, and as with David, insults were traded throughout most rehearsals.

We are all going to miss him.

Chris Sydee

Eltham Training Weekend

A weekend in Eltham - what more could we ask for?

It was always going to be a tough weekend. We'd been there before so we knew what to expect. Standing on the risers for what would seem like an eternity, repeating notes and phrases *ad nauseam*, and to cap it all we were to lose an hour's sleep. But let's not be too pessimistic. On the Saturday morning the sun was shining, and the coffee from the nearby BP garage was just what was needed to inject some enthusiasm and energy. The riser team and a few helpers soon had the hall arranged, and most of us had claimed a chair where we could take refuge during the coming two days. Roy was enjoying his annual trip along the keys of the grand piano, and before too long we were introduced to John Palmer, our invited coach. Many of us knew John from previous meetings, and from his seven years as MD of the **Royal Harmonics** in Windsor. During that time they were never out of the top five choruses at Convention,



and won a bronze and two silver medals. Since 2016 John has been the MD of the very successful LABS chorus **Spinnaker**, based near his home in Havant. John spent 20 years as a BABS music judge, including two terms as Chairman of the Guild of Judges. So when it comes to barbershop singing, John has more experience and credentials than most. He also has a very unique brand of humour which was to keep us entertained and engaged as the weekend progressed.

As predicted, it was indeed a tough weekend. However, with John's constant encouragement and Rita's seemingly unending patience, significant improvements were made

with both Convention songs. Let's just hope that the changes to our singing through improved posture and mouth shapes will become permanent. In the meantime keep smiling!

Adrian

Licensed to swoop!

It's official. Baritones are allowed to swoop!!! At the training day on Sunday they were given specific permission, and even a definite direction, to SWOOP - much to the envy of all other parts. Yes, alright, it was only on one occasion somewhere in 'Rainbow' but, hey, what a privilege. Come on now, be honest, don't you wish you were a baritone? **David S**



I thought John was very funny, but also very insightful with his ideas. I will remember standing outside alone with our eyes closed and singing the songs with nowhere to hide. Just hearing our own voices, whilst harmonising with the chorus. Thanks to Rita and John for a brilliant weekend.

Martin S



John was great at the training weekend and him swing dancing to 'Firefly' was both amusing and helpful for us to remember the new faster rhythm. He really needs to remember to conduct properly: he kept apologising for not being clear enough...

Tom

Every year (well every normal year) we have a debate about employment of external coaches for Convention. I'm always pro and think the money is well spent on thoughts and second opinions, however good the current Director may be. However, I thought our recent weekend was exceptional. I always like JP's approach, particularly his visual reminders: shotgun blasts at the 'Firefly'; his jazzy jig as a reminder of the rhythm etc. But what was so good, and not always the case with some MDs, was Rita's engagement with the whole process - no blind acceptance of John's input but an enthusiastic willingness to adapt and adopt where she felt appropriate and to practise and make notes of the changes. They worked so well together - lets hope we can repay their commitment.

Tim



Standing on the risers all weekend was hard work but I got a lot out of it so it was worth it. John and Rita were fantastic, and when John got the leads to sing ‘**Firefly**’ quieter and in a swing rhythm, I don’t recall hearing them sing better, though incorporating John’s swing dance into a ‘**Firefly**’ performance may be a step too far. Should we consider scheduling the training weekend earlier in the year and give the chorus more time before Convention to practise everything we have learned?

A big thank you to John and Rita and to everyone behind the scenes who organised a fantastic weekend of coaching!

Martin G



*I would like to say how much I enjoyed “The John Palmer Show” at Eltham College in March. I had forgotten what a witty and inspiring tutor he is, able to get important points across whilst keeping the atmosphere light. I will find it hard to forget his claim that he had a replica of Roy in the back of his car, whilst manipulating his head like a noddie-dog. Hopefully, some of his pearls of wisdom will have remained in our collective consciousness. **Brian S***



I thought John and Rita worked really well together. Both readily taking on each other’s ideas to greatly improve the sound of both individual members, and the chorus as a whole. With so much prior notice it was unfortunate that some of those singing at Convention could not make either day. They certainly missed out on a great weekend. **Alan L**

I totally appreciated the time and huge effort our Musical Directors put into the weekend. As a first timer, this was a fantastic experience, adding to my enjoyment as a member of **The Kentones**.
Ron

I thought the recent training weekend at Eltham College was a huge success. John Palmer is an excellent teacher and although I was the butt of many of his jokes I personally gained a great deal from the weekend's experience.
Terry



Before the weekend I was concerned about the level of our singing and worried about Convention. However, during the weekend at times we sang the best I can remember. While we weren't consistent over the weekend, it showed that we are able to sing at a high standard, and raised hopes for Convention.

Kevin P

A not-so-subtle mix of charm and sarcasm! That's how John works, but his encouragement and enthusiasm were contagious. **Paul**



It was a most enjoyable 2-day workshop although exhausting - I was in bed by 9pm on the Saturday, but all worthwhile as John and Rita made a great team and their guidance has certainly helped to give my confidence a significant boost.

Grateful thanks again to John, Rita, Colin and all who organised this event.

Brian S



Learned finally to keep my mouth shut - even while singing! Learned a lot for myself and also enjoyed watching Captain John and Sergeant Rita being polite to each other. I hope they understand we Privates are not being deliberately mutinous. I still don't know what a key is but I do know that these days I keep losing them.

Derek

Thank you everyone for your comments. These and the photos show how much you enjoyed, and learned from, the training weekend.

Martin G (Ed)

My First Experience of Convention

Ron Faulds

I had no idea what to expect at a BABS Convention other than lots of barbershop music and nationally based enthusiasts coming together for an annual bash. My heartfelt thanks go to those members who had primed me with great advice through their extensive experiences over decades of attending these Conventions, particularly the courier service of which I availed myself in order to get around the Centre.

I got what I expected and a whole lot more, including fabulous, lasting, happy memories of a wonderful weekend in beautiful Harrogate. This was only topped by having my lovely daughter, Debi with me, providing support, encouragement and a listening ear. She too was warmly welcomed into our party by the members and other supporters.

Rita, our Musical Director, did us proud, both in the preparation for the event, as well as in the actual performance. Roll on next year's Convention in Bournemouth!

Carol Staples

For weeks, my husband Derek's voice had reverberated round the house as he faithfully practised for the Barbershop Convention in Harrogate. I know I'm biased but he's got a good voice (You might be interested to know that I **HEARD** Derek before I **SAW** him when we met 30-plus years ago. We were at an amateur theatre do and he was reading a Christmas poem at a table behind me. 'Mmm' I thought: 'Who's that? He sounds rather nice'. We got chatting at the party afterwards and the rest is history).

By the time Convention arrived, Derek and I were both very excited. He was buoyed by the prospect of performing live against other Barbershop Choruses from around the country in front of a seasoned audience, and I was just thrilled to be there.

Neither of us had ever been to Harrogate before. My best friend Tracy, whose husband Martin had introduced Derek to **The Kentones** (thanks Martin) had told me a little of what to expect, but from the moment the train pulled into the station, I still got butterflies.

Where's our hotel? Where's the Convention centre? What's the timetable for the weekend? Actually, the hotel was a mere few minutes away and everything else just fell into place.

That evening we headed to an Italian restaurant where **The Kentones** had pre-booked a meal for 7.30pm. I will never forget the warm welcome they gave. 'I'm Colin, lovely to meet you'. 'I'm David, pleased you're here', 'I'm John' and so on. And the wives were so friendly and down to earth. 'What are the fish cakes like?' asked one, leaning across from her table as though she'd known me for years. I could have kissed her. 'Delicious, you'll like them!' I said. Though I'd never met any of them before, I was now embraced as a member of **The Kentones** family.

What was stupendous for me was when part-way through the meal they broke into song. I fumbled for my phone to film them but had left it back at the hotel. I could have kicked myself. But then they stood a second time. I grabbed Derek's mobile and pressed 'record' as they launched into '**Amarillo**'. The joy was infectious. How can you sing and not smile? How can you listen and not be moved? Even the waitresses were joining in. That was the moment the Harrogate weekend came alive for me. **Sheer magic**.

The following morning, we headed to the main hotel to watch **The Kentones** rehearse their songs, '**Firefly**'

and '*Over the Rainbow*', all the while Rita, their MD, honing their performance with skill and a light touch. I thought they were marvellous.

The Kentones were set to perform at 12.30pm so Tracy and I, along with some other wives and partners, headed to the Convention Centre to watch other choruses perform. It was a perfect venue, modern, spacious with brilliant acoustics. Each chorus had its own distinctive style, and was formally introduced by a compere. She also ordered the main doors to be closed so as not to disrupt the performance. A panel of judges sat at the front, making notes. I was struck by the professionalism of everyone involved.

The Kentones appeared a little later than scheduled. As they filed onto the stage, we gave them the best reception possible - loud cheering, wild applause, and whoops and shrieks of support. They gave 100 percent, and afterwards we erupted as they departed the stage. That was the highlight of my weekend. But there was still so much more to enjoy, including the shops and a trip to *Betty's Teashop*. The following morning, we watched several quartets perform and then Derek and I had to catch the 1pm train. As I write this I'm smiling at the memory of a wonderful weekend and Derek is singing upstairs.

'Nessun Dorma', no less.

Three newbies and a couple of swells



Debi (Ron's daughter)

Having heard Dad speak about *The Kentones* and seen how much he is enjoying singing again, it was so lovely to be invited along to the Convention in Harrogate to finally get to see a live performance!

From the moment we arrived, I was made to feel so welcome by you all and the spontaneous sing-along at dinner on our first night was the first time I had got to hear barbersop in real-life. It sounded incredible and everyone in the restaurant loved it!

On the day of the final performance I was so impressed by how much everyone puts in to the preparation! From the early morning soundcheck, rehearsal session at the hotel and then back for show time. It was non-stop, but all totally worth it - huge applause and cheers filled the auditorium and there was a wonderful atmosphere throughout.

So, thank you *Kentones* - I love the fact that Dad is singing again, and I feel really proud that I got to be there with you all in Harrogate!

Let's look forward to Convention 2023

It was great to be back in this lovely Yorkshire town, especially as we were there to sing at Convention for the first time since **Bournemouth** in 2019. It was different in many ways. There were fewer choruses, and those that had made it had fewer singers, but nevertheless it was really good to be there. With only 25 on stage, it was possibly the smallest ever **Kentones** chorus, although I'm sure John Vaughan will correct me if that's not so. It's sad that during the last two years we have lost a number of our regular members, and earlier this year it was clear that others were reluctant to attend for one reason or another. As one of our most senior members told me 'it's an expensive weekend for 6 minutes on stage.'

As we all know those 6 minutes didn't go quite as planned. Maybe we should have invited the judges to our early morning warm-up and rehearsal, where according to our wives and partners we sounded really good. I think we even made the occasional key change!

There's been a lot of discussion as to the reasons why things went so disappointingly wrong, and there's no simple answer. I personally feel that the choice of songs was a significant factor. I think it became clear earlier this year, when week after week we would spend an inordinate amount of time on just a few bars of **Firefly**. And that was before we encountered the mysteries of the key change!

I sincerely hope that we will not be too discouraged by this experience and that everyone will be able to look forward to **Bournemouth** next year, with a couple of songs with which we can make ourselves and Rita proud to be **Kentones**. It will take some hard work and plenty of practice, but we can do it, you know we can.

Adrian Emes

Convention with *The Kentones* and *The Kings*

September 2021 and *The Kentones* had by this time been rehearsing for 3 months after what seemed like an eternity of absence due to Covid 19. However, for a few of us this did not mean an absence of singing, as we had enrolled on a few on-line singing courses resulting in three fantastic virtual choir performances. But I will not dwell on this as it was covered most eminently by Adrian Emes in the December issue.

Even though we had been back rehearsing since late July, a decision was still to be made on whether *The Kentones* would be competing in, or even attending Convention the following April. It was around this time that the committee was planning a '**Come along and sing Carols with The Kentones**' event, and whilst checking the **BABS** website to ensure our advert for this event had been published, I noticed an advert from *Sussex Kings of Harmony*, asking if singers from other groups would like to sing at Convention with them. I contacted them and was asked to have a 'WhatsApp' video interview with their Musical Director, Mark Grindall. It was just a friendly chat and Mark must have done some research, as he knew things about me that I had deliberately not mentioned in my initial application. Mark explained what was expected from his guest singers, which was to learn the two songs, and commit to five all day rehearsals. After the meeting I received the necessary material to learn the songs.

At this time I was sworn to secrecy as to what the songs were, as one had never been performed by anyone in the past, and was a special arrangement commissioned especially for the *Sussex Kings of Harmony*, most

expertly arranged by **Theo Hicks**. I sent an email to all members asking if anyone else would like to join me on the risers with the “Kings” and was pleased that Denis and Frank took up the challenge. As the first rehearsal was only 4 weeks away, learning two new songs from scratch was a big ask, but the three of us managed to have at least 90% of both songs learnt for the first rehearsal in October. Mark had been quite clear that anyone, both in the “Kings” and the visitors, not up to speed with the songs would be asked to leave.

The two songs Mark had chosen for the competition were the little known ‘**Die a Happy Man**’ a Country and Western song originally written and performed by **Thomas Rhett** in 2015, and **Bob Dylan’s ‘To Make You Feel My Love’** which most people will be familiar with, from the cover version performed by **Adele**. Much like ‘**Firefly**’, ‘**Die a Happy Man**’ was the most difficult of the two songs, with many dissonant chords which, when resolved, produced the most beautiful harmonies.

As the months passed, Mark was able to work on the songs to get them exactly as he wanted them, without having to concentrate on rectifying notes and words, well not too much anyway. I managed to attend all the all day Saturday rehearsals and a few regular Tuesday evening sessions too.

By January it had been decided that **The Kentones** would be attending and competing at **Harrogate**, so the three of us had to keep our fingers crossed and hope that the two choruses were not scheduled to perform too closely together. The draw was announced in February and to our relief there was plenty of space between the two groups. It just meant that the three **Kentones** would not be able to manage the pre-performance rehearsal with the guys from Sussex.

Singing with a different group with a different approach to rehearsals was interesting, and I think Mark who had announced that it would be his last Convention (something to do with him living in Cyprus) put in a lot of extra effort to make it his best, as did his chorus. Despite the hard work on rehearsal days we still managed to have a lot of fun along the way and I made a lot of new friends.

Saturday April 30th soon came along, and after performing with **The Kentones**, we had a quick change of clothes, to a laid-back Country and Western type look--jeans, cowboy boots, a light coloured shirt, and a neutral waistcoat.

The time to get on stage soon came, and our set started with a most eloquent introduction by one of the chorus, Ralph George, the first song being ‘**To Make You Feel My Love**’. Following this, Ralph introduced our second song ‘**Die A Happy Man**’, which we sang, somehow remembering most of what Mark had asked of the chorus. He was happy with the performance, saying he had had more than he had expected from the group.

His actual words later on Facebook, were ‘That’s it! Done and dusted. Now the wait to see what the judges thought. I’m happy. The guys did what I asked of them and we presented a great story. As swan-songs go I was chuffed’.

Like **The Kentones**, we waited with anticipation for the scores to be announced, and like **The Kentones**, I think we were all a little disappointed with our score of 65.8% and 15th place. As with **The Kentones**, we have sung better, but performance nerves can get to you, particularly when you are being judged. I am now looking forward to the judges’ comments and feedback.

My personal thanks go to Mark for all the travel and air-miles he put in to attending rehearsals, for letting me join his chorus, and for the expert coaching offered to all of us. I know he said that this would be his last Convention, but never say never.

Alan Lucking

Club members, former members and friends celebrated the 90th birthday of our President, Frank Taylor. Here he looks back on almost half a century of singing with ***The Kentones***

“What would I do every Thursday night, if not spend time with my friends from the chorus?”

So says Frank Taylor, Club President and the only surviving founder member of ***The Kentones***, who celebrated his 90th birthday earlier this year.

Frank was born on March 21, 1932. He worked for the Midland Bank from the age of 16 until retiring at 55. Nothing if not a sticker, he has also been a member of the chorus since its inaugural meeting in 1975.

He says: “In the 1970s, few people in the UK knew anything about barbershop singing. It was mostly an American thing. But then I got a phone call from my old friend Ron Measure. I knew Ron and his brother John from Beckenham and Penge Grammar School, and as teenagers we’d gone to the same youth group.



“Ron was the sort of person who had ideas and got excited about things. He’d seen a TV news item about the first ever national barbershop convention, about to be held in Brighton. He went along to listen, he loved the music and now he wanted to set up a barbershop choir in South East London.

“I was never any great singer but I agreed to go along.”

Frank doesn’t say so, but it’s possible that he also owed his old mate a rather large favour, Ron having earlier set up a sort of social club for ex-youth club members, where after Frank returned from National Service, he met the lovely Pam. She married him in 1958 at St John’s Church, Penge, and is today his wife of 64 years.

“Ron put an advertisement in the local paper, and quite a few guys turned up for the first meeting of what was to become ***The Kentones***, in a room above the old **Star and Garter** pub, in Bromley. By then Ron had recruited an American teacher who was over here on an exchange. This chap was going home in a few weeks’ time, but he’d offered to help us get started before he left”.

“We had the first half of that meeting, then went downstairs for a break and a quick pint. As I remember, noticeably fewer people came back upstairs for the meeting’s second half! But we were left with about 25 - enough to get the chorus started - and more joined over the next few weeks.”

Ron’s brother John was to become the new choir’s first musical director.

Frank initially sang as a bass, then over the years he tried performing with the tenors and baritones, before returning back to the basses again.

He says: “From the start, I loved the sound you can make with barbershop singing. It’s a very long time ago now, but if I remember rightly, one of the first numbers we learned was a song called ‘**Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie**’. Since then I have learned scores of songs.



“My favourite ever numbers are probably ‘**Over the Rainbow**’ and ‘**This is the Moment**’.

“I still say that I’m no great singer. I cannot always make all of the lower notes required of the basses. But I certainly do my best.”

Frank recalls that the tremendous camaraderie that helps makes *The Kentones* special was there almost from the



beginning. “That friendly approach, and the warm welcome for new members, was something that just developed somehow. And it was to prove very important over the coming years, to keeping the chorus going and finding new people.”

Over the years since those early days, he has held almost every office including Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. He even stood in as temporary musical director for a few months in the 1990s!

At the initial suggestion of Chris Sydee and his wife, Avril, Frank and Pam have travelled to the USA, attending annual American Barbershop Conventions in San Francisco, Salt Lake City and Nashville, which he describes as “fantastic, like watching a West End Show. Had it not been for barbershop, I doubt whether I’d have ever visited the USA, but once we went, I loved it there.”

With organisational help from Bob Gilbert, Frank and Pam have also attended barbershop jamborees in Holland.

The couple have two daughters, Carol and Helen; three grandchildren, Jack, Josie and James; and two great-grandkids, Jasper and Josie. “There are lots of names that start with a J in there, I’m not sure if that’s deliberate,” he smiles.

Pam is a member of the *Rock Choir* and Helen is currently a member of a chorus called *Viva Capella*.

When Frank is not learning the latest *Kentones* number, he spends his time playing golf (he has a handicap of 36). “I had to give up badminton, my other sport, but I still love a round of golf, playing at least once every week. Of course, these days I can’t walk quite as far as I used to. If it’s 18 holes, I need to hire a buggy.

“Otherwise I am in reasonable shape for my age. I don’t think it is down to playing sport, I just think I’m fortunate to have good genes. My father never took any exercise apart from a gentle stroll to the pub, and he lived until he was 97.”

This reticent, courteous man is being modest, of course. He’s actually an inspiration, showing how it is possible to live an active, involved life into your tenth decade and beyond. But he says:

“I certainly don’t like anything that could be regarded as a fuss, or being the centre of attention. There have been times, these past months, when I’ve wished that everyone still thought I was only 89!

“Part of me thinks that age is just a number. Most of the time, I don’t feel like I’m 90 years old. The only thing I do notice now, is that although I can get up to my place at the back of the risers quite easily, coming down again is more difficult. I feel as if I might topple off.

“But the other fellows are very good, they allow me to put a hand on their shoulders and they just give me that little bit of support when I’m walking down again.”



One final question and our interview is over. Does Frank still enjoy singing with *The Kentones*, after almost half a century?

“I do love it,” he says. “The choir has been such a big part of my life. It’s wonderful to see it still going strong, after all this time. I’ve really enjoyed being one of *The Kentones*’ gang, and long may it continue.”

Frank was talking to Tracy Gayton

Memories of Brass Bands

Little did Martin know what memories his article would evoke, or awaken, if you prefer.

The more recent ones, blimey, 17 ish years ago. As with a lot of businesses, there is front of house, and the less glamorous, back of house. This is where the less pretty bits happen.

Back to the plot, Friday night was when empty fish storage trays had to be scrubbed, no mean task, galvanised trays over 4 feet long, capable of holding up to 10 stones of fish, and yes I did have to have a massive hernia repaired, but you don't need to know that.

Now, on a Friday evening at 9.30pm, a radio programme called **'Listen to the Band'** aired. This show, at times, had tracks from some of these contests in the Albert Hall, along with more normal pieces — **great scrubbing music**.

Listening to brass bands was part of my formative childhood. As anyone who has knowledge of my home

area will know, when "Ah were a lad", every pit/coalmine had its own brass band, and believe you me, that's a lot of brass bands. Strange, how Friday nights feature in this. I lived in a street of Victorian terraced houses, 8 to a yard, with a wall at each end. (more memories available, if you so desire mmmm!!!!) We lived near the top, my aunt at the bottom. A family of brass band members lived in the adjoining house, "ovver t'wall". Every Friday night was band practice, and I loved going to my aunt's

'Walking round' Sutton in Ashfield 1951.
Brian is on far right in light grey.



to hear them practising, luvvley. Today they'd get someone "offishull" out, to complain about the noise.

Moving on, every Whitsuntide, all the churches in the town, "walked round" to meet on Sutton Market. OK the churches didn't, the members of the Sunday School did, preceded by their church choir, "Any road up me duck" the Colliery brass bands leading them on their merry way. Once all were safely gathered in, on't market, a service was held with the beautiful Salvation Army Band playing so sweetly to accompany the hymns.

To finish this off ('bout time too, if you ask me) a genuinely historic brass band connection: one of my uncles who played trumpet and cornet, was a member of the brass band leading the Jarrow Crusade/March down to London in 1936.

Sutton Market where the Church groups congregated

Can you spot Brian? Answer at bottom of page



“That’s all folks”. Looney tunes win the day !

Bt’F.

Post Script

No apologies for the attempt at my old local dialect. (Sorry Rita, you won’t be the only one who will not have a clue what I am talking about. David Tindall has nervous breakdowns every time he has to check what I have written!!!

Sub-editors note: I have restrained my blue pencil (as far as possible!) from defiling this priceless example of “Fish-speak” so as to preserve its unique flavour. (The Prozac helps) DT

A ‘Wow’ Moment

I came in from the garden with a list of chores I needed to do. ‘Listen to this!’ A set of headphones was thrust into my hand. ‘Oh dear’ I thought, ‘Better show willing.’ I stood listening, then sat down. You know the feeling when your nose starts to prickle and tears are not far away and you have to take a huge breath? A chorus was singing ‘**If I Give My Heart To You.**’ It must have been recorded at a rehearsal, as occasionally you could hear the MD shouting instructions. This did not detract from the quality of the singing. To me it was one voice, smooth like melted chocolate. No one voice stood out and the volume control was stunning. I think you call it light and shade.

When it was over I blew my nose, sighed and remarked, ‘That was so good—who was it?’ (or words to that effect)

‘Us’, said Chris, ‘*The Kentones.*’

A song definitely worth revisiting in my humble opinion, and a standard to aim for. Come on guys you can do it. Thanks to Brian for bringing it into the light.

Avril Sydee

Thank you Avril, you’ve made me want to listen to the song. If anyone has a favourite (old or new) which they feel could become a Kentones classic please send it in. Let us know why you like it, and why we should be singing it.

Martin

Strawberry Tea

**Hosted By :-
Denis & Pat Delaroute**

In their Garden

Free street parking

Raffle

Sunday July 10th 3 – 5 PM

£8.00



**Tickets from :- DAVID SOUTHGATE
Mob:- 07384366360**

Brian is the one with the angelic
looking face, second from the
right.

The Kentones

Club Night:

Thursday 7.30pm at St Paul's Church Hall, Crofton Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 8JE

Life President — Frank Taylor

Chairman — Kevin Phillips



Secretary — Colin Barnes



Music Director — Rita Monori



Acafellas

Meetings:

Alternate Tuesdays, 10am to 12 noon at Chelsfield Methodist Church BR6 6HD

Chorus Director — Colin Couves



Interested in joining us? Need entertainment for an event or function?

Please visit www.thekentones.co.uk

The Kentonian is edited by Martin Gayton and sub edited by David Tindall