



# The Kentonian



**THE BROMLEY BARBERSHOP HARMONY CLUB MAGAZINE**

## Thank you Rita



## And welcome back John

# 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](http://www.thekentones.co.uk) or just Google **The Kentones**.

## From the Chairman

At the time of the last issue of **The Kentonian**, we had returned from a disappointing Convention feeling low. Our finances were dwindling, we were not enjoying singing and there was a real lack of enthusiasm. And shortly after, unfortunately, Rita resigned for personal reasons. We were in a bad place.

So, time to call in the cavalry...John Williams.

A former Kentone and a member of the class of 2009, John left us to go on to bigger and better things- singing in top choruses and quartets. We are delighted to have him back as our new Musical Director. John has learnt so much since he left us, and can use that knowledge to improve us. He can only direct us fortnightly, so big thanks to Frank Taylor, who has volunteered to be his deputy. After their first few rehearsals, I think you'll agree it's going to be fun.

We have just started a **Learn to Sing** course, with 8 new members. Who knows, one day one of them may become our Musical Director! I wasn't there for week 1, but understand it went well. And we may have doubled the number of tenors!

Just a few words of thanks before I finish:

To the Management Committee, for their help in my first year as Chairman.

To Colin Couves, for all his help, not only with **Acafellas**, but for all he does for the Club too.

To Martin Gayton, for stepping up to be Deputy Chairman, as well as running **The Kentonian**.

To Martin Saunders, for becoming Performance Secretary – let's hope he's kept busy for the next year!

Finally to the whole Chorus, for sticking with us throughout what has been a testing couple of years.

Regards-and let the good times begin.

**Kevin**

# Kevin's running for Prostate Cancer UK

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men - yet it remains something that many of us are reluctant to think about. So all the more credit to **Kentone** Kevin Gray. Having lost his partner's father to this dreadful disease, he's tackling the Great South Run on October 16, 2022, to raise funds for Prostate Cancer UK.

Kevin says: "I wanted to do something positive in memory of my partner's dad. Sadly, he passed away during the pandemic, after a hard battle with prostate cancer.

"The disease was diagnosed quite late for him, making it untreatable, and causing him lots of other complications."

The facts are truly shocking. One in eight men will get prostate cancer. The risk is greatest to those who are over 50; or black; or whose dad or brother has had the disease. And the chances of being diagnosed increase as you age. There is some good news - prostate cancer is not always life-threatening. But the earlier you catch it, the more likely it is that it can be successfully treated.

Possible symptoms of prostate problems include changes in urination; pain when urinating; erectile dysfunction; and lower back/hip pain. But some men with early prostate cancer show no symptoms at all. According to Prostate Cancer UK, the best advice is not to wait for symptoms to find out more about your own risk. Never be too shy or embarrassed to talk to your GP. Most family doctors now offer phone and video appointments, so you may not even need to visit the surgery.

The first step to detecting early prostate cancer is a prostate specific antigen, or PSA, test. Freely available from your GP, it's a blood test to decide if you need more tests (such as an MRI scan).

However, because nothing in this world is ever simple, a single PSA test sometimes misses prostate cancer. One in seven men with a normal PSA level may have prostate cancer. One in 50 men with a normal PSA level may have a fast-growing cancer.

For that reason, regular PSA tests are the best way to spot unusual changes in your body chemistry. They can help find aggressive prostate cancers early – when treatments are more likely to cure the cancer and save lives. Meanwhile, back to Kevin...

He says: 'It is because of my new-found enjoyment of running (which helped me lose four stone in recent months) that I have decided to take on the Great South Run, which covers 10 miles around the streets of Portsmouth.'

If you can, please look for the sponsor form on the board at rehearsals or speak to Kevin. Support a fellow member in tackling a personal challenge to raise money for this most deserving charity.

For the sake of all men, we need to do what we can to beat a disease that has taken the lives of far too many, too soon.

**Tracy Gayton**

\* [prostatecanceruk.org](http://prostatecanceruk.org)



# MD'S Corner

Hello all Kentones and Friends,

Having caught up with most of you, I must start with how great it is to be back and to see so many of you still singing. As most of you know, I started my love for Barbershop right here with *The Kentones* back in 2009, a vintage year. If you ask around, you'll find several other guys who started on the same **Learn to Sing** course. Well, back I am, and a big thank you to everyone, as you have made me feel most welcome with your smiles and your willingness to try new things. I have a lot to impart but all in good time... or should I say **Just In Time**, the new song sent out just after I officially started.

I will be using all of what we have started to learn on this song, plus a few new learning techniques, courtesy of my Ipad!

It's exciting to have 7 (so far) lined up for the new **Learn to Sing** course. I have changed the way we will run the course, as I want to get the new recruits on the risers from the first night, so please be patient over the next few weeks, as it's important that the Club increases membership.

The sad news is, of course, the passing of Dick Taylor, who was so upbeat and bright despite having more than his fair share of health issues, and will always be remembered for being pushed off the wrong side of the stage at Convention...only to be pushed back as the curtains were chasing him! His wife Veronica was a regular on the Tea Station too. Both are missed, but I know they enjoyed their time with us.

I am hoping John Sollitt (another 2009 starter) will continue to improve on his health issues. He always works so hard for the Club. (We want you back asap John x.) Looking forward, I promise you I'll work hard to keep things moving in the right direction, and hope most of you will enjoy

Club nights. There will be some hard work, but it will be fun too. I have a long-term, steady plan and hope to be around for many years to come.

As you probably know, I also do a lot of quarteting ... Bass in **Barcode** (men's); Bass in **Powerhouse** (mixed, with Rae singing baritone); Lead in **High Mileage** (seniors quartet); and, (the reason I'm currently with you every *other* Thursday), Bass with **Malevox** (In Birmingham). That may change in time, but as we went on stage with 12 singers for the first time in Harrogate, and scored **82**, finishing **3rd** ... I'll hang on a little longer!

Finally, my thanks to Mr Frank Taylor for jumping in to keep you on your toes on my off weeks, and also for the professional way in which he has assisted me in getting things moving.

So, new ways to sing ...a new song, (with more on the horizon) ... new members on the way, and trying to get some old faces back.

Here's to new, fun times and making new friends along the way.

**John Williams**

**Music Director**

Dick Taylor (centre in wheelchair) at 2012 Convention





# Platinum Jubilee Concert with Just Voices

A real audience at last, and a proper singout! It made us realise all over again what we had been missing. The place was packed, the atmosphere expectant, the people eager and responsive. This was what it was really all about, and, boy, did we enjoy it!

The date was 30th May, the venue was the church hall of Bromley Common Baptist Church, and the occasion was a Platinum Jubilee Concert in aid of **St Christopher's Hospice**, put on by the ladies' acappella chorus, **Just Voices**. It was a privilege to be invited to share the stage with them.

Finding the venue, and then finding the hall within the site, had its complexities, and gave some members quite a chase around, although it was easy for one who told me he used to go there to Sunday School many years ago! Despite the difficulties, all twenty-two expected *Acafellas* made it in the end. We used the time before the audience arrived to arrange our stack at the front of the hall, and then to

do a few warm-up exercises and songs.

These included '**In my Room**'. Little did we know that our hosts would be singing it as part of their first set later on! We even practised coming on and going off, which I think we actually got right when it counted.



The audience began arriving. The hall was not overlarge and there was a sizeable crowd, including a goodly number of our own supporters, relatives and friends. How nice it is to have such constant encouragement from them.

It was a squash, but it set a good mood, added to the thrill, and made for high spirits and expectation.

**Just Voices** were on first, looking gorgeous in their stage attire, with a cool and fitting nod to red, white and blue for the occasion. My, they are good! Their performance was sweet and lovely, and charm just exuded from them. Oh yes, it has to be said - their delivery of '**In my Room**' was a moving and engaging rendition.

Then we were on, with Ron Faulds leading us all to our positions, Colin signing to everyone to WATCH him, and Roy pitching a long, loud and spirited key note for us. "**I'm Gonna Live**" rang out into the hall. Yes, we were away! This was what it was all about! We worked through our set to much enthusiastic applause. I've sung these songs many times, but I was still caught up in the emotion. It was so difficult to come down from the fervour of "**This is the Moment**" to the tranquillity of "**Shenandoah**". I was still up there when the new pitch was blown.

Thanks and admiration go to Colin for his unfazed and dependable directing, and to David Tindall for another

of his classic speeches, giving a brief history of *The Kentones, Cordon Bleu and Acafellas*, sprinkled with generous doses of humour and including, as it did, a fervent recruiting element, aimed at men in the audience, and at women who wanted their other halves to join us so that they could have some quiet Thursday evenings to themselves! Fingers crossed.

We finished up with “**Swing Down Chariot**” and what a crowd pleaser this has turned out to be. Eyes were alert in the audience, faces were smiling, people were holding their breath, and at its culmination thunderous applause burst out. What more could we ask for? Yes, we had come home again, this was our *raison d’être*.



**Just Voices** took to the stage again to bring the evening to a resounding conclusion. All in all, it was a very enjoyable concert, a great **Platinum Jubilee** celebration, and we may hope it resulted in a worthy collection for such a laudable cause as **St Christopher’s Hospice**.

A few final reflections:

#### 1. **Our bread and butter.**

I, as one among many I’m sure, felt the real buzz we get when just singing for pleasure and for the entertainment of the public. In the end this is our bread and butter - serving local groups and performing for their enjoyment. Striving for betterment and a worthy performance at Convention inspires us to sing at our best, but the majority of our year is spent in these routine and time-honoured activities. And they always appear to be well received and appreciated by our audiences. We even get invited back on many occasions!

#### 2. **Thank you’s and well done’s.**

This singout was especially noteworthy with regard to a number of our members. Credit is due to **Carlo** who, that very morning, was on the Isle of Wight and came to this concert in the evening after a long and exhausting journey. Speaking of journeys, thanks are also due to **Les** and **Tim** for putting themselves out so much in attending this singout, and the rehearsals leading up to it.

We are indebted also to **Colin Barnes** who had experienced a wet and exhausting day messing around in a boat, but still fought all the odds and made sure to join us.

Perhaps standing out most of all, though, is the big step **Ron Faulds** took in performing in his first ‘bread and butter’ singout. He has taken to performing like a duck to water. Well done Ron. With this under his belt, and with being on stage at **Convention**, he has now truly foregone all claim to virgin status!

**David Southgate.**

# Harmony College 2022

Some time ago Colin Couves approached me to ask if I would like to take over from him directing **Acafellas**. At the time I declined as I had had no experience even of directing traffic, let alone a group of some 20 singers. The thought of whether I should have a go kept nagging me until, around 6 months ago, Colin announced that he would be stepping down after over 12 years at the helm, and that if a successor could not be found, **Acafellas** would cease to be. It was at this time that I started to think more seriously about it and at the BABS AGM I discussed this with Dale Kynaston, an esteemed director and singer who has directed many choruses. Dale advised me to sign up for the directors' stream at **Harmony College**, which this year was to be held in early August, not over the Summer Bank holiday as it had traditionally been.

This caused a dilemma. For the last 14 years I have attended the **Marciac Jazz Festival**, in Southwest France,

which runs at the same time as Harmony College- from late July to early August.

Combining the Festival with motorcycling in the beautiful Pyrenees, this has been a long-standing vacation for me. Also, this year the Festival was returning after a 2 year, Covid-19 absence.

The thought of **Acafellas** ceasing to exist was more than enough for me to make

up my mind. After enquiring about my suitability for the directing stream, I signed up and set about learning the song I was required to know - the beautiful **Love me and the World is Mine**. August came quickly, and like many others I arrived on the Thursday afternoon in order to be fully alert when the weekend kicked off on the Friday morning.

I cannot decide whether it was a good or bad thing, but due to staff shortages there was no one to open the student bar in the evening. The bar in the on-site hotel was open, but at £6.50 a pint no one was in a hurry to drink. By Friday morning the faculty had arranged for the student bar premises to be open, albeit without a bar. So it was off to the off licence or **Aldi** to buy our own drinks. With no bar, there was also no closing time which meant some were still drinking and singing way into the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings.

After a hearty breakfast on Friday, everyone gathered in the auditorium for a physical and vocal warm-up led by **Tim Briggs** (BABS Gold medallist with **Emerald Guard**). Tim introduced a round that I had not previously heard, **Mrs O'Leary's Cow**, which was great fun to sing, and will be used in one of my warm-ups at some stage. Following this, participants split into their chosen streams.

For those unfamiliar with how Harmony College works, there are many different streams: Arranging, Extreme Quartets, Audition Chorus, College Chorus, Quartet Coaching, and a few others, such as Personal Development.

**Alan hiding at the back of the class!**





So off I went to the lecture room where **Neil Firth** and **Sean Bui** introduced themselves to us. Many will recognise the name Neil Firth, as he has been directing the fantastic **Cottontown Chorus** for many years, winning the Convention Chorus Competition practically every time they entered. Sean is prominent in barbershop circles, directing at least 2 choruses. He is an experienced, classically trained conductor, composer, and singer: he conducts many choirs and groups and now earns his living from being a professional Music Director.

There were about 22 people in the directing stream, most of whom had been directing a chorus for some time. In fact, there were only two of us who had no experience of conducting. The first session consisted of introductions



and stating what we wanted to achieve from the weekend- in my case learning how to direct. At Harmony College there is plenty to choose from between your chosen stream sessions, such as improving vocal technique, introduction to music notation, singing tags, and singing with the current quartet champions, to mention just a few.

We learnt coaching techniques, voice matching, physical, mental and voice

warm up techniques, as well as the fundamentals of actually waving our arms. Sean and Neil made every session so much fun that it was difficult to realise how much you were actually learning.

Having so many on the stream meant that, unfortunately, actual directing was limited to around 20 minutes each. However, there was so much else to learn that no one came away disappointed, and everyone achieved their learning goals.

Sean is a more traditional conductor, not as flamboyant as some, and was a stickler for correct hand position. It was fun to see his innovative use of dry-wipe markers, rulers and other straight objects being tied to participants' hands and arms to achieve what he wanted. Neil and Sean worked really well together, and brought so much to each session that it made every moment enjoyable.

Before the end of the final session on Saturday, they chose one of the students, Matthew Sullivan, to direct the other members of the stream singing **Love me and the World is Mine** in a concert on Sunday. (Matthew was the one other person who had not directed before.) Whilst everyone else was drinking and singing into the early hours of Sunday morning, Matthew was nowhere to be seen. He had obviously been planning his approach throughout the night, as he did a fantastic job. I was so relieved that it was not me, as I doubt my nerve would have held out in front of such a large audience. Plus, I would have missed all of the last night fun in the bar and quadrangle.

For those who have never attended Harmony College, I highly recommend it. This was my third attendance,

previously having been on the College Chorus and the Extreme Quartet streams. Whilst the £340 price tag may put some off, it includes 3 nights accommodation, three meals a day and coaching by professionals which in itself would cost £50 an hour or more. Most importantly, it is lots of fun and you make new friends for life ... you can't put a price on that! If you wish to learn more about Harmony College, speak to me or any other members who have attended. If you are a real masochist, enrol on the Extreme Quartet stream, for which you will have to learn six songs.

Colin will be sorely missed as director, but after a fantastic "directors' boot camp", and with the help of Colin and others, I feel ready and inspired to take on this challenging role.

**Alan Lucking**

**Neil Firth and Sean Bui worked well together**



## Shenandoah

I think it is safe to say that **Shenandoah** is a favourite with the chorus. We sing it often, and it is a song we sing well.

As with many traditional folk songs, the author is unknown and since its earliest beginnings there have been many versions with different lyrics; a sea shanty, a logging song, a fur traders' song. It's been known as **Oh Shenandoah, Across the Wide Missouri, Oh, My Rolling River, World of Misery.**

**Shenandoah** is believed to have originated with early American fur traders travelling down the Missouri River in the early 19th century. Heard by sailors working on the river, the song was adapted as a capstan shanty, sung while hauling in the anchor on clipper ships. From here it spread across the world.

Shenandoah was also the name of a Native American chief of the Oneida Iroquois tribe from the New York State area of America - nowhere near the Missouri, which is further to the west. He was a physically imposing man, six and a half feet tall and strong. He was a friend and ally of George Washington. He co-founded what later became Hamilton College and he is buried in the campus grounds.

Early versions of the song tell of a French fur trader who fell in love with Sally, the daughter of Shenandoah, but the romance was refused by the chief. It is said that the fur trader made the mistake of speaking of his love for Sally to her father instead of her mother. In the ways of the Oneida Iroquois it is the women who oversee all matters relating to courtship, marriage and family and so the fur trader may have offended the tribe. Or the chief may have forbidden the relationship because the Iroquois supported the English in the war against France. In 2006 when the State of Virginia was looking for a new state song, **Shenandoah** was considered, as the River Shenandoah runs through the state, but rejected due to the references to the Missouri River which is not in

Virginia. In 2015 a compromise was reached by pairing the song's melody with the song **Our Great Virginia**. In the 1960s, versions of the song were featured in two films, the first about the American West, **How the West was Won** and the other, **Shenandoah**, about the American Civil War.

It has been performed by many artists including Paul Robeson, Glen Campbell, Bob Dylan, Arlo Guthrie, Bruce Springsteen and even Tom Waits and Keith Richards.

The barbershop arrangement we sing was arranged by Joe DeRosa, the father of **Main Street's** Tony DeRosa.

**Martin Gayton**

**Note to Senior Kentones:**

I always told you it was a SEA SHANTY-scoff no more!!

David T

## Club AGM 29th September 2022

At the club's AGM, Martin Gayton was elected to the vacant Deputy Chairman position and Martin Saunders was elected to the Performance Secretary position. Chairman Kevin Phillips thanked Carlo Azzopardi, who was standing down, for all his efforts in carrying out the Performance Secretary role.

Club Secretary Colin Barnes kindly agreed to stay on for an additional year. It is hoped that a member will shadow Colin for the next 12 months and take over the role next year.

Following the Treasurer's report it was agreed that Club subscriptions will increase next April to £300 per annum.

The Barbershopper of the Year trophy was awarded to Alan Lucking, and a special presentation was made to Colin Couves for serving for over 12 years as *Acafellas'* Chorus Director.

Alan receiving his Barbershoper of the Year trophy



Colin receiving garden vouchers from Kevin Phillips





# The Paul Sheehan Convention Travel Guide

Gillian and I had a fantastic experience at the 2022 Convention. Little did I know when I joined *The Kentones* back in June 2019 that I'd be performing on stage with a fantastic bunch of fellas and an enthusiastic and supportive Musical Director, in front of cheering friends, relatives and complete strangers! We may not have come first, or even twenty-first, but the experience was priceless, and I thank you all for being there and doing what you did.

As Harrogate is not just around the corner from where we live, we decided to take a few days after the competition to explore the area to see what we could find. We found loads of places to visit, and here are just a few, so if you find yourself up that way, you may want to have a look for yourselves ...

## Betty's Café Tea Rooms, Harrogate



What's this? It's not tea and it's not cake! Oh no, and to add salt to the wound, believe it or not there was never a real 'Betty' either. **Betty's Tea Rooms** was founded by a Swiss baker and confectioner called Fritz, who changed his name to Frederick and became a specialist in chocolate. So, getting over that deception, and having had an 'afternoon tea' on a previous visit, this one was for breakfast, and we had these Rosti dishes, which were so good we didn't want them to be finished.

## Turkish Baths, Harrogate

Is it Turkey? – No. Morocco? – No. Egypt? – No! This is the original and fully restored Turkish Baths, just down the road from the big **Wetherspoons** pub in Parliament Street. Opened in 1897, and bloomin' hot except for that plunge pool which was not! **Wim Hof** would have been proud of me (If you don't know who he is, look him up – he does Yoga in the snow.)



## Valley Gardens, Harrogate



A little oasis just behind our hotel, and the starting place for a walk to **Harlow Gardens**. We were there on a Sunday, just as the local artisan market stalls were clearing up, but there were still many people enjoying the park, and the place was absolutely spotless, something we certainly don't see in Sutton.

## Grassington

Lots of rolling countryside here, with a lovely walk to the river and waterfalls. The market town is the home of many small businesses, including many craft

shops (Gillian likes craft shops), and is the location used for Channel 5's, '**All Creatures Great and Small**'.

(The Pub on the left is '**The Drovers Arms**' and the building on the right is the vets' surgery, **Skeldale House**.)



## RHS Harlow Gardens

A lovely RHS garden, which happened to have a daffodil competition taking place – I didn't realise there were so many varieties. And there's a **Betty** variety too!

## Knaresborough



Forget about rowing boats, ice creams and long queues for the restaurants and pubs!

Why not just walk along the river and admire the River Nidd bridge? Lots of others had the same idea as us, and luckily we managed to avoid the rain.

## Stump Cross Caverns

In the Yorkshire Dales National Park, between Pateley Bridge and Grassington, is a car park and café over the site of the Stump Cross Caverns. After bolstering our confidence with tea and cake, we braved the depths and followed in the footsteps of Arne Saknussem, armed only with a torch, hard hat and a clipboard map. Not for the claustrophobic!



## Paul Sheehan



# Colin's Swansong with Acafellas

**David Tindall** arranged for us to appear at his local church, St Mary's Shortlands, on 24th September 2022. I regret to say I was somewhat lacking in confidence, as we had only once appeared in front of innocent and unsuspecting members of the public for over two and a half years.

In the event, it was something of a triumph. The concert was on a Saturday at 1 p.m., so I was amazed that a reasonable number of people were prepared to forego lunch to attend. With the bonus support of some of our wives, the audience numbers were sufficient for it not to be embarrassing, and in fact their applause and obvious enjoyment was contagious. The acoustic in the church was wonderful, and indeed it was a pleasure to sing there. David's announcements were, as usual, both self-deprecating and informative, and the audience loved him.

Thus, we sailed merrily through our repertoire, closing with a very well received "**Amarillo**" during which the audience happily clapped, sometimes

in the right places. We should, perhaps, have quit whilst we were ahead, but the head of music at the church requested an encore which, after a false start, we completed successfully.

Post concert, there were many voices of approval, but the comment I

particularly liked was by a dear lady who said that if she had known it would be that good, she would have insisted that some of her friends and family should also attend. I also spoke to some friends of Julio who are professional musicians, and they too were complimentary, being much impressed by the harmonies and the general performance.

We singers had been especially keen to give a good account of ourselves because this was **Colin Couves'** swansong as our Chorus Director after more than 12 years at the helm.

So, thank you, Colin, I hope we made you proud and –

WELCOME TO THE LEADS.

## Brian Showell

### Footnote from the Editor:

*David Tindall received the following message from Canon Claire Tillotson, Head of Music, St Mary's Shortlands. Not only is it fantastic to receive such lovely praise, the singout also encouraged a member of the audience to come along to the **Learn to Sing** course. Well done, **Acafellas**.*

Dear David,

I just wanted to thank you and the choir for such a fantastic concert last week  
The choir were amazing and everyone was delighted. Please please come again!  
Best wishes

Claire.

Acafellas enjoying David Tindall do his thing





# A New Barbershop Experience

It has been a busy barbershop time for me, singing at The BABS Convention in Harrogate with three choruses: **The Kentones**, **Sussex Harmonisers** and the mixed chorus **EQ Rendezvous**. And three days later, travelling with **EQ Rendezvous** to Helsingborg in Sweden for the three days of the European Barbershop Convention (**EBC**). Having attended the BABS Convention most of my 27 years with **The Kentones**, I must admit that the excitement of taking part has been lacking in recent years, but the **EBC** was a completely new experience. We flew into Copenhagen airport in Denmark, which awoke fond memories of my work trips to the company headquarters in Malmo. Then it was a quick helicopter flip across the water, but now it's a one hour bus ride across the bridge, around Malmo and up the coast to Helsingborg.

Helsingborg is a lovely, touristy city. Typically Swedish and squeaky clean, and busy with vehicle ferries running every 20 minutes 2½ miles across the sea to Denmark. The **EBC** was being held in the Helsingborg Arena, a conference centre and entertainment venue a short walk from our city centre hotel. Competitors came from 14 European nations and were taking part in three simultaneous competitions: Swedish National, Scandinavian and European for men and women, and mixed quartets and choruses. **EQ Rendezvous** were competing in the European mixed chorus section.

For me, Barbershop singing is very much a participatory event, and if I am only listening, my eyes start to glaze over after about 20 minutes. Heading to the hall when we were not competing, my expectations were not high. I listened to the first

chorus from Germany, then the second from Denmark and the third from Sweden and, to my amazement, I enjoyed every minute of the performances; and so it continued throughout the day.

Wow! Was this Barbershop? Why was this experience so different from previous times? Even the quartets were entertaining! True, the standard was very high, but it had been high before. There were a lot of good arrangements of very modern songs which were still Barbershop but very far from the traditional. I think this was driven by a primary aim to entertain the audience, with scoring high secondary.

Considering that **EQ Rendezvous** had only five previous rehearsals prior to Helsingborg, we were very happy to win a bronze medal with a score of **75.8%**. Heading back home I wondered whether this enjoyment would last? Contemplating next year's Convention in Bournemouth I am not sure, but fortunately there are two Extreme Quarteting events coming up that I will really enjoy: 6 songs for **Harmony College** in early August and then 12 songs for **Harmony Brigade** in February.

At least this will keep me busy in my 28th year!

**Denis Delaroute**

**EQ Rendezvous at Rehearsal**



**Helsingborg**



# Frank Taylor is a Legend!

Dear Kentones,

What other nonagenarian do you know who performed at a national singing competition featuring as part of not one but two choruses, which meant that he had to learn four songs, and for one appearance he was required to purchase his first ever pair of jeans! However, it is easy for him as he obviously comes from a distant and highly evolved planet.

Whilst at my second Convention in 2011, I found myself walking alongside Frank as we headed towards the lift to the headland above Llandudno, and that was when he confided in me that his ambition was to spend more of his life in retirement than he had at work.

Who is to say that he won't achieve his aim - after all he does come from the Planet Zog.

Respect!

**Brian Showell**

**PS** You may be interested in an article he penned following what can only be described as an altercation with a bath and shower whilst staying in Den Bosch, Holland. It made me laugh more than any other!

***For readers new and old, printed below is Frank's article which first appeared in September 2011:***

I woke up bright and early on our first morning in the Euro Hotel, Den Bosch, and decided I'd be the first in the shower. It was a bit odd, as the shower consisted of a large, deep bath with the tap fittings and shower attachment fitted half-way along the bath instead of the usual position at the end. There was also a splash screen part way along the side of the bath.

I checked that I had the shampoo, sponge and face flannel at the ready, took off my glasses and with some difficulty climbed into the bath. I turned on the left hand tap and nothing happened. I felt there was a button on the tap, so I pressed that a few times and still nothing. I then turned on the other tap and cold water rushed all over my feet. I turned the tap back to what I thought would be off, and the cold water spurted out of the shower head all over me and the bathroom floor as the stupid screen didn't extend far enough to stop it!

I thought, 'What sort of idiot designed a shower like this?' I then turned the other tap again and scalding hot water came out ensuring I moved pretty quickly. In some manner I managed to get the water to a comfortable temperature so I could proceed to wash my hair. I had been holding the shower head to ensure that it was pointed over the bath but when I let it go, in order to get some shampoo onto my head, the shower head slowly turned round to spray the room once more.

By this time I was getting fed up with the whole affair but hit on the brilliant idea of kneeling in the bath. So I proceeded and I was on my knees holding the shower head, but once again when I put it down, to start with the shampoo, the head turned upwards showering

everything in sight. Eventually I was able to wash my hair on my knees and think to myself, 'The designer isn't an idiot but a sadistic voyeur who has probably put a small camera in the ceiling to video the occupants for a good laugh.'

Having finished with my hair, I now had to wash the rest of me. As I was kneeling, I decided to sit down and have a bath. The water, which was collecting in the bath, had now drained away as the plug didn't work. Then I realised that you had to turn quite a large looking round piece of metal on the side of the bath which apparently activated the plug. I was now ready again.

I looked for the soap which was nowhere to be seen. Through the thick layer of steam which had now accumulated I spied it on the wash basin on the other side of the bathroom. With various mutterings I put my hands on the side of the bath and tried to heave myself up. I'm having problems with my shoulders these days, so it was beyond me. It was back to turning over again on to my knees and standing up that way. I then had to dismount from the bath which wasn't easy as there was no rubber mat to stop me from slipping. I thought, 'Do the EU Health and Safety Regulations not apply in Holland?' When I eventually returned to terra firma I decided 'To Hell with it, I'll wash in the basin.'

What really annoyed me was that I explained all of the difficult plumbing devices to Pam and warned her that once in the bath she would never get out again without assistance. I sat in the bedroom waiting for her to shout but she emerged five minutes later. I said, 'How did you get on?' She replied, 'It was lovely, no problem!'

# 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** — John Williams



## Acafellas

### **Meetings:**

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

**Chorus Director** — Alan Lucking



**Interested in joining us? Need entertainment for an event or function?**  
**Please visit [www.thekentones.co.uk](http://www.thekentones.co.uk)**

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