



MEN IN HARMONY BARBERSHOP CHORUS (INC)

PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

THE SECOND DECADE – THE STORY CONTINUES

BY ANDY ABERLE

## PREFACE

Ten years ago when I recorded the story of the creation and exciting early development of the Men in Harmony barbershop chorus, the first in Australia, I wrote of the joy I experienced in re-living in prose, events of which I was part, and I've had the same pleasure in recounting a second ten-year episode.

This is a different story of course, the first was about a group of raw recruits feeling their way in a new musical world, but stepping out with extraordinary confidence and, in their own naivety, achieving amazing things. By the early nineties the Australian men's barbershop movement had emerged as an efficient, growing organisation and Men in Harmony was just one of many well run clubs around the country, all striving to improve in this demanding singing style. That has added a new ingredient in the life of the chorus and another spur in the pursuit of excellence.

Today, the Men in Harmony chorus has reached new levels in barbershop singing skills but, as the reader will note, has also managed to continue being innovative in trying new ideas in presenting its brand of entertainment to the public, with considerable success.

I trust it will never lose that adventurous spirit.

In harmony,

Andy Aberle

August 2005

## MEN IN HARMONY – A CONTINUING HISTORY THE SECOND DECADE

1995

The second decade in the Men in Harmony Barbershop Chorus story began at a cracking pace, with 1995 shaping to be the busiest year in the life of the chorus to date. The planning and preparation underway at the close of the previous year was intensified with new initiatives and goals set and the focus principally centred on four key events, the **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner** in March, an **Easter Harmony Fair** (fete) in April, an **Anniversary Show** in June and participation in the **Third National Convention** scheduled for Canberra in October.

The year started with the usual membership drive and it proved very successful. Over the first few weeks thirty six visitors attended rehearsals and within a month or so thirteen had been admitted to membership which brought the total to about eighty.

At the AGM in February, **Rob Walley** stepped down as President and **Vic Richards** was elected with **Pat Knight** as Vice President, **Rod Eagleton** as Secretary, **Stan Prentice**, Treasurer and six committeemen, including **Andy Aberle** who was re-appointed Special Projects Officer to oversee the big events planned. **Bruce Okely** was confirmed as Musical Director and **John Little** as his Deputy.

As part of an AAMBS sponsored national tour, nearly all members attended an intensive coaching weekend (from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, Feb 10/12) with Senior Music Specialist, **Mel Knight**, from SPEBSQSA head quarters in the U.S. It was a "live-in" at Noalimba and was voted a huge success. Further training reinforcement followed on March 10 when **Bill Albrecht**, the delightful American **Musical Director of the Melbournaires** (who was visiting on business) spent the rehearsal evening with the chorus. Meantime **Vic Richards** had initiated weekly music theory teaching sessions prior to rehearsal and **Gordon Grigor**, **Graham Bishop** and **Howard Hughes** were having considerable success in promoting the **Barber Polecat** training scheme in which individuals were assisted to achieve faultless singing in their respective parts from the polecat repertoire.

All this extra work, plus the regular submission of tapes, was reported by the Music Leadership Team, to be producing a noticeable overall improvement in the corporate chorus singing.

## TEN YEAR CELEBRATIONS

The **Tenth Anniversary Dinner** was held at Dorchester Lodge on Saturday, March 18. With 145 past and present members, partners and friends attending, it was a very happy occasion, mixing some formality with great fellowship and fun. The special program of events was a feast of nostalgia featuring significant songs from the past ten years, the re-forming of old quartets and other groups, airing of superseded costumes, a colourful printed program and the inauguration of the **Ten Year Badge** with a special recognition issue to the ten remaining founding members still singing. A great deal of memorabilia was displayed depicting the growth of the chorus.

Meantime, work intensified in preparations for Men in Harmony's fund raiser, **Harmony Easter Fair**. Held in the grounds of Saint Nicholas Anglican Church in Floreat on Saturday, April 8, it involved a huge effort, from both the men and the ladies of **Partners in Harmony**, with whom the proceeds were shared. There were sixteen separate stalls including the traditional "money spinners" like, Cakes, Plants, White Elephant, Sewing & Craft, Books and Bottles. There were also Morning Teas, Hamburgers, Confectionery and fun stalls for the children like, Splat the Rat, Fish Pond, Splasho, Train Rides and Lucky Dip. Just over \$4,500 was raised and there was great fun and good exposure for Men in Harmony, but the exhausted membership, both men and ladies, concluded that there were easier ways to raise money.

These "extra-curricular" activities did not detract from the chorus music program which was conscientiously administered by the strong Music Leadership Team headed by **Allan Tuckwell**. The group met regularly and oversaw the riser tape program, the Barber Polecat scheme and entry standards for new members as well as forward planning and the convention preparation. Special quartet workshops were organised for the first Friday evening each month and extra sectional workshops on other Fridays.

**Harmony Handful** sub-group administered by **David Martin** and directed by **John Little**, was in steady demand for day-time outings. Members enjoyed sharing their harmony with community groups in less demanding and fun situations.

The benefits to the chorus sound from all the extra work was clearly displayed in the wonderful **Men in Harmony's Tenth Anniversary Show** at Methodist Ladies College auditorium on Saturday, June 10. It was a highly successful venture in every way. The chorus was joined by "old friends", **Perth Harmony Chorus**, champion ladies quartet, **Mischief Down Under** and current men's national champion quartet, **Bad Habits. Don Rock**, harmonica virtuoso, added a touch of variety and, with occasional appearances from great "story teller" **Roy Smith**, and chorus members handling the compering and continuity, it was an extremely professional program. The capacity audience of 750 (seats were added along the back wall) certainly thought so. Over 200 additional potential bookings were turned away and there were regrets that a second show hadn't been planned. Ticket prices were a modest, average \$12.50 - even so, a profit of over \$6 000 was realised.

Fund raising was further augmented by the sale of chocolates and also proceeds from a quiz night run with **Partners in Harmony**. Held at the Castlebeck Tavern, Osborne Park on July 6, the enjoyable evening was organised by **David Harper** and an enthusiastic team. Later in July the chorus provided the program for a **PSA (Pleasant Sunday Afternoon) Concert at St Edmunds Anglican Church, Wembley**. This was a novelty for the men which provided a "sharpening up" opportunity for not only the chorus but also several quartets. It was well received and a modest fee resulted. Members also helped the Partners in selling raffle tickets for the Heart Foundation.

There was a chance to relax on August 12 when square dancers, **Tom & Dot Clayton**, arranged for the chorus and partners to attend a square dance gathering at Floreat Forum Hall. The men sang of course and the barbershoppers were rewarded with instruction in square dancing and participation in a great evening of fun.

The amateur "toe-tappers" were applauded for their singing but obviously had some way to go with their dancing. It was a very happy evening and earned a fee for the chorus.

## CONVENTION PREPARATIONS

That "night off" readied the men for an intensive live-in workshop weekend with PHC Director, **Cathy Rainey**, on August 18/19. Held, once again, at Noalimba the emphasis was on all aspects of good chorus singing and focused particularly on the two competition songs *Roses of Picardy* and *Toot Toot Tootsie Goodbye*. The men responded well to Cathy's coaching and revelled in the hard work. They came away with a feeling of having reached a new plateau of performance level.

Meantime, additional rehearsals were scheduled for selected Friday nights at Ashfield Community Hall and there was a further opportunity for fine tuning when the chorus appeared on the **Perth Harmony Chorus show** at MLC on September 9 prior to the ladies departure for the United States to participate in the women's international competitions. The MIH quartet, **Happy Daze**, was also given a spot on that program.

President **Vic Richards** announced that all of the fund raising efforts over two years allowed the Management Committee to subsidise members convention expenses by \$439 per singer travelling, and, after final daily rehearsals, 61 men and supporters departed for Canberra on October 10/11 feeling confident and as well prepared as they could be. The costume sub-committee, headed by **Sam Jacobs** and **Julienne Van Noort**, had recommended only small changes to the previous popular standard rig and suggested, white trousers, shirt and shoes with blue waistcoat and bow tie but also observed that a review of future overall costume needs was due.

The majority of the group stayed a little out of Canberra city with a handful in apartments close to the action in town. The **Canberra Chordsmen** was a small club and many aspects of the third convention organization reflected this shortage of manpower.

In particular, the logistics of competition were sadly deficient with choruses having to warmup outside in icy weather but, the contest venue was first class and the usual convention good fellowship carried the day. Men in Harmony scored a total of 399 points, 43 more than the Perth tally but still 26 behind the **Banana Blenders** who once again won Gold. However, the gap had narrowed considerably and while there was some disappointment, the majority of members were proud to receive the silver medal. They were aware the weakness was in the up-tempo song but were re-assured by many unsolicited comments praising a magnificent rendition of *Roses of Picardy*.

The convention period fell during the annual Floriade celebration in Canberra and the spectacular floral displays were a wonderful bonus for visitors to the Capital. Another plus was the opportunity to catch up with the South Australian foursome **Fourum** who were attending their first convention. It was also the first time groups from the two states in the widespread Western Region had been together and the South Aussies appreciated an invitation to share the MIH rehearsal venue and were grateful for practical and morale support from the "sandgroppers". Men in Harmony quartets, **Western Connection**, **Fun Tones** and **Happy Daze** did not make the top ten but all performed creditably in competition.

## A BUSY FINISH

On return home there was a positive feeling in the chorus and emphasis on what a great team effort the members had produced and only enthusiastic thoughts for the Sydney convention in two years time. In any case, the chorus was quickly "back in business" with two charity fund raising concerts, the first on November 19 at Perth Modern School auditorium in aid of Save the Children Fund. The program was shared with the **Karrinyup Symphony Orchestra** and **Tina Alteri** compered.

The second fund raiser was staged in Trinity Church in the city on December 12, in aid of Uniting Church Crossroads program. Men in Harmony were joined by some very talented young instrumentalists and singers and the concert raised over \$4000 for a very worthy cause.

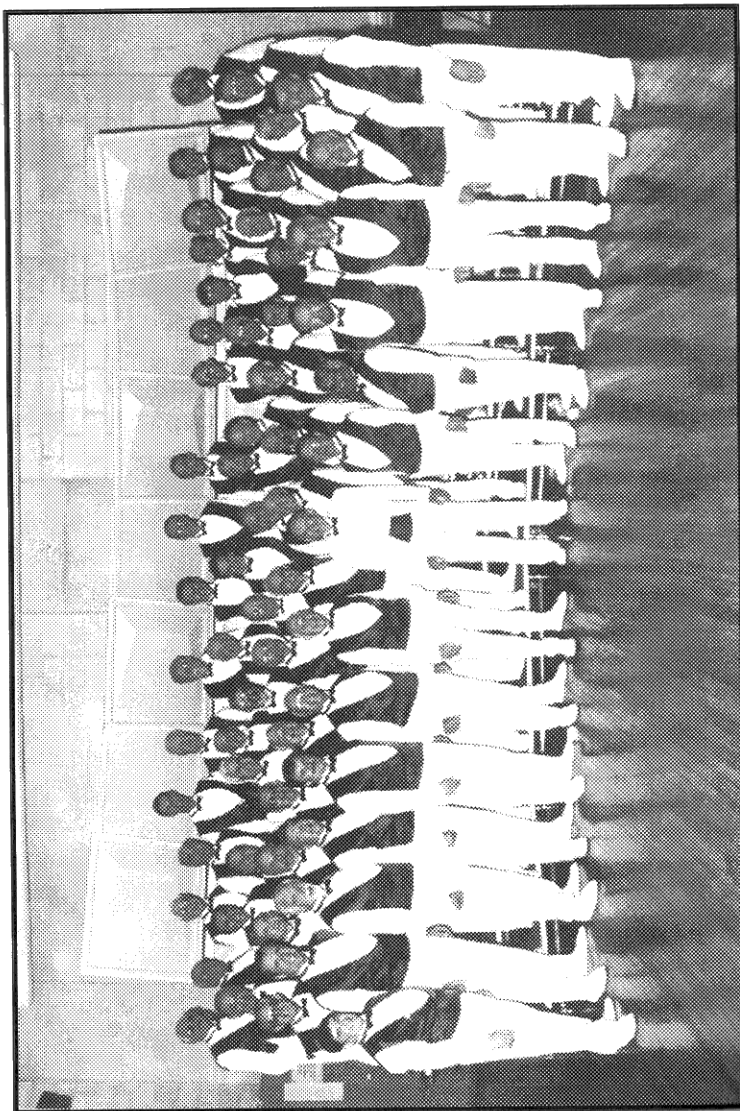
Plaudits in the Uniting Church newsletter included; "Men in Harmony led an enthralling program, they sang with panache, a beautiful selection of pieces including carols old and new, the stirring *Battle Hymn of the Republic* and the lovely *One More Song*. Sixty impeccably dressed men, under the direction of **Bruce Okely**, brought a lovely evening to a close with a moving encore of *The Irish Blessing*". There was also a Carols by Candlelight outing for Attadale Baptist Church, held at the nearby primary school, on December 16.

Those last couple of months in the year were tinged with great sadness at the passing of two chorus stalwarts, **Maurice Dixon** and **Ray Gracey**, and the very popular lady, **Sally Walley**, wife of Past President, **Rob**. As usual, members and partners expressed in song their respects and great sense of loss on those sad occasions



The annual windup was organised by **George Jackson** and held at the Riverton Rossmoyne Bowling Club. The traditional contributions from chorus sections and the Partners added to the fun and seven members received ten-year badges; **Arthur Boddy, Pat Knight, Peter van Noort, Rob Walley, Sam Jacobs, Ray Foster** and **David Martin**. **Graham Bishop** was awarded *Chorusman of the Year*. It was a happy occasion with speakers observing that it had been another year of significant growth and progress for Men in Harmony.

### Canberra 1995



1996

The year began on another sombre note with the passing of bass **Bob Patterson** but that could not dampen the enthusiasm for what promised to be another busy and exciting time for the chorus.

The usual "visitor evenings" were held with 22 guests on one night, and in the first couple of months seven new members were admitted. However, it was noted that the pattern of previous years was continuing with a membership turnover of about 10/15%, new intakes being offset by departures. It was apparent that some new people, especially those working, were finding it difficult to keep up with learning demands and, although enjoying themselves, were reluctantly leaving.

Meantime, **Bruce Okely** advised the chorus that he intended to take an extended holiday break later in the year and the Management Committee decided that this could be an opportunity for Men in Harmony to engage a top coach, probably from overseas, to work intensively with the chorus for a lengthy period. Two names were mentioned, **Dr Hank Hammer** from Hawaii and Canadian, **Wally Coe**, who had coached the Gold Coast Chorus for the '95 convention in Canberra. During that convention, **Bruce** and President **Vic** had taken the opportunity to meet and talk with **Wally** about the idea and he had indicated interest. **Vic** was authorised to pursue enquiries on all aspects of the ambitious plan.

### A WEEKEND DOWN SOUTH

Special Events Officer, **Andy Aberle**, had been negotiating for some time with a Dunsborough based group, for Men in Harmony's participation in a combined venture in Busselton. The idea stemmed from an approach from the Director of **Sou' West Singers** choral group, **Colin Day**, and, after two trips south progressing arrangements, the project came to fruition on the weekend of February 24/25.

Of the total 100 strong Men in Harmony party (singers & partners), 42 travelled by chartered coach and the remainder by private cars.

About half the party stayed together on the Saturday night in rented units at the **Geographe Bay Holiday Resort**. The schedule was very tight, starting with an afternoon barbershop workshop for interested local folk which was well received – some said it was inspiring – there was no doubt however, that everyone was perspiring! in forty degree heat! (Incidentally, one of the locals was **Neil Horner**, who waited a further eight years to realise his ambition of joining Men in Harmony).

The show was billed as a **Summer Night on the Vasse** with some unusual but delightful features. It began in the civic hall at 6.15 and, after the first half, everybody, audience and show company, adjointed to the surrounding lawns by the Vasse river for a picnic meal which, in the case of the MIH party, was catered for by Coles. The show resumed and finished about 10pm. The chorus and **Sou' West Singers** each sang in both halves and combined for *Advance Australia Fair* as a finale. Three quartets; **Special Connection**, **Funtones** and **Blue Chip Stock**, also performed. The chorus was extremely popular and, in response to the enthusiasm, Men in Harmony sang some encores from a boat landing on the opposite side of the river. It was a spectacular and fitting way to end what had been a special and very successful evening.

The touring party were on the road by mid-morning on the Sunday in time to arrive in Mandurah for lunch in a park by the inlet. This consisted of sandwiches organised by Mandurah local, **Gavin Archer**, and also fruit, carried on the coach from Perth. **Sam Jacobs** took along all the gear for making tea.

The Mandurah afternoon show, *Summertime Harmony*, was a Men in Harmony initiative, staged in the Senior Citizens Hall, the venue for previous successful visits by the chorus. Men in Harmony used the same repertoire as Busselton and filled out the program with the local ladies **Kanyana Singers** barbershop chorus and a jazz combo, **Lee Clark & Friends**. The program was well received and the full house reflected the considerable promotional effort that had been carried out with leaflets, posters, newspaper editorials and plugs on the local TV station.

A contracted fee of \$1500 from the **Sou'West Singers** and the Mandurah diversion helped in the financial success of the weekend venture with a little over \$2000 profit. However, as usual, with such exercises, it was only made viable by the self-funding contributions of chorus members in paying for their own travel, food & accommodation costs.

Not that anyone complained, the weekend was enthusiastically voted an outstanding success in every respect by all who made the trip

At the AGM two new committeemen were elected and **Paul Chancellor** replaced **Stan Prentice** as Treasurer. President **Vic Richards** reported that he had received a promising response from **Wally Coe** regarding the post of **Coach in Residence** later in the year, and negotiations were continuing. In addition to funding travel costs for **Wally**, the chorus would have to provide accommodation for him and his wife and provide a vehicle for the duration of their stay.

## PLENTY OF SINGING

The chorus engagement program remained busy. In aid of the WA Institute for the Blind a concert, which also featured the **Creole Jazz Band**, was staged at the outdoor amphitheatre on the newly developing **Ellenbrook Estate** on the evening of March 31.

Sponsorship provided for top sound and lighting facilities and, with **Peter Holland** compering, the 400 strong crowd loved it. It was to be the first of several visits to that venue. There were two outings in April – a daytime gathering on the 13<sup>th</sup> at the **Mundaring Hills Festival** and, on the 26<sup>th</sup>, an evening variety concert in aid of **Scarborough High School Chaplaincy** at the **Karrinyup Community Hall**.

There was no slackening in the pace with a concert for the **Rossmoyne Ladies Probos Club** at the Air Force **Association Hall, Bullcreek**, in July (\$600 fee) and, in August, Men in Harmony were invited back to **Saint Edmunds Church, Wembley**, for another **Pleasant Sunday Afternoon** concert. All engagements were very successful with encouraging feedback about the chorus performances.

In May the President advised that **Wally Coe** had accepted the invitation and was available from October till the end of the year. Efforts began immediately to locate a house or flat on some economical basis. Ads in local newspapers and personal efforts by members proved fruitless but finally, a partially furnished house in Daglish was secured at \$145 per week. Members offered items of furniture to make up the deficiencies and **Renne Dewaard** offered a car on a economical hire arrangement. An overall budget cost of about \$8000 for the project was indicated.

As always, there were other important matters before the administrative team. There had been concerns for some time about the need for a safety rail on the back of the risers and various designs were under consideration.

The chorus' custom-built trailer (for transporting the risers) was stolen from outside the hall and apparently used by the culprits to carry off a variety of hospital possessions, which did not please the hospital administration. After a trial period, it was decided not to acquire another trailer because the alternative arrangement of hiring one as needed was a far better system. One interesting development was an increase in the weekly hire charge for the Red Cross Hall from \$10 to \$25.

Following a review, the costume committee (including **Sam Jacobs & Julienne vanNoort**) recommended some changes and suggested that the costume deposit amount for new members should be increased from \$40 to \$60.

It was obvious however, that the current range of costume options continued to serve the chorus well – the white or black trousers and shoes used with a range of shirts and bow ties, plus the blue waistcoats, gave a great degree of flexibility and changes were quick and easy during a show.

Matters of discipline in various aspects of chorus life kept servicing, none of them new. They included effective use of weekly rehearsal time, especially the efficiency of the notices break, absences without apology, poor support for some committed engagements and general lack of commitment by some individuals to learning their work. The Music Team recommended that entry standards should be more stringent and eligibility testing for shows etc. should be diligently observed. To improve communication with members the Management Committee adopted **Pat Knight's** suggestion of individual personal "letterboxes" using concertina filing boxes.

However, on the positive side, it was noted that since its formation the Thursday afternoon **South of the River** group had continued to thrive and this was obviously the catalyst for the formation of a similar **North of the River** gathering on Friday evenings in Nollamara. Led by **Graham Bishop** and **Gordon Grigor**, the initial group of a dozen or so had steadily grown. Such voluntary efforts aimed at increasing individual singing skills was a very healthy sign for the future of the chorus.

**Bruce Okely** firmed his leave arrangements to fit the plans for **Wally Coe's** "locum" visit and advised that he would now be away prior to **Wally's** arrival and be back for most of his stay. He outlined a scheme for the orderly ongoing operation of the chorus in his absence which involved assigning duties to key people like Deputy Director, **John Little** and Music Team members. Team leader, **Allan Tuckwell**, reported that he foresaw no problems in maintaining an efficient operation.

## WALLY COE ARRIVES

**Wally Coe** and wife, **Liz**, were "sung" into Perth airport on September 20 and the chorus wasted no time in organising a live-in workshop with him at Noalimba the following weekend. It was hard work but also clear that **Wally's** aggressive style was producing immediate benefits and the intensive weekend, coupled with early rehearsal start times for the next few weeks, readied the chorus for the big annual show.



**Noalimba workshop with Wally Coe**

Back: Pat Knight, John Nelson, Rod Eagleton, Denis Connor, Renne Dewaard  
Front: John Christie, John Minchin, Wally, Dusty Durston

## ANOTHER GREAT SHOW

**Andy Aberle** had been working for some months in planning for the show to be held at MLC Claremont, on October 11 & 12. **Gary Taylor's** New Zealand award-winning quartet, **The Aristocrats**, was engaged to feature, along with the **Creole Jazz Band** and soprano, **Zoe Kikiros**. **Perth Harmony Chorus** declined an invitation and also indicated that they were planning a different format for their own show, which did not include Men in Harmony. After preliminary advertising had started the **New Zealanders** cancelled and urgent efforts to find a replacement foursome, including the possibility of **Close Shave** from Hobart, proved fruitless. The slot was eventually filled by the **Kalamunda Youth Swing Band** and the inclusion of a "mixed" quartet, **Double Trouble**.

Under the show title, *Close Harmony, Swing 'n' Jazz* the lineup was certainly different content for Men in Harmony but, backed by the usual strong promotional plan and excellent "in house" selling, the two-night season was a great success with nearly 1200 patrons (many of them first-timers) and a net profit of \$10 650.

There was an opportunity, two weeks after the show, for all members and partners to relax with **Wally** and **Liz** at a picnic by the river at Crawley Bay. Well organised as usual by **Tom Clayton**, it was a great success. **Wally**, of course, made constructive observations about the Men in Harmony show performance which highlighted areas for immediate improvement. There was no doubt that his concentrated coaching in vowel matching and expanded sound reflected in the quality of the singing for the remainder of the year.

His teaching skills were not confined to chorus work as he also focused on potential MD's, quartets and found time for the south-of-the-river group. **Wally** also brought with him a recommendation for Men in Harmony's entry in the 1997 convention.

It was a package based on two songs with a similar theme - *I Never Meant to Fall* and *I Didn't Want to Fall*, by the same composer.

As songs, they did not find instant favour with the members, nevertheless, work began on learning notes and words with a view to having the basics in place by the end of **Wally's** stay.

Chorus engagements included a charity afternoon performance at John Curtin High School in aid of the chaplaincy on November 3 and the prestigious annual Save the Children Fund concert at Perth Modern School on Sunday, 24. This event included the state primary schools string orchestra and a children's choir. The President of SCF, **Mrs Ruth Reid**, was present and the show was compered by show-biz legend, **Jill Perryman**, who was very complimentary about the chorus' contribution. The final outing for the year was a Carols by Candlelight at Attadale Primary School on December 14. To sharpen the chorus for these outings, and progress the contest songs, **Wally** conducted extra workshops at the Red Cross Hall on a Saturday and on several Friday evenings.

At the annual Christmas party, held again at the Rossmoyne Bowling Club, **Len Barnett** received the **Chorusman of the Year** award for his ongoing music coaching and nine men were admitted to the "**Ten Year Club**" - **Gavin Archer, John Christie, Dan Davies-Moore, Wilf Eccleston, Gordon Grigor, Jack Melrose, John Minchin, Ron Pye & Allan Tuckwell**. The year finished on a positive note with enthusiastic anticipation for the fourth national convention in Sydney next year.

1997

**Wally** and **Liz Coe** left for home on January 7 offering to return in August to help complete chorus preparations for competition at the Sydney convention in September. Before departure **Wally** also made several recommendations about the musical future of the chorus, in particular, suggestions for the development of some younger music directors, and listed **Ian Mulholland, Kim Sebbage** and **Les Goh** as candidates.

## CHANGES IN THE AIR?

At the first committee meeting of the year, **Rob Sproule** made a presentation outlining some concerns about the chorus and its future which were critical of the current administrative team and systems, and the functioning of Men in Harmony generally. The committee approved his request to conduct a canvass of members, which took the form of a questionnaire, handed out at the start of the next rehearsal night, and calling for immediate "knee-jerk" completion. The 100 questions, in five basic categories, were couched in strongly negative and critical terms and required a simple "agree" or "disagree" response. It was an elaborate exercise and **Rob R's** summary of the results suggested that there was much to do if the chorus was to progress. The committee accepted some of his recommendations and proposed workshops for the near future to consider the matters raised in more detail.

This activity, coupled with **Wally Coe's** suggestions regarding musical direction, was somewhat unsettling for the members and there was also disquiet about **Bruce Okely's** position and his future with the chorus. **Bruce** allayed some of these concerns stating that he saw merit in **Wally Coe's** ideas and benefits for the chorus, and emphasised the need to stay focused on competition preparation.

A reminder of the pending national gathering came to the fore when **Andy Aberle**, who was the current national **Vice President Conventions**, reported that he had been to Sydney in that capacity and, whilst there, had pursued enquiries on behalf of Men in Harmony for a suitable accommodation deal.

He was unimpressed with the convention accommodation offerings and had found an attractive alternative which appeared to suit the chorus requirements. **Andy** was authorised to proceed with firming reservations at the **Oxford Koala Hotel**. The estimated collective savings to the membership from this option was about \$12 000.



## A LOT OF SINGING

Whilst preparation for Sydney was a dominant focus for the chorus, a heavy program of engagements was developing for the year and this helped keep the members constantly "on their toes". They commenced with participation in a community festival at Mundaring on Australia Day in which the chorus sang at two outdoor locations. **Ian Mulholland** and **Kim Sebbage** shared the direction on the day and it was a very successful outing. There was a fund raiser for the Balya Foundation at MLC auditorium in February and a return concert for the Royal WA Institute for the Blind at the Ellenbrook housing estate on March 16. It was a happy occasion in which the good natural acoustics and first class sound facilities, enhanced the chorus work and that of the **Kalamunda Youth Swing Band** which shared the bill.

On Friday evening, April 11, Men in Harmony provided the second half of a concert in the Floreat Uniting Church in their "Friday at Floreat" concert series, which raised funds for the church's development. Also on the program were young solo classical instrumentalists on flute, cello and piano. The a capella singing from the chorus and quartets, provided quite a contrast to the usual fare and was well received.

But the highlight for the first half of the year was a visit to Perth by AAMBS 1997 touring music specialist, **Burt Staffen**, from the United States. **Burt** arrived on April 23 and, over the ensuing ten days, worked with all quartets, **Harmony Handful** (**Southside Harmony**) and, as often as possible, with Men in Harmony. The schedule culminated with a live-in workshop at Noalimba on Friday evening and Saturday, May 2 & 3. His overall program included basic musical skills and work in the chorus established repertoire.

Conscious of the coaching the chorus had received from **Wally Coe**, and the fact that **Wally** was scheduled to return, **Burt** was obviously reluctant to vary the plans for the contest songs, although it was apparent that, under different circumstances, he may have recommended some changes. During the busy visit there was time for socialising and all agreed it was an enjoyable and timely exercise in the contest year. **Burt** was billeted with the **Donnelly's**, **van Noort's** and **Aberle's**.

That intensive work complimented the ongoing coaching systems which were a key part of the regular chorus life. Overseen by the Music Leadership Team, the periodic submission of riser tapes and extra sectional practices were working well, with Bass Section Leader, **Len Barnett**, setting a very high standard.

However, on the lighter side, members of **Harmony Handful** continued to enjoy the more relaxed presentations to daytime audiences, at three to four weekly intervals. At the same time, **Southside Harmony** was growing in strength and also beginning to accept engagements in its own name.

## SOME CONCERNS ALLAYED

Meanwhile, the "in house" unease that had been generated by **Wally Coe's** ideas and **Rob Sproule's** survey continued to simmer. In particular there was concern about the respective responsibilities and authority of the Music Director and the Management Committee. The matter came to a head at a Special General Meeting in June which resulted in the acceptance of a Position Paper compiled jointly by **Bruce Okely** and President, **Mike Donnelly**. The document spelled out the respective responsibilities and clarified some areas of confusion. This action was timely and well received by the men who saw it as a basis for moving forward in a new spirit of co-operation and harmony.

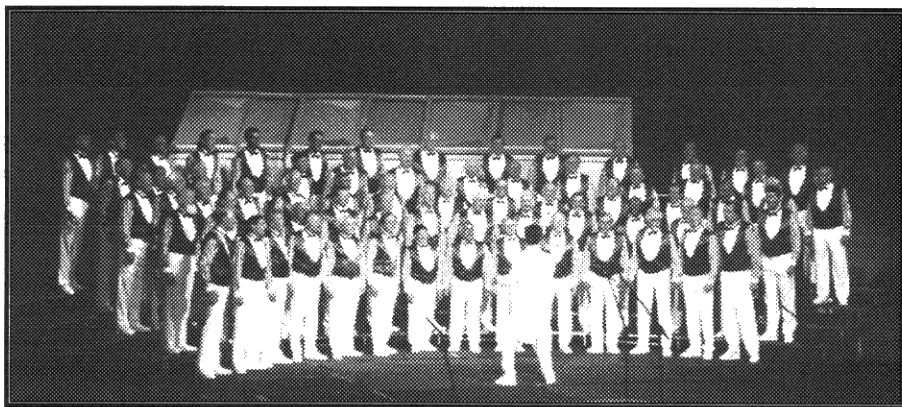
In June, the chorus made a guest appearance on **Ted Bull's ABC** radio show and the men revelled in the wonderful acoustics of the big recording studio. The experience highlighted the sound deficiencies in the cavernous Red Cross Hall and re-activated earlier thoughts about finding a more suitable rehearsal venue.

## WALLY BACK FOR THE BIG ONE

Members enjoyed participation in the program of the **Perth Harmony Chorus** annual show at Perth Concert Hall on July 12 which was a convenient "warmup" for the return of **Wally and Liz Coe** the following week. **Wally** expressed disappointment that some of the work program he had recommended had not been fully implemented nevertheless, the members conscientiously applied themselves to his demanding revision and final preparation plan for the convention (scheduled for September 11 to 14). This included some rehearsals at the **Perth Harmony Chorus** venue to familiarise the singers with the Wenger risers which would be in use at the convention.

The largest Men in Harmony travelling party to date (about 120 people) flew to Sydney during the few days prior to the commencement of convention activities which were based in the **Sydney Convention Centre at Darling Harbour**.

On **Wally Coe's** insistence, the chorus managed to hire some Wenger risers which were set up in a function room at the Oxford Koala hotel and this helped with last-minute preparation. However, in spite of the very intensive work, Men in Harmony once again could not match the Gold Coast chorus and had to settle for sharing equal second place with the NSW Central Coast chorus. The actual contest performance was a new experience for the men for, for the first time since the creation of Men in Harmony, **Bruce Okely** was not involved in directing the contest songs. He sang on the risers while **Ian Mulholland** and **Les Goh** shared the direction duties.



*Sydney September 1997*

There was good natured acceptance among the chorus membership of the results and everyone acknowledged that, Australia-wide, the overall level of skills in the barbershop singing movement were escalating at an amazing rate. As always, the convention was a great success in terms of participation and fellowship (there were 18 choruses & 38 quartets competing) and most of the "old hands" enjoyed catching up with friends from the Eastern States.

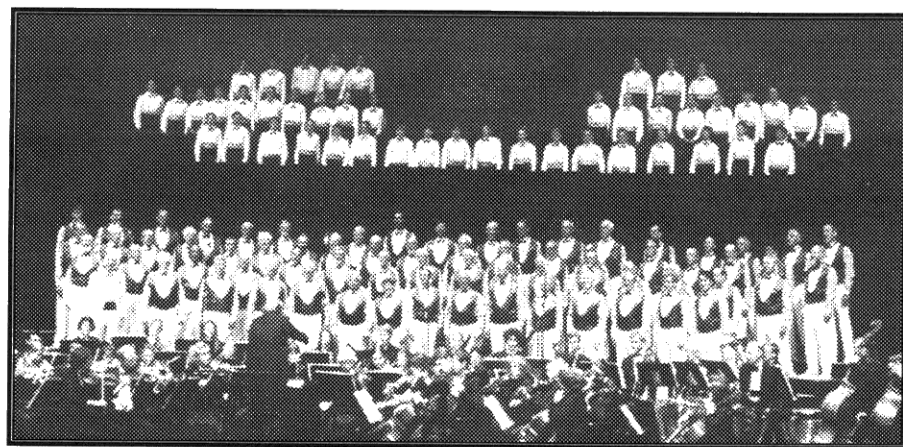
And all shared in celebrating the success of two MIH quartets that finished in the top ten (*Hi-Time*, 5<sup>th</sup> and *Blue Chip Stock*, 10<sup>th</sup>) and also, *Highest Scoring Senior Quartet*, *One More Time* – John Minchin, Merrill Claessen, Bob Parmenter & Tom Clayton.

## SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM BRUCE

Shortly after the return from convention **Bruce Okely** announced that he would be resigning from active membership of Men in Harmony and issued a "Prospectus" listing some ideas about forming a new barbershop chorus in Perth. Whilst there was some surprise (even shock!) from the singers, there was also a realisation that not everybody wanted to continue in barbershop singing at the same competitive level with its accompanying high work and commitment demands. It was clear that twenty or more members would join **Bruce** in the new venture.

But the chorus remained at full strength till the end of the year for several very important engagements. With **Bruce** directing, Men in Harmony participated in the annual sell-out **Seniors Telethon Concert** at the Perth Concert Hall in October and, on November 1, made a special presentation at the **Subiaco Primary School** (Principal, Rod Eagleton) to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding.

Then it was back to the **Perth Concert Hall** on December 12 for a grand **Red Cross fund raiser**. This show was a fitting finale to **Bruce's** long career with Men in Harmony as the men shared the stage with the **Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra** and the **Perth Children's Choir**. Whilst the chorus sang a bracket on its own, the highlights were two appearances with the orchestra. The first featured special arrangements of the *Blue Danube* & *Finlandia* and the second, a group of Australian carols which also included the children. The thunderous applause from the capacity audience said it all!



December 1997, Perth Concert Hall with  
Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra & Perth Children's Choir

## END OF AN ERA

There were mixed feelings at the annual windup a few days later. Held at **Dorchester Lodge**, festivities included the usual fun contributions from the sections and **Partners in Harmony**, and there was warm applause when seven men stepped forward for induction into the **Ten Year Club**. **Andy Aberle** and fellow founders pinned badges on **Arthur Boddy**, **Pat Knight**, **Peter van Noort**, **Rob Walley**, **Sam Jacobs**, **Ray Foster** and **David Martin**. His associates heartily endorsed **Les Goh's** selection as **Chorusman of the Year** for his lively and enthusiastic contribution to the musical life of the chorus.

There was a special moment when President **Mike Donnelly** presented **Bruce Okely** and **Andy Aberle** with their Life Membership badges. This gesture was correcting an oversight which had occurred when both veterans received their actual awards some years earlier, **Bruce** in 1990 and **Andy** in 1993. On those occasions, the well deserved honours had been bestowed with accompanying framed certificates but the lapel badges were overlooked in both cases. There was resounding acclamation for the action.

But more than a little sadness pervaded proceedings when it was time to formally farewell **Bruce and Alice** and to pay tribute to **Bruce's** vision and tremendous contribution to the founding, development and achievements of the Men in Harmony Barbershop Chorus over thirteen exciting and dynamic years. And there was much reminiscing and recounting of hundreds of "triumphs", great and small, stretching from Perth all over WA, the Eastern States and even in the UK.

The parting of the ways marked the end of an era but it was amicable, in good fellowship and with gracious good wishes as the men contemplated the future for the Men in Harmony and the new chorus, soon to be known as **WestCoast Chordsmen**.

1998

The new year began with the announcement that the AGM would be asked to endorse the appointment of **Ian Mulholland** and **Les Goh** as **Co-Musical Directors** of Men in Harmony and there was a feeling of excitement and anticipation as **Ian** shared his thoughts on some bold new ideas which involved Broadway type music and big "off the risers" productions.

## CO-MUSICAL DIRECTORS

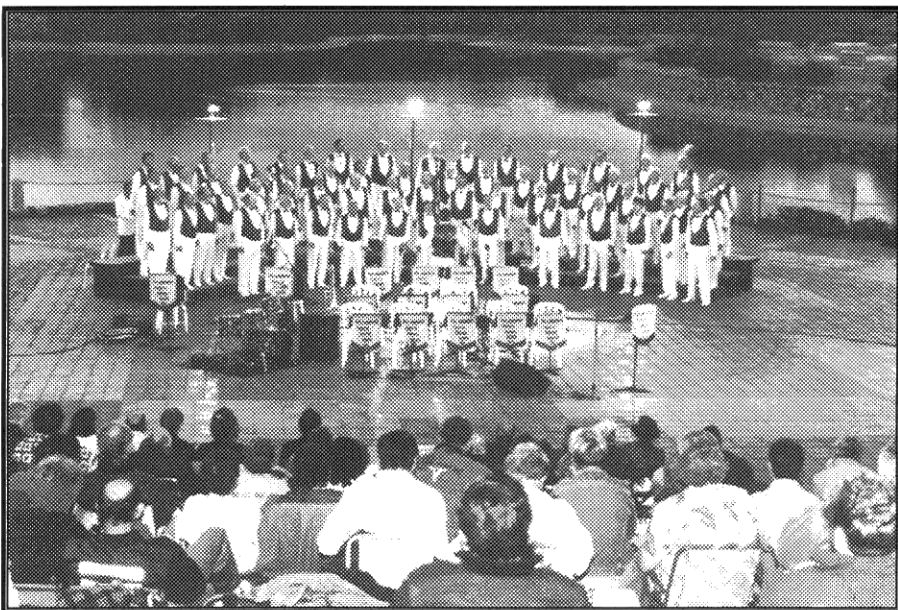
**Ian and Les'** first action was to make an individual assessment of every singer in the chorus to determine their strengths and weaknesses and to review voice placements. On the first Saturday after resumption of rehearsals, some practice rooms were hired at UWA Music Department and, with **Mike Donnelly**, **John Little** and **Allan Tuckwell** assisting, each member was invited to sing his favourite song. This private "hearing" was a new experience for most of the men but all appreciated the helpful comments offered and also the logic in the new leaders' objective in gaining a practical measure of the level of musical talent with which they would be working. One immediate result was a recommendation to a few singers that they may be more comfortable singing a different part.

At the AGM on February 17, all of the existing Management Committee members were re-elected and a new system was introduced with the nomination of five Vice Presidents with specific duties and responsibilities. It was felt that this would more clearly define the roles and identify people occupying that "port folio". **Renne Dewaard** was added to the strength and the two MD's were confirmed by the meeting.

Preparations began early for the first engagement of the year, a return visit to Ellenbrook on Sunday, March 8 for another fundraiser on behalf of the Royal Society for the Blind. Issuing of learning tapes for the new repertoire had begun on the first night back and **Ian** kept producing these at a steady rate – he and **Les** were keen to immerse the men in the wide selection of songs from Broadway musicals which they planned on presenting in the annual concert later in the year.

This keenness became apparent to the singers when the exciting *Nothing Like a Dame* from South Pacific, was listed for the Ellenbrook show. To help in readying for that first outing under the "new regime" an extra practice was held at Saint Nicholas Church Hall, Floreat, on Thursday, March 8.

**The Kalamunda Youth Swing Band**, two chorus quartets and top ladies quartet, **Audacious**, filled out the program and, with **Peter Holland** compering, the evening was a great success and well supported. Incidentally, the flexibility in costuming that the costume committee had developed was apparent in the very appropriate "outdoor" gear the men wore – blue striped shirt, blue sparkle tie, blue waistcoat and white trousers and shoes – very cool!! Nevertheless, the new committee decided that the basic costume range had been unchanged for some years and the costume committee began considering some new options.



March 1998 Ellenbrook

The **Visitors Night** on March 10 was very successful with thirteen visitors attending, most of whom returned for some weeks. A canvass of the attendees indicated that nearly all had responded to personal invites from existing members confirming that, whilst leaflets, posters and local paper stories were helpful, most new members were the result of the "bring a mate" system. It was resolved to hold another special drive later in the year.

## EXCITING NEW MUSIC

Also in March, AAMBS advised that arrangements had been finalised for a national tour in September, by the champion US quartet **Acoustix**. This news automatically fixed a date in the Men in Harmony calendar for an annual show on Saturday, September 26, and enquiries began immediately for a suitable venue, the 2300 seat Burswood Theatre being listed among the possibilities. This development also added some urgency to the new music program and the learning tapes kept coming at frequent regular intervals for *Where is Love*, *Ole Man River*, *My Fair Lady Medley*, *Can You Feel the Love Tonight* and the demanding *Les Miserables Medley*. The pressure was certainly on but the men revelled in the work and the exciting range of songs.

Early in the year **Cathy Rainey** had been engaged from time to time to assist the chorus with voice development coaching. This began on an "overview" basis, augmenting and reinforcing **Ian & Les'** work, but later evolved into the setting aside of the early part of the evening for her full time attention. The singers responded well to her demanding but encouraging style and there was a noticeable improvement in the overall corporate sound.

This was demonstrated on May 17, when Men in Harmony again provided a program at **Saint Edmunds Anglican Church, Wembley Downs**, in their **"Pleasant Sunday Afternoon"** concert series. The varied repertoire was very well received and was a pleasure to deliver in the excellent acoustic conditions. The chorus work was augmented by some quartet items. Later in the month Men in Harmony helped farewell **Perth Harmony Chorus** by singing at their send-off concert prior to heading East for the national championships.

## A SPOTLIGHT ON BROADWAY

Meantime, nothing had come of the Burswood enquiries and a booking for the show, **A Spotlight on Broadway**, was firm with the **Regal Theatre, Subiaco**, for September 26 – the first time at that venue for a Men in Harmony. But that wasn't to be the only new experience for the members – their introduction to the production side of the "Broadway" repertoire was a really exciting revelation. **Harry Docherty**, **Director of Perth's Johnny Young Talent School & Hot Shoe Performance Company** had been engaged as Stage Director for the show and he brought a wide experience in show production to the venture. It was a first for many of the singers to combine their vocal contribution with an "off the risers" presentation but everyone embraced the new experience with enthusiasm.



This was a substantial extra dimension in the preparation schedule (especially time-wise) and, whilst some progress was made on normal rehearsal nights, extra weekend rehearsals at the Johnny Young centre became essential to cope with the complex sequence of movements on stage, the quick changes in the wings and the associated placement of props etc.

Several members were involved in providing or making the props, including **Ernie Turpin** whose artistic skills were evident in quite a few of the pieces, especially backdrops. Some of **Harry's** gear was also used, and the **Gilbert & Sullivan Society** helped out with costumes for *My Fair Lady* and *Les Miserables* numbers.

There was an opportunity to try out some of the new songs in concert at the **WA Primary Schools Choral Festival** on Friday, August 28. Held at Winthrop Hall, the Men in Harmony guest appearance was one of several from adult choirs, included to demonstrate for the children, various singing styles. It was also a great opportunity to present barbershop singing to parents, especially fathers, and, of course, make a quiet "plug" for the show in a few weeks time.

Amidst that very busy time the men still managed to help **Partners in Harmony** in their commitment to sell raffle tickets in public places on behalf of the **Heart Foundation**. On this occasion the work was shared by **WestCoast Chordsmen** which lightened the burden but, the Men in Harmony representatives still made a substantial contribution. Of course there was a benefit for the chorus when, later on the Partners presented the chorus with a cheque for \$2000, some of which was derived from that joint endeavour. Incidentally, during the year, the chorus was successful in obtaining a grant of \$2000 from the City of Perth and one of \$3000 from the Lotteries Commission for the purchase of costumes and riser equipment.

These windfalls were timely and helped to cover the cost of the new costume package devised by the Costume Committee. After much deliberation and research all members received a smart royal blue jacket and a new casual summer rig consisting of fawn trousers and a short sleeved summer shirt. The shirt had an alternative logo embroidered on the pocket. This came about because it was apparently difficult to reproduce the detail in the established logo, using the embroidering system. To date that is the only occasion the new logo has been used.

## "ACOUSTIX" HEADLINERS!

**Tom Clayton's** show committee designed a colourful poster highlighting the star quartet, which supported the strong word-of-mouth promotion by all the men at every opportunity.

Red Tickets was engaged to handle the public sales but the majority of tickets were sold "in house" by chorus members. This function was very efficiently handled by **Bob Parmenter** and a small team of helpers and led to a sell-out of the 1050 seat theatre. The final full dress rehearsal held in the theatre on the Thursday was a long and tiring night but, with growing confidence and excitement building, everyone was ready for the big night and a new adventure in choral singing. All of this peaked with the arrival of **Acoustix** on the Friday. That evening the chorus joined **WestCoast Chordsmen** and **Perth Harmony Chorus** at Churchlands Senior High School for a general workshop with those four masters of the art, who, in sharing some of their skills, gave a very impressive and powerful display of barbershop singing at its best.

Men in Harmony opened and closed the show, the first appearance featuring the **Music of Broadway** – it was an outstanding success when all the hard work paid off and the audience loved it! Young people from the **Johnny Young & Hot Shoe** companies followed with some bright and breezy song & dance.

**Perth Harmony Chorus**, fresh from taking yet another gold medal in the ladies national competitions, closed the first half with their usual polished contribution. The second half opened with a brilliant performance from **Acoustix** and Men in Harmony returned to the risers for their final appearance – a really great show. There were many tributes to **Ian**, and **Les** both, from inside the chorus and from fans, for their enterprise and vision in taking Men in Harmony to a new level of excellence in the business of entertainment.



A Spotlight on Broadway  
"My Fair Lady"

Immediately after the big event, the chorus sponsored **Ian Mulholland's** attendance at a Harmony College in Sydney which was staffed by members of **Acoustix** and top local coaches. **Ian** found the course very stimulating and helpful.

However, a momentous year was marred when, following the show triumph, **Les Goh** resigned from the position of Co-Music Director and as a member of the chorus. In a detailed statement he outlined his dissatisfaction with a wide range of issues in the chorus life and operation. The Management Committee immediately appointed a special sub-committee (Task Force) of senior chorus members to pursue the matter with **Les**, in an effort to encourage him to review his decision. Sincere and conscientious efforts were to no avail and **Les** parted company with Men in Harmony. His considerable musical talent and experience was a sad loss to the chorus.

One of **Les'** concerns was a suggestion that communication between the Executive and the members was poor. The Management Committee re-acted promptly, offering a "Members Forum" to be held on the first Tuesday of every month at 6.30pm, before rehearsal. It was envisaged as a two-way communication time when club officers would report on proceedings at the last Committee Meeting and invite comment from the floor on any matter of concern. Taking up the opportunity, one group of new members, including **Michael Hyde**, presented a well prepared written submission on the shortcomings they had experienced in the recruitment and induction procedures currently in place. They were now contented members but offered their recommendations with a view to easing the passage of future recruits. The submission was accepted as very useful and positive input in planning for future recruiting programs.

There was something of a void in chorus musical activities after the intense pressure of the show but the men rallied again to take part in the **Annual Seniors Telethon Concert** at the Perth Concert Hall on October 7.

There was really plenty to do reviving the Christmas music and readying the chorus for a festive season contract singing carols in the city streets for the City of Perth, the first of what has since continued as a regular annual engagement. The exercise was so successful that the men were asked to add an extra session on Christmas Eve, if 7.30 in the morning can be called "Christmas Eve".

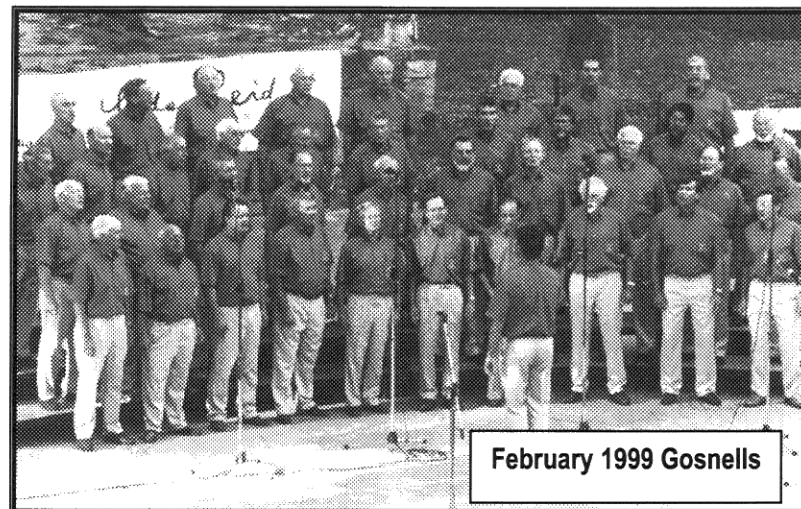
The end of year party was held at **Dorchester Lodge, Melville**, on Friday, December 11 and it was a happy occasion with the usual "fun & games" and lots of reliving the highlights of another dynamic year.

**Ernie Turpin** and **George Jackson** received **Ten Year Badges** and **Ted Ludemann** was awarded **Chorusman of the Year** for the courageous way he overcame the severe effects of a farming accident and returned to singing against all odds.

## 1999

At the AGM in early February senior members of the Executive were re-elected: **Mike Donnelly**, President; **John Hill**, Secretary; **Joe Vermeltfoort**, Treasurer, but **Vic Richards**, **Peter van Noort**, & **Pat Knight** stepped down and were replaced by **Trevor Sainsbury**, **Richard Diggins** & **Michael Hyde**. **Ian Mullholland** was appointed Music Director and **Kim Sebbage**, Assistant Music Director. **Michael Hyde** immediately took up editorship of the newsletter which had lapsed in the latter part of the previous year. It was issued as necessary, at two to four-week intervals and the second issue came out under the resurrected banner "Chorus Chatter".

In a reaction to the feedback from the forum discussions of a month or so earlier, a new set of procedures was compiled for the induction of new members with particular emphasis on the role of mentors or "buddies". This was in place for the visitors' night, held the week after the AGM and it was quite successful, with nine prospective new members present. Another initiative that flowed from the forums was a "commitment canvass" of all members seeking comments on a range of issues. This showed a very high level of dedication from individual singers, a desire for personal improvement and a readiness to work hard in their own time to achieve the corporate goals. As an aid in these endeavours it was proposed to prepare a chorus manual that would include some guide lines and standards expected from each member.



February 1999 Gosnells

The first outing for the year, on Sunday afternoon, February 14, was an outdoor concert for the Gosnells Town Council in a delightful bushland setting. The audience of well over 1000 people, including many young folk, obviously enjoyed the variety of music presented.

*The Les Miserables* medley was particularly popular and the several quartets and soloist received a great reception. A fee of \$600 resulted. A month later there was a return to Ellenbrook for the Blind Society charity performance.

On this occasion the men were joined by the **Gumnut Stompers Dixieland Band**, **Bad Habits** quartet performed along with the "in house" foursome, **Happy Daze**, and **John Hill** brought out his pipes for the event - as usual, a very successful evening.

To help the new recruits settle in and build general fellowship, a barbecue was held at the **Children's Playground, Kings Park** on Sunday, March 21. It was a great day with about eighty people present including members, families and friends. The "catering" was in the capable hands of veteran "barby" organiser, **Tom Clayton**, who assigned the cooking task to **John Minchin, John Little, Allan Tuckwell and Ted Ludemann**. With the ever reliable "Partners" supplying the salads, it was a wonderful lunch. There was plenty of singing of course, and a thoroughly good time was had by all.

Members were quickly aware that it was going to be another very busy year – apart from the fifth national convention in Brisbane in September there were plans afoot for several concerts "out of town". Music revision, riser tape auditing and section practices intensified along with some extra presentation revision at the **Johnny Young** studios.

It had been some time since Men in Harmony had taken the "show on the road" and the Management Committee considered that the "new" style of show production was an ideal vehicle to again try this type of venture. It was decided to stage a show in Fremantle on Friday, April 30, and Mandurah the following week, on Saturday, May 8. **Andy Aberle** was appointed **Show Producer** and, under the title, **Harmony 'n' Swing**, he assembled a company built around the Men in Harmony chorus as the feature act. The chorus was supported by the two top local quartets, **Bad Habits and Mischief Down Under**, and the "swing" ingredient was supplied by the **Kalamunda Youth Swing Band**.

The same show was staged at both locations – the **Fremantle Town Hall** and the **Mandurah Performing Arts Centre**. Identical advertising material was appropriate but, for the most part, because of the geographic separation, two separate promotional plans were necessary and this added greatly to the work. Fremantle Town Hall was old and cramped but proved quite adequate and a reasonable audience provided a profit of a little over \$2000. The Mandurah theatre is very modern, great to work in but costly, and, in spite of extraordinary advertising efforts the audience was disappointing, resulting in a loss, which reduced the overall surplus to about \$800. However, there were some positive results from the enterprise, mainly the universal feedback about the Men in Harmony chorus and its "new" brand of music which was very well received by both audiences. This gave everyone heart and encouraged the Management Committee to persevere with plans to take the show to Albany in July, but there was plenty to do "at home" before then.

The **Western Region Convention** was held on the afternoon of Sunday, May 30, and the chorus appeared, along with the **WestCoast Chordsmen** and **Bad Habits** in support of the region quartet competitions. It was a pleasant outing which provided an opportunity for members to catch up with WestCoast friends from the "old days" and share the risers with them in the mass sing. Three chorus quartets qualified for the national contests – **Encore & Happy Daze in the Open Contest** and **One More Time** in both the **Open & Seniors**.

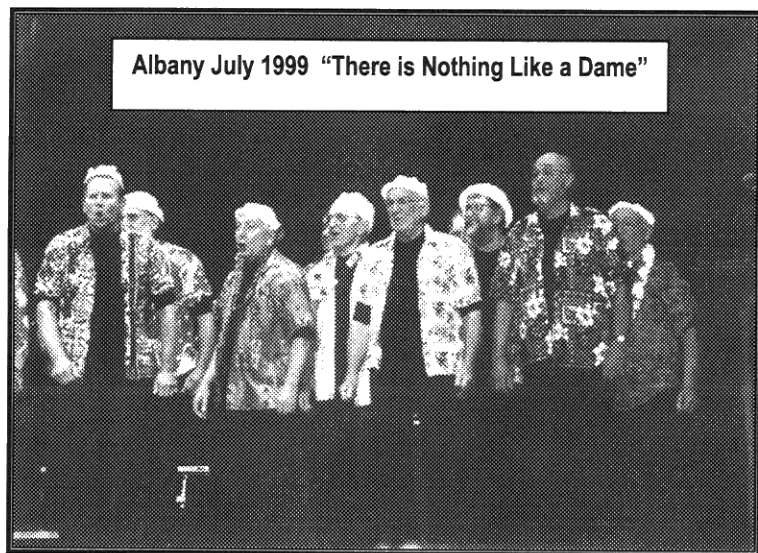
A special workshop, organised by the **Western Region Board**, was held on the weekend of June 18/20. Visiting coach, **Bernie Cureton**, flew in from Melbourne, where he was directing the Melbournaires chorus, and he and **Ian Mulholland** conducted the instruction. The Men in Harmony had a session on the Friday night with **Ian** and again on the Saturday morning with **Bernie**, then **WestCoast Chordsmen** joined in for a general session in the afternoon. There was an intensive session for quartets on the Sunday morning in which Men in Harmony foursomes participated. The exercise was a timely reminder that the National convention was only three months away and it was time to increase the pressure.

The chorus funded **Ian Mulholland's** attendance at the annual **Harmony College** in the United States during the first week in July and **Ian** returned with new ideas and a determination that the Men in Harmony would reach new heights in the forthcoming national competitions.

For some months **Andy Aberle** had been enquiring about the feasibility of taking a show to Albany but there had been some problems with the financial viability of such an endeavour.

This was not uncommon, with considerable "out-of-town" experience over the years, there had always a problem with ventures involving overnight stays and the added cost of accommodation. One difficulty in this case was the seating capacity of the **Albany Town Hall Theatre**, the only suitable venue, which, although a delightful place to work in, had only 310 seats. Even with two shows, revenue earning capacity was borderline, at prices the "market would bear". However, an application to the **Country Arts Department** bore fruit and a grant of \$1000 was received. This was based on the benefit, this type of musical experience would bring to a country centre. Although the exercise would still require a considerable personal financial input from chorus members, the men agreed to proceed with the plan. The project was developed in collaboration with the **Albany City Chorus**, a group of lady barbershoppers, and this connection greatly facilitated the promotion of the show.

So, a party of fifty singers and partners set off in private cars on Friday afternoon, July 23, with accommodation reserved for most of the company in self contained chalets at **Havana Villas, Emu Point, Albany**. At a cost of \$13.00 per head/per night, it was a very economical out-of-season deal. Action commenced on Saturday morning with rehearsals in readiness for the afternoon matinee. In addition to Men in Harmony the program included men's quartets, **Bad Habits & Encore** along with **Audacious** ladies quartet from Perth, plus **Affinity** ladies quartet and, of course, the ladies chorus from Albany.



The "men" opened the show on the risers and closed with the colourful Broadway bracket which brought the house down. The matinee was a reasonable house but the evening performance was sold out and it was evident that everyone enjoyed themselves - this was clearly demonstrated at the afterglow, held at the theatre.

Activities wound up on the Sunday morning with a workshop for the Albany people, including a group of interested men. This was promising, indicating the possibility of forming an ensemble but, unfortunately, it did not develop. As anticipated, the visitors from Perth bore their own travel and accommodation costs but all agreed it was a great weekend and there was no doubt that the principal objective of the exercise, to promote barbershop singing in the Albany area, was well and truly achieved.

The Albany show was a great opportunity to perform the two contest songs in concert and, with the visit down south behind them, members were reminded that there were now only a few weeks till the convention, and time to fine tune every aspect of the package. This, of course, became the main focus and there were extra rehearsals scheduled on the last four Sundays before the big event. But there were still two opportunities for the men to "strut their stuff" before departure. On Friday, August 20, Men in Harmony once again joined several other adult choirs in performing at the **Annual Primary Schools Choral Concert** and then, the traditional **Family & Friends** convention send-off on Friday September 3.

With one or two exceptions, the entire Men in Harmony travelling party of about 85, including a chorus of 49, were accommodated in the **Sapphire Motel**, not far from the convention headquarters which was based in the various facilities at **Southbank Parklands Brisbane**. The few days before competition are always very busy but on this occasion even more so for the chorus, because a new feature had been added.

On **Ian Mulholland's** initiative, a **Past Champions Concert** was added on the Friday night as an opportunity for current barbershoppers to see and hear some of the earlier national award winning quartets and choruses and, as inaugural gold medallists, the Men in Harmony were included in the lineup.

The chorus sang a selection of non-barbershop material from the Broadway repertoire, finishing with **John Little's** solo *Bring Him Home* from *Les Miserables*. Needless to say the presentation was a great success and showed the Eastern Staters a new side to the Men in Harmony.



Unfortunately, although the chorus achieved its highest contest score to date, the Gold Coast and Brisbane men did better and Men in Harmony were placed third. But there was little despondency in the ranks and all were proud to make an appearance in the showcase concert and come away with a bronze medal.

A final highlight for the men was their rendition of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* during the very moving church service held in the historic **Albert Street Uniting Church** on the Sunday morning. Some stayed on for the Harmony College which was the usual stimulating high standard.

As members gradually tricked back home following the convention it was a quiet time for engagements but, a fixture that had been in place for some time was an outside singout for the *Proms on the Terrace* season on Sunday afternoon, October 24. This was staged on the steps of the **Central Park** building and involved two appearances, alternating with a group of children dancing. There was a bitterly cold wind blowing in the singers' faces which was not conducive to a good presentation. The finale featured both groups together and some of the men were so concerned for the children, who were lightly clad, that they removed their blue jackets and wrapped them round the youngsters. It was probably not one of Men Harmony's most successful engagements!

Another **Visitors Night** was held on the first Tuesday in November and this attracted four prospective singers. The newcomers encountered some familiar tunes as the chorus began work on the Christmas music, in readiness for the festive season contract for the City of Perth. This began with a big concert in Forrest Place on Sunday, November 28 and continued on three succeeding Sundays with the men singing in the streets in several locations. It was a very successful exercise with the standing of Men in Harmony considerably enhanced with the general public.

In August, **Renne Dewaard** had, with Management Committee approval, undertaken to compile a folder of the profiles of all chorus members. In a memo he asked everyone to submit their own personal story set out under a list of headings he supplied. It was fairly broadly based and aimed at exchanging information about one another that was probably not well known. It could also serve as a vital tool in extending good fellowship and broadening common interests. The initial response was slow but, as members gradually responded, a compendium was developed with facility for expansion.

There was great sadness when members gathered, with **Southside Harmony** people, to farewell in song, popular member and great club man, **Denis Connor**, who passed away on December 1.

At the annual end-of-year gathering on Friday, December 10, no additional member had completed a decade of service but, the choice was heartily endorsed when **Roy Schofield** received the *Chorusman of the Year* award for his great work as Chorus Manager and for his considerable contributions on the Music Committee.

## 2000

The year began with no slackening in the pace and scope of activities for the Men in Harmony chorus with plans developing for a big annual show involving more exciting new music, increased efforts to find a better rehearsal venue and the production of an up-to-date CD recording.

Early in January the **Perth Harmony Chorus** advised the Management Committee that they were to host the **1990 Sweet Adelines Australian convention** at the Burswood complex in June and received an assurance that members of Men in Harmony, as usual, would be very happy to assist in marshalling and other contest activities.

Another piece of news at that time was the registration with AAMBS of Southside Harmony as a new chorus, with **Allan Tuckwell** as Music Director. Most of its members were from Men in Harmony and **Westcoast Chordsmen** but it was also beginning to attract new people in its own right. For some time **Westcoast** had gradually taken over the role formerly filled by **Harmony Handful**, principally catering for daytime singouts for nursing homes, retirement villages, Senior citizens Clubs, etc. And so, after a decade of popular community service, as a sub-group of Men in Harmony, **Harmony Handful** quietly disappeared as an entity, leaving behind happy memories for its members who had helped share the joy of four part, close harmony in the quieter corners of the suburbs.

At the AGM on February 1, **Mike Donnelly** stepped down as President and Secretary **John Hill** took the reins. **Gavin Allen** was elected Secretary. That meeting also approved the Management Committee's recommendation to increase the annual membership fee from \$240 to \$300 (\$75 per quarter) but there were some expressions of concern at rising costs of barbershop singing and the motion did not receive unanimous support.

The annual recruiting drive was successful and, under the overall supervision of the Music Team good quality recruits were joining the chorus. **Roy Schofield** resigned as Music Team Leader and the spot was filled by **Paul Chancellor**.

The Music Committee remained strong and active in all aspects of the musical agenda, in choosing music, setting standards, section rehearsals, auditioning new people and the auditing of riser tapes.

The recruiting program was going so well that a second drive was conducted in May but that proved to be a very busy time and it was later decided that one successful campaign per year was the best strategy.

## ANOTHER VENUE NO BETTER

Following an invitation from **Perth Harmony**, the Management Committee decided to trial the ladies' new-found rehearsal venue, the **Macedonian Club in Karrinyup**, and three nights were set aside in March. The hall was considerably smaller than the Red Cross facility but it did not have the resonance problem, and it boasted a bar and storage space for risers and other gear. In their reports on the experiment, both MD's commented favourably on the acoustics which, although "flat", required the singers to work harder and pay more attention to accuracy. However, as proposed at the outset, the matter was referred to the whole membership for a democratic decision but there was little support for adopting the place as a new permanent home and rehearsals reverted to the **Red Cross Hall**.



2000 Red Cross Hall

## TEMPORARY IMPROVEMENTS AT RED CROSS HALL

In an effort to improve acoustics at Hollywood, discussions were held with an acoustic engineer, **John Mc Pherson**, who recommended carpeting the floor. The idea was progressed with the hospital administration and the **Red Cross** and the chorus was authorised to try experimenting with carpeting the southern end of the hall floor. A large quantity of second hand carpet was acquired and temporarily stored at **Renne Dewaard's** business premises. Under Paul Chancellor's supervision the cumbersome and weighty material was carted to the hall and laid by a working bee over a weekend. It was very hard work but, with the risers reversed (facing south) and the men singing over the carpet, it was agreed that there was a definite dampening effect on the resonance.

However, the Management Committee resolved to continue efforts to find a more satisfactory venue and all members were encouraged to help in the search.

On this matter of a permanent "home" the Management Committee had been working quietly behind the scenes on a quite dramatic and radical idea which involved the possibility of creating a dedicated choir rehearsal facility in Perth that would serve, not only the barbershop community, but a wide range of choral groups.

A committee of interested bodies was formed including **Men in Harmony, Perth Harmony Chorus, WestCoast Chordsmen, Collegium Symphonic Chorus and the Perth Oratorio Choir**. The group worked hard at trying to solicit support from government agencies or municipal councils in endeavours to locate a suitable venue but it was proving difficult to attract any firm support from the various authorities.

## "NEW" MUSIC A HIT!

**Ian Mulholland's** program of new and "different" music continued to be enthusiastically embraced by the members. It was a radical departure from the traditional barbershop fair and, whilst the regular repertoire was not neglected, it had made way for some great songs from Beatles favourites as well as the Broadway musicals. To help with the heavy learning program sectional practices featured prominently in the music program and the men were encouraged, and in some cases, required, to submit riser tapes to measure their progress. It was also decided to hold a live-in workshop in August to build chorus fellowship, and generally improve singing technique and standards in preparation for the annual show in October.

As a further investment in expanding the store of training skills in the chorus, the Management Committee approved the funding for the attendance of **Assistant Musical Director, Kim Sebbage**, at the 2000 annual Director's College in the United States in July, at a cost of \$3,200. Kim expressed his appreciation to the chorus for the great opportunity extended to him.

In June the **Perth Harmony Chorus** hosted the sixth **Sweet Adelines Australian National Convention** and, as usual, members of Men in Harmony enthusiastically assisted the ladies in a range of support duties associated with the conduct of the competitions, including marshalling on doors, the movement of contestants and transport and handling of risers. The men also joined in some of the social activities helping to extend hospitality to visiting partners of the ladies.

## DIRECT & TO THE POINT

Also, at the end of June, **Kim Sebbage** introduced a novel idea in the form of a weekly newsheet, *Direct & to the Point*, to supplement the *Chorus Chatter* which was now not appearing frequently enough to keep the members fully informed of vital weekly news. Written in a bright and breezy style, the one-sheet publication became a very important and effective vehicle and an essential part of efficient day-to-day communication in chorus activities.

The following month members had an opportunity to relax at a **Christmas in July** evening held at the Royal Perth Yacht Club. **George Jackson** organised the event which was well supported and a successful occasion where singers and partners socialised and enjoyed great fellowship. It was a very welcome break from the fairly heavy program of solid preparation for the forthcoming annual show.

## A WORKSHOP WITH JIM CATT

The workshop weekend of August 18/20, held at the Noalimba facility, was very well supported by most of the chorus, which at that time numbered 63. **Jim Catt**, MD of the **Gold Coast Chorus**, flew in to direct the coaching program which began on the Friday evening and continued at a demanding pace until noon on Sunday. Members responded enthusiastically to **Jim's** teaching style which was concentrated on voice production and better singing. He was ably supported by **Ian and Kim**. A high proportion of attendees slept over on both nights and the camaraderie was great with people singing "at the drop of a Bb", especially at meals. On the Saturday night, an impromptu concert with items from "the floor" produced a lot of fun.

Activities concluded with **Jim's** special session for quartets on the Sunday morning and all agreed the whole weekend was a very successful project.

**Partners in Harmony** continued as a very active and supportive auxiliary group with fundraising an ongoing activity. Clearly one of their most successful ventures was the selling of raffle tickets on behalf of the **Heart Foundation** which produced a very handy commission. From August to November the ladies were assigned outlets all over the metro area and, with **Vi Durston** in overall charge and **David Martin** representing the men, mixed teams of men and women manned selling tables in a very efficient group effort. This reflected in generous donations from the ladies to MIH travel and costume funds.

The chorus fitted in a performance at the **Cottesloe Civic Centre** on the first Sunday afternoon in September which featured smaller ensembles, soloists and quartets. Unfortunately there was apparently a breakdown in planning by the **Cottesloe Council** resulting in only one or two officials turning up which left the men to give an exclusive presentation to a small group of wives and other loyal family supporters.

## ANNUAL SHOW SUCCESS

Men in Harmony's big show, **Rise & Shine**, held on Friday & Saturday, October 13 & 14, was an outstanding success. Staged once again at **Methodist Ladies College**, Claremont, it included a matinee on the Saturday and the three performances attracted a total of 1560 people which realised a net profit of over \$11,000. But it was also a success on many fronts as **Producer, Andy Aberle**, observed in his post-show report to the Management Committee. The show program included a dixieland combo, a tap dance team and the **Perth Harmony Chorus**, and featured the current **Australian National Champion men's quartet, Southern Cross**, specially flown in from Brisbane. The great variety was very well received by the audiences but the crowning achievement for the Men in Harmony was their exciting new, off-the-riser presentations of "Broadway" music that attracted genuine and enthusiastic plaudits from everyone who saw the show.

The chorus appeared three times starting with a bracket on the risers to open the show finishing with the very fast-paced and demanding, **Beatles Medley** which included a spot from **Ian Mulholland** on guitar and chorus backup, singing *Yesterday*. The second set was made up of three cameos – *There's No Business Like Show Business*, *Can You Feel the Love Tonight* and the grand *Phantom of the Opera* medley. But it was the final appearance and the *Les Miserables* medley that brought the house down.

The staging, lighting and choreography, with the whole chorus on the move was very exciting and **John Little's** solo *Bring Him Home* brought standing ovations. It had all been a huge amount of work by the members and a tribute to **Ian's** talent, flair and initiative in experimenting with a new and exciting way of sharing the chorus music with the public. He was ably assisted by **Kim** and **Harry Docherty** who helped considerably with devising the choreography and training the men.

As **Andy** observed, there is no doubt the show raised Men in Harmony to a new level of professionalism in the eyes of their Perth fans. And others were impressed too – as the letter of appreciation from **Southern Cross** stated, 'It was a pleasure to share the stage with you, your performances were a credit to you all. Of all the choruses around Australia you truly have the most varied and exciting show packages. We were thrilled and humbled to be a part of such a successful occasion'.

After the pressure and demands of the big show the members might have expected a "lay-off" before Christmas but that wasn't to be. On November 3 the chorus appeared at the **Perth Entertainment Centre** in a substantial fundraiser concert for **Telethon**. This was a new experience on the large open stage in the huge auditorium but the chorus was well prepared and received a great reception from the big crowd.

## RECORDING A NEW CD

With the chorus at peak performance level it was the right time to proceed with plans for recording music for Men in Harmony's second CD. The Music Team had investigated various professional recording studios but found the costs daunting. It was finally decided to engage **Pro-Copy** to make the recording in the **Subiaco Arts Centre** auditorium, the scene of Men in Harmony's first public performance, over fifteen years earlier. The work was done on a normal rehearsal night, Tuesday, November 21, and "work" is the appropriate word. As those who had participated in the first recording were aware, recording is a most demanding and exacting exercise but everyone rose to the occasion, quickly learning the high level of discipline necessary. It was a long, exhausting night but the MD's and sound engineers were finally satisfied with ten or so tracks that were "put down", mainly from the show repertoire. The plan was, to resume the work early next year and record a batch of Christmas songs to complete the CD. The month ended on a sad note with the passing of popular former member, **Lloyd Sparks**, who had moved to **WestCoast Chordsmen**. Many of his associates from all three choruses attended the funeral to farewell their friend with a musical tribute.

With a very busy year coming to an end, the Management Committee advised that it had indicated to **AAMBS National Council** an interest in bidding to hold the 2003 national convention in Perth. Whilst awaiting a response, and with this and other activities in mind it was decided timely to make a comprehensive assessment of Men in Harmony's current situation and what goals it should be aiming for in the future. **Michael Hyde** undertook to produce a five-year developmental plan for the chorus.

## A HAPPY END OF YEAR

However, there was a lighter note on Sunday, December 10, when everyone "let their hair down" at *2001 Convention Bouncedown*, held in the **Red Cross Hall**. This event flowed from **Michael's** initial draft of his thoughts for the future of Men in Harmony which had been made known to members. Proceedings started with an open discussion of some of the ideas canvassed in the document and the gathering of feedback from the whole membership. The fact that 47 singers attended was heartening for the Executive and the healthy discussions that ensued demonstrated a lively interest in where the chorus was going and gave valuable insights into what the rank & file membership was looking for.

Those deliberations completed, cleared the way for some lighthearted "enthusiasm building" for Men in Harmony's expedition to Melbourne next year for the Sixth National convention. This took the form of a range of entertaining items from individual members, ensembles and quartets which was presided over by the "umpire", **John Hill**, appropriately attired in umpire's whites and whistle in hand. The hall was decorated and a fine supper was served and everyone had a great time. Thanks were recorded to the organising committee comprising; **John Hill, Andrew Champness, Pat Knight, Ted Ludemann, Brian Hanks, Ian Mulholland, Mike Donnelly, Michael Hyde** and **Neal Fearis**. There were even some "Gold Medals" awarded – a very happy night.

The Christmas season of singing in Perth city streets was a very busy schedule. The chorus sang two 2-hour sessions daily from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> inclusive, with an extra appearance on the Wednesday evening. It was an exhausting contract but Men in Harmony were well received and enhanced their reputation for professional work, with the general public.



Members still found time to enjoy the annual "windup" held at the Heritage on Charles on Friday December 15. **Derek James**, who had taken over as editor of Chorus Chatter produced a festive edition in a new format especially for the occasion. During the proceedings, **John Little** and **Len Barnett** were honoured with Life Membership of Men in Harmony for their long years of service.

**Howard Hughes** was inducted into the "10 Year Club" and **Michael Hyde** received the **Chorusman of the Year** award from **Peter van Noort**. There was the usual fun with skits and parodies from the part sections but the ladies of Partners in Harmony earned the greatest cheer with their rendition, *If I Wasn't a Barbershopper!*

In its final meeting for the year the Management Committee, in reviewing the events of the past twelve months, observed that chorus discipline had slipped lately, with rehearsals starting up to fifteen minutes late and riser behaviour becoming sloppy. It was resolved that a tightening up would be necessary in the new year if the chorus was to give a good account of itself at the Melbourne Convention, for which, possible contest songs were already being considered.

## 2001

The new year got under way with plenty happening for the members. Some engagements were already lined up and, on the first night back, the contest songs were announced and music and learning tapes issued. They were; *Where the Southern Roses Grow* and *Royal Garden Blues*. The Management Committee also decided to review costumes for the big occasion. Reinforcing the fact that it was convention year, registration forms and accommodation information was to hand from the Melbourne committee.

At the AGM on February 6, **John Hill** was re-elected President and **Gavin Allan** remained as Secretary. **Joe Vermeltoort** retired as Treasurer and was replaced by **Warren Beckwith** and the VP's were **Andrew Champness**, **John Bell**, **John Little**, **Trevor Sainsbury**, **David Winch** and **Renne Dewaard**.

## A STRONG MUSIC COMMITTEE

The Music Committee, wasted no time in setting future plans and spelling out the requirements for singers' participation in engagements or recording, with an emphasis on the satisfactory submission of riser tapes.

Section rehearsals were promulgated with **Len Barnett** (as usual) leading the way with firm plans for the bass section based on a three-weekly Sunday afternoon gathering at his home. **Barry Watson** joined the music committee in place of **John Minchin** as tenor section leader. It was decided to devote more time and effort to the development of quartets from chorus ranks, this being seen as a vital means of encouraging individual skills, and **Gavin Allan** was appointed to co-ordinate the overall project. The annual visitors' night on February 27 attracted a good response with some promising voices among them.

There was a delightful occasion on March 10 when the chorus turned out to sing at the wedding of **Trevor Sainsbury's daughter** held at the zoo. The men sang ten songs during the afternoon proceedings and were very popular with the guests. **Trevor** and his family were most appreciative. This was followed the next day by participation in a twilight outdoor concert for the Gosnells council in the garden amphitheatre and a week later, the chorus provided the whole program at an afternoon concert in the chapel at **John Septimus Roe School, Mirrabooka** – a busy musical time!

## AT LAST – A NEW VENUE

However, the highlight in March was the move to a new rehearsal venue! The need for the Men in Harmony to find a new location had suddenly taken on an urgency when the hospital management indicated to the Red Cross that, as part of the refurbishment of the whole property, the hall was destined to be demolished. Of all the possibilities considered in the search by the combined choir committee, the disused **Dalkeith Cinema** was most favoured, especially by **Perth Harmony Chorus**, because of it's relatively "dead" acoustics – quite the opposite of the Red Cross Hall.

Finally, MiH and PHC decided to jointly lease the venue on a twelve month trial basis with an option to extend. It was a much costlier alternative than previous arrangements for both choruses, and it did not have the extra spaces that the men were used to, but the committee believed that the unsympathetic acoustics would force the chorus to work harder with consequent benefits in the end-sound produced. There was also a major advantage for the men in having access to the ladies Wenger risers which were to be left assembled continuously. There were a few weeks of "shaking down" but a regular routine quickly developed between the two groups and so, after nine happy and eventful years at the Red Cross Hall, which had served the chorus well, the Men in Harmony settled in to their sixth "home".

## THE CHALLENGES KEEP COMING

Ian Mulholland continued to challenge the chorus with new ideas for songs and coaching in better singing technique, always encouraging the men to aim for their best as the only basis on which Men in Harmony would progress. This also extended to expecting that the chorus would be at full strength for the engagements it undertook – those that did not attend were letting down the team and selling the audience short.

With the shift to the new quarters complete, he surprised the members at rehearsal near the end of March, by introducing his friend, **Andrew Foote**, well known professional singer and teacher, who was an instant hit with his "pupils". As **Andrew** observed, most of what he had to say was not new to the men but his powerful presence, wonderful voice and practical "down-to-earth" teaching style, was very well received. He generously shared his skills and talents from time to time as part of Ian's overall coaching program in preparation for the convention. This plan later included input from **Cathy Rainey**, **Carole Macintyre** and **Harry Docherty**.

## A LITTLE TIME OFF!

The Easter break in April brought an opportunity to relax at a picnic held at Burswood Park on the Sunday. Co-ordinated very well by **Andrew & Linda Champness**, it was a BYO everything and there was lots of fun and games like mini-golf, quoits, cricket, quizzes and even a song or three! Most members and families who hadn't left town for the holiday break were there and a good time was had by all. There is no doubt that such informal occasions were great for building morale and a welcome break from the fairly steady pressure a convention year brings.

That opportunity was timely because the remainder of the month was taken up with preparations for more engagements later in April, May and June. For some time there had been discussions with the **Glory Soccer Club** and the chorus had learnt their club song *Glory, Glory Perth Glory*, based on the *Battle Hymn*. On Anzac Day, April 25, Men in Harmony attended the club's home ground and sang a bracket of songs at a luncheon for enthusiastic Glory supporters. A little later the chorus entered the soccer field via the players' tunnel and formed up on an open stage in front of the main stand where they sang the club song. Not surprisingly, it attracted tumultuous applause from the very biased crowd.

## FREMANTLE EISTEDDFOD

Ian continued to break new ground for Men in Harmony when he announced that the chorus had been entered in the choir section of the **Fremantle Eisteddfod** on Saturday, May 19. On the night there was no warmup facility at the **Fremantle Town Hall** so the chorus found itself making ready in an arcade nearby, an impromptu performance which attracted quite a few passersby. The competition was a new experience for the men and, apparently, also was barbershop singing for the judges and officials who were very complimentary and glowing in their comments when awarding first prize to MIH.

The judge's comments are worth recording – "The sense of joy in this choir is very touching – feeling, ensemble, diction, tuning largely have a special rightness and integrity. One goggles at the hours of effort to produce this highly skilful and robustly musical unit. Good on you Gentlemen!". The chorus sang in the showcase concert the following weekend.

More appearances followed, with participation in a fund raiser **Anglicare Celebration Concert** on the 30<sup>th</sup> at **Perth College** auditorium. The songs were from the chorus inspirational repertoire – *The Lord's Prayer*, *You'll Never Walk Alone*, *It is Well With My Soul* and the ever popular *Battle Hymn*. The ongoing concert work readied the chorus for its participation in the **Western Region Convention** on Saturday, June 16, at Churchlands Senior High School auditorium which provided an opportunity to present the contest songs in concert. It was not a competition for choruses but the MD's appreciated some helpful informal comments from the judges. However, several quartets from Men in Harmony ranks did compete with some very creditable results. In the Open contest, **On Q** took first place followed by **Happy Daze**, second and **Blue Chip Stock**, fourth. **Chordiality** were crowned Seniors champion followed by **Twilight Shadows**, second.

## MORE TOP COACHING

Contributing to Men in Harmony's steady all round improvement was the coaching received throughout June and July from **Cathy**, **Carole** and **Andrew**. This input was enhanced by a visit to rehearsal on July 10 by top ladies coach, **Rose McGee** from Queensland. And, added to all of this attention from some of the finest teachers in Australia, was some coaching "cream on the cake" when dynamic American coach, **Eddie Martinez**, arrived late in July, as AAMBS specialist roving educator for 2001.

**Eddie** was in Perth for a week and worked with all choruses and quartets. He held an intensive workshop for quartets on Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> and took the MiH rehearsal on the following Tuesday. The Australian movement had benefited from the skills of some great American teachers over the years but all agreed that **Eddie** brought a new level of talent and friendly enthusiasm to the task, which the singers found very infectious.

All of the outside help was continuously reinforcing the ongoing 'in house' efforts, which included very strong and efficient communication via the weekly **Direct & To The Point** and the monthly **Chorus Chatter**, both of which were now being edited by **Derek James**. Frequent articles on the right attitude and focus left no doubt that the convention was fast approaching. Everyone was also urged to make full use of the individual 'letter boxes' as an effective means of distributing vital information

In July, members joined other barbershoppers in a musical tribute at a memorial service for **Alex Pritchard**, one of the founders of the chorus, who had left the active ranks in 1991. Alex was remembered for his contribution in designing and making the two trolleys used for moving the Men in Harmony risers. Co-incidentally, shortly before his passing, members of **Southside Harmony** had sung specially for him at his bedside in the nursing home where he resided, during the annual visit by that chorus.

## CD FINISHED

The Music Committee had been anxious to complete Men in Harmony's second CD recording but this was proving difficult due to the continuously busy music program. The original plan included having the disks ready for sale at the convention so, with this in mind, the task was finally completed on rehearsal night, August 7. The new material, together with the tracks put down the previous year, was hurried to the producers and MiH's second CD, *Singing Up A Storm* was ready shortly after. The content reflected the chorus' wide range of songs and included most of the latest repertoire plus one or two quartet items to add variety. Following the success of the Fremantle exercise the chorus entered the **Joondalup Eisteddfod** contest and, on August 10, once again took first place in the choir division, appearing in the winners' concert a month later.

August continued to bring important developments for the chorus, among them a gracious acceptance by the Premier, **Dr Geoff Gallop**, of the position of Patron of Men in Harmony.

But the most significant was formal confirmation from AAMBS National Council (after much hard work and negotiation by the Management Committee) that the chorus bid had been successful and the Men in Harmony Barbershop Chorus was appointed to conduct the **7<sup>th</sup> National Convention in Perth** in October, 2003. Many members (especially those who had been involved in the 1993 project) were aware of the ramifications of this development but, apart from securing a tentative reservation at **Burswood Convention Centre**, the matter was placed "on hold" until after the current convention, which demanded a single-minded focus of all the chorus energies.

The final prelude to the convention was the participation by the chorus in the **Perth Harmony Chorus** annual show held at the **North City Centre in Padbury** on Saturday, September 8.

Of course, the men sang the contest package as part of their presentation to very warm and receptive audiences at both the afternoon and evening shows. The singers also felt good about themselves and that "farewell" outing added to their growing confidence for the friendly musical tussle ahead. Extra rehearsals on Sunday afternoons were added to the final preparations.

## MELBOURNE HERE WE COME

The Melbourne Convention was AAMBS seventh biennial gathering but it had also taken on a very significant additional status under the banner of, the **Third Pan-Pacific Convention**. This involved the inclusion of quartets and choruses from all round the Pacific rim including New Zealand, Hawaii, mainland USA and even Tokyo. This increased the anticipations and excitement of the participants from the West because all these groups were to be part of the biggest competition lineup since the movement began in Australia. The event provided quite a challenge for **Andy Aberle**, who had been appointed **Joint National Contest Administrator** earlier in the year.

While on a visit to Melbourne in that capacity, **Andy** had found time to research the accommodation situation and, on his recommendation, the Management Committee accepted an offer for the majority of the chorus and partners, to stay at the **Albany Motel, South Yarra**. It was a fairly basic venue but it was comfortable, clean, served reasonable meals, and, importantly, very economically priced. It was only a seven minute tram ride from the Convention headquarters at the **Melbourne Arts Centre, South Melbourne**. The MiH Management Committee also decided to subsidise each singer's costs by \$600.

Most of the 63 man squad and partners flew to Melbourne on September 11 to be settled in for the convention, running from Thursday, 13 to Sunday 16, inclusive. As we all know, the world was shocked by the events that unfolded in New York at that time (9/11) and the Aussie barbershoppers, gathering in Melbourne, held grave concerns for the US contingents and their welfare. There was relief to find that the champion quartet and judges had arrived safely, as did the group from Hawaii, but a chorus from California had been grounded. Men in Harmony joined with all the Australians and other visitors in offering support and fellowship to the Americans present - it was the true spirit of barbershop harmony in caring action and the visitors, some of whom were greeted with the news when they landed, appreciated very much the genuine kindness and care that surrounded them.

Thankfully, there were apparently no close connections to the casualties, among the Americans present, nevertheless they obviously felt very much for their countrymen at home.

In true "showbiz" style, everyone quickly settled in to the convention schedule and, in spite of its size, the gathering ran very smoothly. **The Melbourne Concert Hall** proved a magnificent venue for barbershop singing, no sound shells were needed on the stage and only minimum microphones. Twenty two choruses and forty seven quartets took part in the overall competitions which included (within the competition structure) an **Open Contest**, a **New Zealand annual contest** and an **Australian biennial contest**.

Men in Harmony rehearsed in a tiny hall within walking distance of the motel. It was a little cramped but adequate for the purpose and **Cathy Rainey** added her expertise to the last minute fine-tuning.

Unfortunately, in spite of all the hard work, the chorus came fifth in the Australian competition but, the gathering was marked by a spectacular increase in the level of competition at the top where the **Banana Blenders**, the newly formed **Sydney-Harmony** and **Brisbane Clippers** were placed in that order with only three marks separating them! The "Brisbanites" evened the scales when **Southern Cross** once again took the gold medal in the quartet contest with the promising new Sydney quartet, **Freefall**, second. WA quartet, **On Q**, which included **Mike Donnelly**, came a creditable fourth, and MiH foursome, **Blue Chip Stock**, was placed eighteenth with **Happy Daze**, twenty third. **Twilight Shadows** came sixth in the Seniors and WA boys, **Soundgropers**, fifth in the Junior contest.

Men in Harmony were a great hit in the **Parade of Champions Concert** on the Friday night where they sang some of the Broadway music to a very appreciative audience and were highly commended when they once again featured in the ecumenical church service in the famous **Melbourne Scots Church**, singing the **Battle Hymn**. The concert, incidentally, included two past champion WA quartets, **Bad Habits** and ladies legend, **Mischief**.

As the men trickled "back to base" and the chorus reformed over the next week or so, there was some obvious disappointment in the realisation that the chorus could have done better, especially in the up-tempo song but, the overwhelming attitude was one of having taken part in a wonderful convention and there was a need to get back into harness and deal with the important commitments facing the chorus for the rest of the year.

## PLENTY TO DO BACK HOME

Unlike the previous outing for the **Terrace Proms**, when the men nearly froze on a bitterly cold afternoon, the 2001 occasion was held in blazing sunshine in the middle of Saint George's Terrace on Sunday, October 28. The Terrace was closed to traffic and the audience were seated in the roadway with the singers on risers. As well as the heat everyone had to contend with the flies but, any lingering regrets about the convention were erased when the men presented a top performance. Directed by **Kim Sebbage**, they gave the large crowd thirty minutes of very enjoyable melodies in the barbershop style including an immaculate rendition of **Royal Garden Blues** - "who said we couldn't get it right!".

A week later the men contributed to the entertainment at the **Rotary Fair** held in the **Subiaco Theatre Gardens**, one of that organisation's big fund raisers for its charitable good works. Under **John Little's** direction it was a happy outing and the singers were agreeably surprised when presented with a bottle of wine each for their contribution.

Over the next six weeks all efforts were concentrated on reviving the Christmas music for the big program of singouts in the city. A short presentation was fitted in for the **Nedlands City Council** before rehearsal on Tuesday, December 11. It was probably the tightest "fit" the chorus had ever experienced as the singers squeezed into a corner in the actual council chamber during a break in a normal council meeting.

However, it was well received by the councillors and led to subsequent engagements by the city at citizenship ceremonies. A smaller ensemble called on the Premier (the Chorus Patron) in his office to deliver a Christmas greeting.

The Perth singouts found the chorus in an unusual location at the corner of Colin & Hay Streets, West Perth. It was a very unsatisfactory spot, only metres from a busy intersection with constant traffic noise. However, for five week days, spread over three weeks, the chorus dutifully complied with the contract, producing good quality music and, at times, were rewarded with a small cluster of appreciative passersby and an occasional acknowledgement from diners at a nearby café.

In the middle of all the festive preparations the Members paused to farewell popular veteran member, **Ken Talbot**, who passed away after a long illness. **Ken's** many friends from the three Perth choruses added their musical tribute at his funeral.

The annual Christmas party was held on Friday, December 7, at the **Rose & Crown Hotel, Guildford**, and, as usual it was a very happy occasion. The evening's activities were organised by **Andrew & Linda Champness**, who kept the program moving very well. Of course there was plenty of singing and, true to form, the ladies of Partners in Harmony took honours for their "special" contribution. **Andy Aberle** presented **Keith Davies & Renne Dewaard** with their Ten Year badges and there was very enthusiastic all round approval when **Peter van Noort** called **Vic Richards** forward to receive the **Chorusman of the Year Award**.

Members were ready for the annual break, shortened by the Christmas contract, and dispersed, aware that there were busy and exciting times ahead.

## 2002

After another demanding year, the chorus took a longer than usual break in January, resuming rehearsals on Tuesday, 29, just in time to brush up some Australian songs for presentation at an **Australia Day, Citizenship Ceremony** for the Nedlands City at Tawarri Reception Centre the next evening. This engagement flowed from the earlier gesture for the Council and was the first of what was to develop into a regular annual invitation.

## COMMITTEE CHANGES

At the AGM on February 12, **Trevor Sainsbury** was elected President and **Peter van Noort**, Secretary. **Peter** and past committee veteran, **Andy Aberle**, both joined the new team offering their combined experience (gained in running the very successful 1993 convention) towards Men in Harmony's big commitment in taking on the 2003 national gathering. **Richard Diggins** also returned to the fold, along with **Andrew Champness**, **John Bell** and **Roy Schofield**. **John Hill** stayed on as Past President and **Warren Beckwith** remained as Treasurer.

## A NEW DIRECTOR

In December **Ian Mulholland** had advised the Management committee that he had decided to stand down as Music Director of Men in Harmony to devote time to his new **Youth Development Proposal** aimed at interesting school students in harmony singing. The idea was to "sow seeds" that would hopefully, lead young men into the barbershop singing movement later on. The committee accepted **Ian's** resignation with great regret but endorsed the proposal and commended **Ian** on his initiative, wished him well and appointed a sub-committee, headed by **Richard Diggins**, to work with him on the project. At the AGM, on the outgoing Management Committee's recommendation, **Kim Sebbage** was appointed Music Director.

The new Music Committee, with **Roy Schofield** as convenor, was quickly under way with plans for a different approach to training any prospective members who may result from the visitors night on February 26. They were to be coached by **Kim** over a period of eight weeks in the hall next door, as a separate group from normal chorus activities, the "course" culminating with a semi-formal "graduation night".

Also, a "pod" system was being implemented which formed the chorus members into groups of three, within their respective sections, aimed at helping one another progress quicker in learning new songs etc. The visitors night attracted a good number and fifteen men began the training.

## CONVENTION TEAM ASSEMBLES

No time was wasted in setting up Men in Harmony's, **7th National Convention Committee**, and the initial core group assembled in March to draft basic plans and strategies for the mammoth task that was to dominate the life of the chorus for the next two years.



Those key members were, **John Hill**, **Richard Diggins**, **Peter van Noort**, **Warren Beckwith**, **Vic Richards**, **Trevor Sainsbury** and **Andy Aberle**. **John Hill** convened one or two meetings till **Vic Richards** (who was also a veteran of the 1993 convention committee) accepted the position of **Convention Chairman**. With specific management roles assigned, the team quickly settled into a pattern of regular, lengthy meetings, the frequency of which was to escalate as the months passed.

Great chorus worker and sixteen year stalwart, **Tom Clayton**, passed away at the end of March. His barbershop friends added their musical tribute at his funeral as they recounted with fondness the many contributions **Tom** had made in the life of Men in Harmony.

## ANNUAL SHOW – NEW VENUE

Meantime there was much happening on the “home front”. An annual show had been tentatively planned for mid-year and, following the previous success at the Regal, a \$1000 deposit had been paid to that venue for two dates in July, Friday night, 25, and Sunday afternoon, 27. The two shows were necessary to provide sufficient seats to recoup the anticipated cost of a top US quartet, **Michigan Jake**, as the feature attraction. They would appear in the Friday show but not Sunday. However, with the 7<sup>th</sup> national convention based on the Burswood complex looming large on everybody’s mind, it was considered advisable to try and use that facility, to gain some practical experience for the big gathering in eighteen months time. Saturday, July 26, was available and, when a comparison of costs showed little difference, the Management Committee opted for the 2300 seat **Burswood Theatre** and **Andy Aberle** was appointed to produce the show.

Singouts for the chorus were less frequent than previous years but a return to Joondalup for a guest appearance in a festival, held on Saturday afternoon, March 23, was a welcome opportunity. The variety program was very tightly run and, unfortunately, the chorus contribution ran well over time, much to the obvious annoyance of the Producer. However, there was time to relax on the next weekend at a “**champagne breakfast**” held at Baden Park Maylands. Organised, once again, by **Andrew & Linda Champness** it was a very successful outing, well timed to take minds off the fairly heavy work program.

The quartet development job remained vacant for some time but was eventually filled when **Harry Owen**, who had moved to WA from Canberra on retirement, offered to take up the task. **Harry**, a very experienced national Gold Medal quartet singer was welcomed to the chorus and offered every assistance by the music leadership and Management Committee.

Unfortunately, his efforts to generate enthusiasm for quartet work were not well supported by the general membership and after several months the venture lapsed.

## RECRUITS “GRADUATE”

The induction period for the new “recruits” culminated on rehearsal night, April 30, with a special in-house “**graduation program**”. Their “training facility” was used for the occasion and five men were presented to the chorus for membership having satisfied the criteria **Kim** had set under his experimental training plan. A further four were still progressing. It was a semi-formal gathering with family and friends invited to hear some words of welcome from **President Trevor** and information about the chorus, the Australian movement, etc. from other senior members. There was, of course, plenty of music from the chorus and quartets, and a song (*I Love You Truly*) from the trainees, followed by supper and socialising.

Whilst this was a pleasant enough occasion, some misgivings were expressed by members about the radical system of “hiving off” potential new members and teaching them in almost complete isolation, rather than having them participate in normal chorus activities from the outset, with special attention along the way. These concerns were born out when, within a few weeks, only two or three of the February intake (fifteen possibilities) remained. Unfortunately, this disquiet from members was symptomatic of a growing unhappiness and serious drop in general chorus morale which was to escalate dramatically over the ensuing weeks.

## CONCERNS SURFACE

From the beginning of the year there had been a steady number of resignations and applications for “extended leave” from chorus members and the Management Committee was becoming increasingly concerned. A range of reasons was given by those involved including, work and family commitments, disappointment with the chorus performance at the Melbourne convention and, of most concern, unhappiness with the conduct of rehearsals and a diminishing amount of “fun”.

On June 1, Men in Harmony sang at the **Perth Harmony Chorus, Family and Friends** concert to farewell the ladies on their departure for the women's national championships in Wollongong, where the Perth chorus once again won Gold and PHC quartets were placed second, third & fourth. Whilst notes in **Direct & to the Point** suggested that Men in Harmony's contribution at that ladies concert had been up to standard, several knowledgeable observers commented to the contrary, adding further to the Executive's concerns, especially with the big concert scheduled the next month.

For some time, **Dallas Grivas** and **Ted Ludemann** had been working on adapting Men in Harmony's wooden risers to include a fourth step so that a reduced number of singers could be assembled in a tighter, five row block. This was achieved by using the treads from two modules. They also designed and made, safety rails which attached to the rear sub-frame. The refurbished complex was finished in June. Earlier, in May, a grant of \$3 500 from the Lotteries Commission was used to purchase a piano for chorus use at rehearsal. It has proved a very useful training aid.

In June, advice was received that a new barbershop chorus, **Vocal Evolution**, was forming in Perth, made up of predominately, former Men in Harmony members, including some very accomplished and experienced singers. Others indicated that they would probably follow suit after the concert.

## GREAT SHOW LINEUP

The show team was working hard assembling an attractive variety concert under the banner, *Top of the World Harmony*. The large Burswood theatre was "new territory" for Men in Harmony but the staff were very helpful and generous with advice in all the activities - the fact that the chorus would be back the following year on a much bigger project was very much on everybody's mind.

The lineup included the **Perth Harmony Chorus, Western Australian Children's Choir, Kalamunda Youth Swing Band, Bad Habits** quartet, **Michigan Jake** as the feature attraction, and Men in Harmony to open and close the show. There was the usual intensive promotion and advertising effort in place but initial ticket sales were slow.

**Peter & Julianne's** costume committee had designed a new black shirt for the show with a vertical band of glitter on one side, and also, a shirt-front which could be "ripped off" in spectacular fashion during one song.

## A SAD TIME

Whilst all the show preparations conveyed a positive impression, there was, by the end of June, great misgivings among the general membership and the Management Committee, as to whether the chorus would be ready to perform at a satisfactory standard in the concert on July 26. The events of the following few weeks were the most painful and traumatic in the history of the Men in Harmony Barbershop Chorus. The deep concerns held by the Executive about the immediate and long term future of the chorus, were raised with the Music Director but, when sincere and conscientious efforts at finding a positive and amicable way forward proved fruitless, **Kim's** contract was terminated in the first week of July.

## THE SHOW MUST GO ON

With only a few weeks to go, **Ian Mulholland**, who was now in the new chorus, agreed to direct Men in Harmony in the show, with some adjustments to the repertoire. **Carole Macintyre** was engaged to help with additional coaching and **Lesley Barnes** added some advice on presentation.

*Top of the World Harmony* attracted only a break-even audience of 800, which was disappointing in the light of the strong promotional efforts, but all agreed, especially audience contacts, that it was a great night's entertainment. While **Michigan Jake** was outstanding, all the groups performed well and, even though the "shirt rip-off" didn't quite happen as planned, the Men in Harmony lifted themselves for the occasion and were well received.

The quartet and partners were generously billeted in the homes of chorus members; **Ian & Gae Mulholland, Renne & Tanneke Dewaard, Vic & Pam Richards** and **John & Deanne Hill**. The visitors were very grateful for the hospitality extended which included a social evening at **Ian & Gae's** home.

They also managed to fit in a day trip to Rottnest on the last day which added to the pressure of a very tight logistical schedule.

**Michigan Jake** were on a national AAMBS managed tour and had to be rushed to the airport immediately the show ended, which was achieved very smoothly, along with the pressure to bump out of the theatre by midnight - a magnificent effort by the Men in Harmony production team.

The opportunity for practical working experience with the Burswood venue and staff was of enormous benefit to chorus members. The fact that the show comprised a large company of four big groups (MiH – 45, PHC – 60, Children's Choir – 80 plus the band with gear) provided first hand knowledge of the layout and facilities available backstage, in readiness for the conduct of competitions etc. next year.

## A NEW BEGINNING

On August 6, a **Special General Meeting**, was convened to consider a motion proposing the re-instatement of **Kim** as Music Director. The gathering provided an opportunity for full & open discussion on the matter, but the motion failed by a strong majority. The meeting also endorsed the Management Committee's efforts to find a new Director and approved the engagement of **Carol Macintyre** in a temporary capacity, which quickly became a permanent appointment till the end of January.

Rehearsal night, August 13, was shortened to make room for a delayed afterglow which was not feasible on show night. It was a happy occasion and an ideal way of lifting the spirits of the men, so dampened by recent stressful events. Winning first place in the choir division at the 2002 **Joondalup Eisteddfod** a week later, under **Carole's** direction, gave morale another great boost. And on September 11, Men in Harmony joined **Perth Harmony Chorus** at the rehearsal venue for a **Sweet Adelines International**, world-wide **Sing for Peace** concert, commemorating the harrowing events in the USA a year before (9/11).

**Carole** wasted no time in making her own assessment of the chorus, requesting a recorded song from every singer and recommending that members tape frequently to help measure their own progress.

She revised a selection of the current songs and, with the annual contract firming for singing in the city, also began work on the Christmas repertoire. It was a busy musical schedule, in which the men revelled.

There was another sombre occasion when, on Sunday, October 20, at short notice Men in Harmony took part in a very moving ceremony of remembrance in honour of the casualties of the recent Bali bombings. With singers from **WestCoast Chordsmen, Southside Harmony & Vocal Evolution**, they made a significant contribution to the occasion. **Rae Knight** probably summed up everybody's feelings when she recorded in **Direct & to the Point**, in part..."the guys turned out to rehearse all afternoon then presented themselves magnificently in a combination of royal blue and white jackets adorned with kangaroo paws.

The applause at the end of the first song *I Am Australian*, was deafening...and as for *You'll Never Walk Alone*, that message was taken away by all who were there. **Carole** and **Bruce** did a great job in bringing this chorus together.....I am even more proud to be a barbershopper".

Throughout all the domestic problems the **Convention Committee** had been pressing on with the many tasks that the national project generated. Key matters like early negotiations with the Burswood people, working out the spaces that would be needed, investigating accommodation options for visitors and developing a strong relationship with the **Perth Convention Bureau**, all took a lot of time. **Andy Aberle** also advised that he had again been appointed **Contest Administrator** for the convention, a posting that would have major administrative and logistical benefits for the Convention Committee in managing the competitions, as part of the overall task.

The men experienced a very busy day on Sunday, November 3, when they performed at two widely separated engagements. In the morning there was a return visit to the **Rotary Craft Fair at Subiaco** where they presented a bright range of songs to a very receptive crowd and then proceeded to **Bassendean** to take part in the **Council Fair**. Of course, the same repertoire was applied, and while less comfortable than the morning "gig", it was a pleasant success and attracted a fee. After the engagement at the fair, most of the men gathered at the **Barnett's** home and sang a mini-concert for **Len and Dorothy**, both of whom had been ill for some time.

A **Carols by Twilight** outing on Sunday, December 8, for the **Claremont/Nedlands Christian Council**, provided a warmup for the busy pre-Christmas schedule of street singing in Perth.

## TIS THE SEASON TO BE MERRY !

The chorus paused in all this busy festive season preparation to celebrate at the annual party on Friday, December 6. Held at the Swan Yacht Club, East Fremantle, there was no doubt that Men in Harmony had "weathered the storm" and was entering a new era in its eventful history. During the celebrations **Warren Beckwith** received the **Chorusman of the Year** award for his outstanding contribution to the life of the chorus.

He was commended for his work as chorus Treasurer (he also held that position nationally) editing **Direct And To The Point** as well as serving on the Convention Committee. Five members were admitted to the **Ten Year Club** when **Andy Aberle** presented badges for a decade of service to; **Rod Eagleton**, **Peter Raven**, **Alex Ramshaw**, **Ted Ludemann** and **Merrill Claessen**.

The Christmas singing in the city was a very demanding schedule. Between December 13 and 24 the chorus appeared on 46 occasions, on nine days in about twenty different locations, from the city centre to Northbridge. To cover the ground, the chorus was sometimes divided into two groups, **Allan Tuckwell** assisting with directing. Some of the sites were sparsely populated, especially at night, but the presentations were well received and the men enjoyed themselves. A letter of appreciation from the city read, in part, "Men in Harmony added great atmosphere to the city....and this has been reflected by the feedback from members of the general public who enjoyed your performances, both the entire group and the smaller ensemble performances". The members parted for the seasonal break in good spirits, looking forward to an exciting year ahead.

## 2003

The break was short and was punctuated by the passing, of both **Len and Dorothy Barnett** within a period of about two weeks. Almost the entire barbershop community, both men and women, attended the ceremonies to farewell their friends and associates with musical tributes, gestures that were very much appreciated by the Barnett family.

Tuesday, January 14, found the men back on the risers working on a review of the Australian songs in preparation for the annual **Citizenship Ceremony at Tawarri Reception Centre** on Wednesday, 22. Also, three prospective members, who had been attending rehearsals prior to Christmas, passed their auditions on that first night. Even with the additions, the chorus was starting 2003 with an active lineup of 47 members and it was resolved to apply extra energies to ensuring a good response at the planned visitors night on February 25. An ad was placed in the **What's on in the West** section of the West Australian, and colourful new invitation leaflets were produced. These were based on photos specially shot at **Pro-Copy** studios using a new modern format. Everyone was acutely aware that Perth was now home to four men's barbershop choruses and attractive recruiting material was extremely important.

At the AGM on February 18, **Peter van Noort** resigned as Secretary and **John Hill** returned to that role. **John Bell & Andrew Champness** stepped down while **Allan Tuckwell & Pat Knight** joined the team. **Vic Richards** was co-opted to the Management Committee in his vital role of **Chairman of the Convention Committee**. There was enthusiastic support for **Carole Macintyre's** appointment as Music Director for the ensuing twelve months. A special vote of thanks was passed, with great acclamation, to President **Trevor Sainsbury** for his patient work and leadership in bringing the chorus through a very torrid period.

With **Derek James** resignation to join the new chorus **Warren Beckwith** and his staff took over production of **Chorus Chatter**, along with all of his other contributions, and it continued as an extremely important and effective means of communication in the day-to-day running of the chorus.

It had now returned to a weekly publication following the demise of **Direct & to the Point** last year. **Rod Chadbourne** played a key role in gathering, co-ordinating and editing the material.

Men in Harmony contributed to the **Perth International Arts Festival** when the chorus sang in the main foyer area of the **WA Museum** on Saturday, February 15 and, a few weeks later, sang at the **Reabold Hill Amphitheatre** in a fund raiser for the **Alzheimers Association Concert**. These outings were very different but equally successful and there was great, unsolicited feedback from several quarters, especially after the **Reabold Hill** concert. People particularly commented on the way the men were obviously enjoying themselves.

The visitors night was successful with about ten new faces appearing, eight of whom were still interested a week or two later. The hall next door to the theatre was hired for several weeks to augment the spaces for dispersal and chorus members were urged to continue with recruiting efforts.

Two significant events occurred in March. On Sunday, 9, a **Barbershoppers Memorial Service** was held in **Saint Andrews Church**, Perth, as an act of remembrance for all barbershop singers and partners from the men's & women's groups who had passed away since the movements began in WA. Despite the oppressive heat it was a well attended and dignified occasion with much inspirational singing. Three weeks later AAMBS, 2003 visiting educator, **Dr. Hank Hammer**, spent a weekend with all the WA men's groups. On the Saturday morning Men in Harmony had a separate session with this top teacher and in the afternoon were part of a group exercise.

As always, much of the wisdom offered by such experts was not new to the singers but, presented in a different way it was timely reinforcement for the first class instruction the men were receiving from **Carole**. In that regard, new training tapes (CD's) continued to appear and the regular personal recording program was stepped up. Each week an individual recording was required of two previously notified songs, for submission to Section Leaders, to measure the personal progress of each singer.

As part of the ongoing recruiting and promotion plan, the chorus arranged for two public sing-outs north of the river, at a **Community Day** promotion in the **Kingsway Shopping Centre** and at **Joondalup Lakeside Shopping City**. There was plenty of interest from passersby and hopefully, some seeds of interest sown. The presentations included quartet items. Everyone appreciated a "night off" on March 18 when the men relaxed with a guest performance from **Garry Lawrence** (with whom they were to work a little later on) appearances by regular quartets, some tag singing and viewing of videos of top international quartets & choruses.

## CONVENTION PREPARATIONS

In his report to the Management Committee in March, **Vic** outlined the substantial progress the busy **Convention Committee** had made in preparations for the big event. All of the key matters had been firmed with the Burswood management, meals, operating spaces, accommodation at the hotel and a host of supplementary items. **Ozaccom** had been appointed to manage bedding arrangements for the visitors, a logo had been designed and was in use, a registration fee had been recommended to AAMBS for approval. One newsletter was distributed across the movement in October and a second was being finalised. **Partners in Harmony and Perth Harmony Chorus** ladies were ready to contribute as soon as required and additional men from the chorus would soon be added to the basic team.

In April, the chorus sponsored a trip for Assistant MD, **Allan Tuckwell**, to a **Director's College in New Zealand** conducted by **Dr. Greg Lyne**. **Allan** returned, enthused by the knowledge he had gained from one of the best instructors in the world. **Southside Harmony** chorus shared the costs of the trip. Since the beginning of the year there had been a few more resignations from the chorus but this loss had stabilised and several of the new recruits had been admitted to full membership. The men were particularly pleased when **Bill McAllister**, from whom they had been learning so much, joined the Men in Harmony. **Bill** immediately directed special attention to the lead section.

Men in Harmony joined the other **Western Region** groups for the annual convention at **Churchlands Senior High School Auditorium** on Saturday, May 17. It wasn't a contest for choruses but the judges offered informal comments which suggested that Men in Harmony needed extra work in several areas. This was sobering but timely for the members, some of whom may not have been as conscientious as they should at this stage of preparation. Chorus quartet, **Twilight Shadows**, won the Seniors trophy and they, together with **Global Achord**, qualified for entry in the convention open competition in October.

There was more top class coaching in June when popular visitor from the USA, **Eddie Martinez**, making a welcome return visit, worked with the chorus on two successive Tuesdays. **Eddie**, a very experienced musician/director/coach and former Director of the "Heart of Texas" chorus, brought a very bright and breezy style to his teaching, and was a great hit with the members, who appreciated the reinforcement that the two sessions provided. Members of **Southside Harmony** were doubly fortunate.

## SOMETHING DIFFERENT

July provided two opportunities to try music of a different kind, when the chorus was invited to participate in a **Festival of Choirs** production at **Winthrop Hall**, in the University of WA. The program consisted of ten choirs singing different styles of music including ethnic, traditional and barbershop from MiH and **Perth Harmony Chorus**. The "novelty", was a combined rendition of a song *One Voice*, specially composed for the occasion by **Ashleigh Greig**, of the University Music Faculty. The ladies and men's barbershop choruses and the **University Undergraduate Society** sang as one choir to present the piece, under the baton of the composer, as a dramatic finale to the evening's program. It brought the audience to its feet and was sung again as an encore. That stirring song was popular with the barbershoppers and was featured on several subsequent occasions when the men's & women's choruses shared the stage.

The second opportunity to do "something different" was a request from **Garry Lawrence**, who was producing the play *Breaker Morant* at the **Old Mill Theatre**, South Perth. He needed a strong male voice choral recording of *Soldiers of the Queen* as musical background to be intermittently played throughout the story. The chorus gathered at the **Pro-Copy** recording studio and, with sounds of battle fed in by **Garry**, the men marched round a central microphone singing. After several trial runs, a satisfactory recording finally resulted.



To add to the overall atmosphere, small ensembles from the chorus attended at the theatre throughout the season and sang some of the normal repertoire at interval, to the delight of the patrons. **Warren Beckwith** had a part in the play, an excellent production, definitely enhanced by Men in Harmony's contribution!

By now of course, the final run-up to the convention was dominating the life of the chorus. This included the musical work on the two competition songs – *From the First Hello & The Moment I Saw Your Eyes* (with presentation). There were extra practices for all sections, some starting early on rehearsal nights and others on weekends. Regular personal recordings were also helping.

## CONVENTION TIME – THE BIG TASK

The Convention Committee gave regular progress reports, gradually refining details of the daily programs for the big gathering. As **Contest Administrator, Andy Aberle** had concerns about the audio characteristics of Burswood Theatre for barbershop competition, finally deciding that sound reflectors were essential to improve the acoustics and set about making a set.

After two prototypes units passed the test he made a further ten to provide complete cover for the Wenger riser complex – it was a very successful project which was commended by the theatre audio staff. There were also compliments from contestants.

**Partners in Harmony** began planning for their role as soon as a reasonable indication of delegate numbers was available.

Working with **Richard Diggins, Gwen Aberle** organised a group to prepare the 700 delegate kits, a very big job, and the ladies team, under President **Ann Bishop**, carried out a range of delegate services throughout the convention, including staffing the registration desk and organising all the details associated with the **Welcome Dinner**. The ladies made a huge contribution to the overall project. Once again, members from **Perth Harmony Chorus** assisted with the competition logistics, attending and guiding the competitors in a very calm and efficient manner. That continuing reciprocal co-operation between the ladies and men is testament to the longstanding friendship that exists between the two Perth clubs.

To attempt to record the myriad tasks carried out by the **Convention Committee** and Men in Harmony personnel in producing a magnificent convention between October 9 & 12, would be impossible in this document.

The attention to detail in the movement of several sets of risers and all the other gear in support of the competitions, was immaculate and all deadlines were met, like bumping in and out of the theatre on time. The **Convention Committee** had worked solidly for nearly two years and the great teamwork in all the activities was a credit to chairman, **Vic Richards**, who did a lot of early research on accommodation and set up that contract, then kept the project on track through some very difficult times. With **Vic** were; **President Trevor Sainsbury**, newsletters & promotion; **Treasurer Warren Beckwith**, finance management & contracts; **Richard Diggins** who handled registrations and delegate services; **Rod Eagleton**, special meals & general; **John Hill**, general administration; **Neville Page**, gear movements etc. and **Andy Aberle**, contest logistics & control.

There is no doubt the convention responsibilities were a distraction for the Men in Harmony chorus but, in placing sixth, the 46-man chorus improved on the Melbourne score, and whilst there was some disappointment, most members spoke confidently of the future.

It was also gratifying to receive plaudits from members of the 13 choruses, 25 Open Quartets and 13 Senior Quartets that competed, and who, with their partners, made up the 700 plus delegates. Phrases like "best yet", "wonderful hospitality", "beautiful city", "magnificent organisation" were very nice to hear.

Chorus members shared the joy of MiH quartet, **Global Achord**, in taking third place in the Seniors Quartet contest. Some chorus members still had enough energy to attend the **Harmony College** immediately after the convention and enthused about the wonderful teaching and fellowship they had experienced.

## BACK TO NORMAL?

Life began getting back to normal in November with a return visit to the **Subiaco Craft Fair** on Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup> and participation in **Perth Harmony Chorus** highly successful annual show (2pm & 8pm) at MLC auditorium the next weekend. Partners in Harmony joined the men for a "thank you supper" at the end of rehearsal on the following Tuesday. It was pleasant and relaxing way of reviewing the hectic events of the past few months, exchanging experiences and generally complimenting each other on a big job well done.

The Christmas music contract with the city was less demanding than previous, with commitments on five days, but, with the benefit of past years' experience behind them the men managed the task well and revelled in a great reception. As usual, the concert in **Forrest Place** was a highlight and the financial reward was again, a substantial boost to chorus funds. .

The **Christmas party** at the **Swan Yacht Club** was a happy affair as members, ladies and friends reminisced about a challenging but successful year for the chorus. **President Trevor** was admitted to the **Ten Year Club** and **Ken Nakamura** was a very popular recipient of the **Chorusman of the Year** award for his exemplary club & music work and for recruiting two new tenors to the ranks. **Warren Beckwith** was called forward to receive a **Special President's Award** for his huge contribution to the operation of the chorus on many fronts during the past two demanding years. **Trevor** pointed out that probably only those working closely with **Warren** were fully aware of the load he bore along with his demanding personal business life and his role as Treasurer of both Men in Harmony and AAMBS.

### LIFE MEMBERSHIP FOR VIC

Another highlight of the gathering was the presentation of **Life Membership** to founding member **Vic Richards** for nineteen years of unstinting contribution to the life of Men in Harmony, culminating with his chairmanship of the **2003 Convention Committee**. To a rousing endorsement from all present, it was pointed out that **Vic** had served on the Management Committee for a total of sixteen years as Member, Secretary, Vice President and President. In his "spare" time he had taught music basics, been Chorus Manager many times and Bass Section Leader from time to time.

And in saying "thank you" to these worthy members there was still room for heartfelt appreciations to **Carole** for her huge contribution, not forgetting **Juliana** for her faithful attendance at every rehearsal and reproduction notes of all **Carole's** instruction for the night – an extremely helpful teaching aid. And, of course, to the **Partners in Harmony** ladies for their wonderful ongoing loyalty and support.

2004

Rehearsals resumed on January 20 in time to review the Australian songs for presentation at the **Nedlands Citizenship Ceremony** the following week. That annual performance was obviously appreciated by the city and general public and appeared to be firmly fixed in the chorus calendar. It was also a great "starter" for the singers and a happy outing to get things moving for the year.

### A NEW TEAM

With the convention responsibilities behind and most loose ends tidied up, there were quite a few new faces on the Management Committee elected at the AGM. **Trevor Sainsbury** announced that he was standing down and, in fact, was taking twelve months leave from singing on medical advice. A troublesome throat problem had been bothering him for some time and, apparently, total rest was the only answer. He was farewelled with regrets but with the sincere thanks of his musical associates for the wonderful leadership and strength he had shown in his term in the chair. **Pat Knight** took up the reins. **Warren Beckwith** also stepped out of the Treasurers job, which he had handled so efficiently, and **Vic Richards** took over the books of the club. **Andy Aberle, Richard Diggins** and **Peter van Noort** made way for **Charles Lockwood, Peter Raven, Rod Eagleton** and **Rod Chadbourne**.

**Carole** was re-appointed **Music Director** and she quickly reviewed the **Music Leadership** team. Some key appointments were, **Bill McAllister, Musical Adviser; Mike Donnelly & Merrill Claessen, Assistant Directors** & warm-ups, and **Allan Tuckwell, Quartet Co-ordinator**. **Peter & Julienne van Noort** decided it was time for a break from costume duties and this position was taken up by **Linda Champness**.

### RECRUITING – A DIFFERENT APPROACH

The annual new-member drive produced six visitors, but the first night was marred by a power blackout which certainly didn't help the introductory process. The small number probably reflected the competition that now existed for recruits and there was a general acceptance that finding new members had become an ongoing exercise in which the men were encouraged to invite anyone who showed interest in singing, to visit rehearsal any time throughout the year. However, members were very happy to welcome **Neil Horner** to the chorus on passing his audition.

It was a very special moment for **Neil** who had first encountered Men in Harmony when the chorus visited **Bussleton** to stage a concert with the **SouWest Singers** in 1996. On that occasion he was immediately hooked on barbershop and, when his attempt to form a group down there failed, he had "waited in the wings" till a shift to Perth made joining the chorus possible.

February ended with a very challenging weekend of top class coaching from AAMBS' annual visiting master coach from the USA, **Jim Kahlke**. It was a return visit for **Jim** who was **Music Judge and Chairman of Adjudicators** at the **Melbourne** convention. He held an intensive session for quartets on the Saturday and spent the Sunday afternoon with the Men in Harmony chorus. As usual, the men were totally absorbed in the wonderful teaching offered, including a different approach to the contest songs that had so dominated proceedings a few months earlier.

Members were enjoying **Carole's** music program, especially some revivals and some new songs being added to the repertoire like, *Bye Bye Love*, *Blue Moon*, *Hello Mary-Lou*, *Boardwalk*, *Wonderful World* and the challenging, *And So It Goes*. **Allan Tuckwell** wasted no time in setting up a **Scratch Quartet schedule** which included every singer, caste in ad hoc quartets, three of which appeared in a "mini-concert" every four weeks. The men had fun but took this work seriously and all agreed it was a great training tool. It also gave **Carole** a good overview of the singing qualities of individual members. In addition, **Juliana** had been joined by **Jessica Bullen** from PHC who added her experience and talent to the coaching, especially in presentation and showmanship.



Jessica Bullen (left) & Juliana Kelly,  
generously sharing their experience and talent

## EASTER BONNETS

**Andrew & Linda Champness** organised a very enjoyable social outing on **Easter Sunday**, April 4. It was held at **Riverside Gardens, Bayswater** and about fifty members, family and friends took part in games, quizzes and all round good fellowship followed by a picnic tea. The highlight was an **Easter Bonnet competition** which attracted some very novel entries – the "unbiased independent" judges awarded prizes to **Monica DeGroot** and **Andy Aberle**. An enthusiastic vote of appreciation was passed for **Linda & Andrew's** wonderful contribution to a very successful day.

Two weeks later there was a return invitation to **Winthrop Hall** for another **Festival of Choirs** evening. Men in Harmony sang some of the new repertoire and once again joined PHC with "One Voice". **Carole** complimented the men on their work which was obviously reflecting some response to her coaching, the individual taping and section practices.

The annual **Western Region Convention** was held at **Churchlands Senior High School** at the end of June. Of a total of five competing quartets, two were from Men in Harmony ranks with a third group containing a further three chorus members. **Twilight Shadows** was placed third in the **Open contest and First in the Seniors**. **Global Achord** and **Three & One** were second and third in the **Seniors**. As always, it was a pleasant outing and an opportunity to catch up with friends from the other men's choruses. **Carole**, just home from helping **Perth Harmony Chorus** take **Gold** once again in the **Sweet Adelines** regional competitions, acted as **Singing Judge** for the men's contest.

By early July plans had firmed for an annual show and MLC auditorium was secured for the event to be held in October. **Rod Eagleton** was appointed Producer, and, with **Andy Aberle** helping, assembled an attractive variety program. It was decided to try something different by including acts from school students. Several possibilities were explored and the final program included an instrumental group and a barbershop ensemble from **Methodist Ladies College** plus a solo violinist from **Perth College**.

However, with all ticket sales in the hands of the members, it was emphasised early in the planning that everyone needed to work hard at compiling a personal list of potential sales and the chorus contribution should be the best yet!

A very helpful aid to this quest for excellence was the notes **Juliana** was continuing to produce each week, which faithfully reproduced all of **Carole's** instruction throughout the rehearsal evening, word for word. Members were urged to make maximum use of the information, which was distributed to most people within a day or two via E-mail and was great reinforcement of the evening's work – a wonderful support too!

## QUESTION TIME

Midst the heavy music program there was an opportunity to relax at a dinner-quiz night on Sunday July 18. Organised, once again, by **Andrew & Linda Champness**, the evening was a great success with about 120 people attending at the **Peninsular Tavern, Maylands**. It was a little different from the usual format in that proceedings commenced with a buffet meal before the actual quiz and this idea was well received by the participants. There was the usual fun and good fellowship – **Tim Threlfall's** table took the honours and the **Richards family** table did well too.

The chorus was indebted to **Andrew and Linda** who had worked hard, not only devising the questions and running the quiz but also in assembling (with the help of chorus members) an impressive array of prizes & "giveaway's". Money raised was applied to providing the men with new casual winter zipup jackets to replace the well-worn blue jumpers.

## VOICES DOWN UNDER

For eighteen months or so the ladies of **Perth Harmony Chorus** had been working on a very ambitious international project they named **Voices Down Under – A Cultural Exchange**. Held in September 2-6, at the **Burswood Complex**, it involved choruses and quartets from all over the world and included a wide range of educational opportunities with world class teachers, male & female, chorus & quartet coaching, two big concerts and a great deal of socialising and fellowship.

Men in Harmony were able to assist with some of the logistics such as risers and sound shells, but they also wholeheartedly participated in most activities. The top visiting male quartet was **Saturday Evening Post**, which included the legendary **Brian Beck**, who had visited Perth as a member of the **Side Street Ramblers** in 1987. He and his associates (including the champion ladies quartet) gave some of the most inspiring teaching ever experienced by Perth barbershoppers. Most of it was at Burswood but **Saturday Evening Post** also came to a MIH rehearsal for a powerful evening's work – very challenging!

Men in Harmony was part of the **Voices of Perth Chorus** which comprised a core from MIH and **Perth Harmony Chorus** plus singers from other men's and women's groups. The combined chorus sang *Lida Rose/Will I Ever Tell You & And So To Sleep Again* at the **Show Case Concert** and Men in Harmony also presented a group of Australian songs at the **Cultural Exchange concert**. There was a **Gala Dinner Dance** (music from **Western Command Army Band**) a singout on **Fremantle Esplanade** and a **Mass Sing** in Perth city centre. There was also a delightful church service held on the Sunday at the **Baptist church in East Fremantle** during which Men in Harmony were invited to sing the *Battle Hymn*. The Management Committee subsidised registration fees for chorus members to attend the prestigious gathering and almost everyone participated – it was a grand and successful enterprise.

## ANOTHER OPENING – ANOTHER SHOW!

For the next few weeks all chorus energies were focused on the big show on Saturday, October 23, which carried the title **Get Up & Go Show**. In his report **Rod** observed that most people agreed that the program was a very attractive one – in addition to the items from the young people mentioned above, a tap dance troop was added, a jazz band, the ladies quartet **Audacious** and a cabaret style presentation from **Carole & Bill** (on piano) with support from a bass player and **Pat Knight** on drums. Logistics could have worked better and the show ran overtime but the audience obviously enjoyed the evening. As usual, **Partners in Harmony** ran a supper and did all the front-of-house tasks.

In spite of a very active promotional effort, using every reasonable device, the support fell short of expectations with a total of 600 fans in the house. However, this was still sufficient to produce a surplus of about \$3000.

The first chorus bracket went very well with a great many complimentary remarks but the abridged second appearance was not quite as impressive, perhaps due to the delays. However, the finale, with the men and **Audacious** singing *Lida Rose/Will I Ever Tell You* was a hit with the audience and there was feedback that they would like to have heard more of Men in Harmony. General observations included a notion that, after all the hype and activity of **Voices Down Under**, the market could have been a little over exposed to barbershop.

## CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY

Revision of the Christmas repertoire followed closely on the show in readiness for a repeat appearance at **Carols by Candlelight** at the **Edith Cowan University, Nedlands**, on December 5. The **Perth City** contract began with a combined evening concert with **Perth Harmony Chorus** on the **Forrest Place** stage. The city had prepared well for this event with plenty of seating to cater for a good crowd which was very receptive. And this was the case for the remaining three engagements around the city streets (two afternoons and one evening) which attracted genuinely appreciative groups of shoppers. A contributing factor was the mixed range of music offered which included the usual Christmas fair and quite a few of the new bright songs **Carole** had introduced to the repertoire. The proprietor of the **C Restaurant** (the revolving one at a great height) was so impressed with what he heard in the street that he asked **Carole** if the men could sing to his patrons after their commitments on the last evening.

The chorus obliged and, in very cramped conditions, gave an impromptu mini-concert to the surprised but appreciative diners. The men were rewarded with a festive drink – a nice way to finish the job.

## FRANK HONOURED

On Tuesday, December 14, the annual Christmas breakup was held, for the first time, at the **Royal Perth Yacht Club**, in the **Perie Banou Function Room**. It was a delightful venue with stunning views over the river, a great setting for a happy occasion. There was enthusiastic approval when **Peter van Noort** called **Jack Melrose** forward to receive the **Chorusman Of The Year** award for his many years of service as chorus librarian, a demanding, continuous task he had carried out so effectively. **Frank Lawton** had no idea when his three founding associates, **John Little**, **Vic Richards** and **Andy Aberle**, invited him to join them at the podium for a chat, that it was to pin a **Life Membership** badge on him on behalf of all his fellow members. To a standing ovation, the gathering was reminded of **Frank's** sterling service to Men in Harmony over twenty years of active membership, including time on the **Management Committee**, **Music Team** and **Baritone Section Leader** – a very popular award.

Unfortunately, there was another function taking place in the surrounding grounds during the early part of the evening and the noise was a problem for some of the entertainment items including popular guest ladies quartet, **Audacious**, one or two of the men's foursomes and the **Partners in Harmony** item, but it did not intrude enough to dampen the fun.

Past President **Trevor Sainsbury** was a very welcome guest and, in response to a request he had made at the last Christmas gathering, **Andy Aberle** recited the legend of **Bendigo**, always a popular story.

And in the plaudits, **President Pat**, voiced everyone's heartfelt gratitude in thanking the ladies of **Partners in Harmony** for their loyalty and support, **Rae Knight** for her assistance in the editing of Chorus Chatter, **Juliana and Jessica Bullen** for their huge ongoing input in the chorus quest for excellence and, of course, the hard work and enthusiasm that **Carole Macintyre** applied to the task week by week.

## CONCLUSION

In recording the first decade in the life of the Men in Harmony Barbershop Chorus I noted that during each year in that period, there seemed to be one or more exciting or influential event of outstanding significance and, I believe my readers will agree, that pattern continued in this story of the second ten years. There were certainly some great "highs" and even a "low".

But, at the end of the second decade of its existence, the Men in Harmony is, in some respects, a different organisation to the chorus of ten years ago. The most obvious change, is a reduction in the size of the chorus and this is a reflection of the fact that, compared with 1995, when Men in Harmony was the sole male choral group singing the barbershop style in Perth, at the end of 2004, there are now four men's choruses in the area, all seeking to attract new members. And this task is much more difficult than it was, especially in efforts to interest younger men, who, in these high pressure economic times, can not easily find the time to devote to such a hobby, even if it appeals to them.

There have also been changes in the Australian movement as a whole which have had a strong influence at chorus level, principally, the dramatic improvement in the general overall quality of barbershop singing nationally, as demonstrated in the biennial competitions, now a vital feature of the ongoing Australian calendar. Although "out of the medals" for the last two contests, Men in Harmony still rated highly and that situation provides a great platform on which to build and strive for the future. In this regard, with **Carole Macintyre** at the helm, the chorus has never been better placed. If each individual singer does his best to match their Director's level of effort, commitment and enthusiasm, the Men in Harmony can excel.



Of course, some things haven't changed like the fellowship and fun that are vital ingredients in the pastime of singing barbershop music, along with the thrill of being part of the harmony when it's right.

And there is still a feeling of pride when a distinguished member of the University of WA music faculty glowingly introduces the Men in Harmony to an audience as an "icon in the WA music scene".

How long it continues to earn such an accolade is in the hands of present and future members.

Andy A

## APPENDICES

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Year	Pres.	V/Pres.	Sec.	Treas.	Members & VP's from 1998
1995	Vic Richards	Pat Knight	Rod Eagleton	Stan Prentice	Andy Aberle Sam Jacobs Rob Walley Allan Tuckwell Peter van Noort George Jackson
1996	Vic Richards	Pat Knight	Rod Eagleton	Paul Chancellor	Andy Aberle Peter Raven Ray Mills Mike Donnelly Allan Tuckwell Rob Walley Sam Jacobs
1997	Mike Donnelly	Pat Knight	John Hill	Joe Vermeltfoort	Tom Clayton John Little Peter van Noort Vic Richards (PP)
1998	Mike Donnelly		John Hill	Joe Vermeltfoort	John Little Vic Richards (PP) Tom Clayton Peter van Noort Pat Knight Renne Dewaard
1999	Mike Donnelly		John Hill	Joe Vermeltfoort	John Little Tom Clayton Trevor Sainsbury Richard Diggins Michael Hyde Renne Dewaard
2000	John Hill		Gavin Allen	Joe Vermeltfoort	Trevor Sainsbury Vic Richards Richard Diggins Paul Chancellor John Little Mike Donnelly(PP) Renne Dewaard

**2001** John Hill Gavin Allen Warren Beckwith

Mike Donnelly (PP)  
Trevor Sainsbury  
Andrew Champness  
David Winch  
John Bell  
John Little  
Renne Dewaard

**2002** Trevor Sainsbury Peter van Noort Warren Beckwith

Andrew Champness  
Roy Schofield  
John Bell  
John Hill (PP)  
Richard Diggins  
Neville Page  
Andy Aberle

**2003** Trevor Sainsbury John Hill Warren Beckwith

Richard Diggins  
Andy Aberle  
Pat Knight  
Neville Page  
Allen Tuckwell  
Vic Richards  
Rod Eagleton

**2004** Pat Knight John Hill Vic Richards

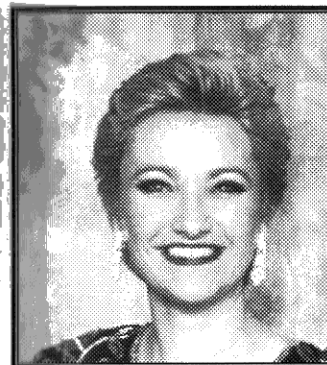
Andrew Champness  
Charles Lockwood  
Peter Raven  
Rod Eagleton  
Rod Chadbourne

## MUSIC DIRECTORS

<b>1995/6/7</b>	Bruce Okely	<b>Deputy MD</b> John Little
<b>1998</b>	Ian Mulholland & Les Goh	<b>Co-Directors</b>
<b>1999/2000/1</b>	Ian Mulholland	<b>Assistant MD</b> Kim Sebbage
<b>2002</b>	Kim Sebbage	
<b>2003/4</b>	Carole Macintyre	

## MEN IN HARMONY LIFE MEMBERS

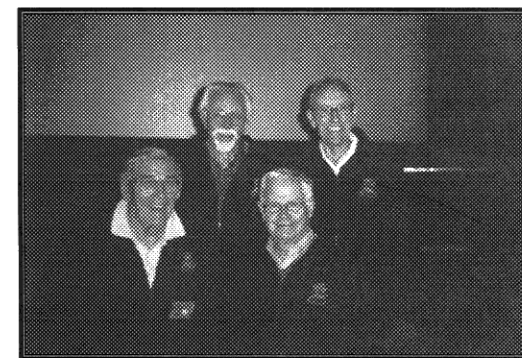
**1990** Bruce Okely  
**1993** Andy Aberle  
**2000** Len Barnett John Little  
**2003** Vic Richards  
**2004** Frank Lawton



**Carole Macintyre**

## AAMBS LIFE MEMBERS

**1993** Bruce Okely  
**1997** Andy Aberle John Little



**Four "Lifers" John, Frank, Andy & Vic**



**Ian Mulholland and Friends**

## TEN YEAR BADGE ISSUED

### 1995 (June) Founders

Andy Aberle Len Barnett Neil Durston Dick Lambert Frank Lawton John Little  
David Macgill Bruce Okely Vic Richards John Russell

### 1995 (December)

Joe Atkinson Graham Bishop Tom Clayton Bob Jamieson George Jamieson  
Alan Parsons Ken Talbot

### 1996

Gavin Archer John Christie Dan Davies-More Wilf Eccleston Gordon Grigor  
Jack Melrose John Minchin Ron Pye Allan Tuckwell

### 1997

Arthur Boddy Ray Foster Sam Jacobs Pat Knight David Martin  
Peter van Noort Rob Walley

### 1998

George Jackson Ernie Turpin

### 1999 Nil

### 2000

Howard Hughes

### 2001

Keith Davies Renne Dewaard

### 2002

Merrill Claessen Rod Eagleton Ted Ludemann Alex Ramshaw Peter Raven

### 2003

Trevor Sainsbury

### 2004 Nil

## CHORUSMAN OF THE YEAR

1989 Sam Jacobs

1994 Peter van Noort

2000 Michael Hyde

1990 Ken Talbot

1995 Graham Bishop

2001 Vic Richards

1991 Wilf Eccleston

1996 Len Barnett

2002 Warren Beckwith

1992 Neil Durston

1997 Les Goh

2003 Ken Nakamura

1993 Renne Dewaard

1998 Ted Ludemann

2004 Jack Melrose

1999 Roy Schofield



House call on the Barnetts

## MEN IN HARMONY MEMBERS

### March 1995

Andy Aberle	Gordon Grigor	Bruce Okely
Gavin Archer	David Harper	Alan Parsons
Joe Atkinson	Howard Hughes	Bob Patterson
Len Barnett	George Jackson	Pender Pedler
Ian Besomo	Sam Jacobs	Steve Peters
Graham Bishop	Bob Jamieson	Stan Prentice
Arthur Boddy	George Jamieson	Ron Pye
Paul Chancellor	Martin Jansen	Alex Ramshaw
John Christie	Pat Knight	Peter Raven
Merrill Claessen	Dick Lambert	Vic Richards
Tom Clayton	Frank Lawton	Doug Routley
Bill Cole	John Little	John Russell
Denis Connor	Ted Ludemann	Trevor Sainsbury
Doug Davies	Eddie Lynch	Roy Smith
Keith Davies	David Macgill	Lloyd Sparks
Dan Davies-Moore	Alastair Maitland	Graeme Speed
Renne Dewaard	David Martin	Rob Sproule
Maurice Dixon	Ian McAllister	Andrew Talbot
Brian Downing	Jack Melrose	Ken Talbot
Neil Durston	Ray Mills	Allan Tuckwell
Rod Eagleton	John Minchin	Ernie Turpin
Wilf Eccleston	Jeffrey Mirfin	Peter van Noort
Ray Foster	David Morrison	Joe Vermeltfoort
Roger Garrod	George Musgrave	Rob Walley
Ray Gracey	Duke Nachbar	Andrew Watt
John Nelson		

### October 2004

Andy Aberle	Ray Foster	Neville Page
Warren Beckwith	Dallas Grivas	Alex Ramshaw
John Bell	Neil Horner	Peter Raven
John Bishop	John Hill	Vic Richards
Rod Chadbourne	Howard Hughes	Arthur Riley
Andrew Champness	Pat Knight	Trevor Sainsbury
Merrill Claessen	Frank Lawton	Shodoh Saitoh
Don Clarke	John Little	Alan Salter
Liam Connolly	Charles Lockwood	Ru Suzuki
John DeGroot	Ted Ludemann	Tim Threlfall
Richard Diggins	Carole Macintyre	Allan Tuckwell
Mike Donnelly	David Martin	Ernie Turpin
Rod Eagleton	Bill McAllister	Peter van Noort
Wilf Eccleston	Jack Melrose	David Willock
Neil Fearis	Ken Nakamura	David Winch