



**MEN IN HARMONY BARBERSHOP CHORUS (Inc)
PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

THE FIRST TEN YEARS - A HISTORY

A.E. (Andy) Aberle

March 1995

THE HISTORY

OF THE

MEN IN HARMONY BARBERSHOP CHORUS (Inc) PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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PRE-HISTORY?



Don Amos offers the first bit of coaching in barbershop singing in Western Australia to the Four Notes: Laurie Russell, Bruce Okely, David Macgill and John Little.

When the popular Perth quartet, the Four Notes, sang in the Federal Hotel, Fremantle late in 1983, they made, not only a chord or two but, quite unexpectedly, a great friend.

The group were raising funds for a planned trip to attend the annual barbershop singing convention in St Louis and were surprised and delighted to find that the audience included Don Amos from the UK, Life President of the British Association of Barbershop Singers.

The encounter was the start of a very happy and enduring association between Don, the quartet and, later, the Men in Harmony barbershop chorus.

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PREFACE

By most standards, ten years may not be considered very long historically but in the case of the Men in Harmony Barbershop Chorus its first decade has been dynamic and exciting and I have found the task of telling the story stimulating and very satisfying.

Writing a history involves a responsibility to ensure that all significant events and achievements are included. This has been my principal aim and I trust I have succeeded.

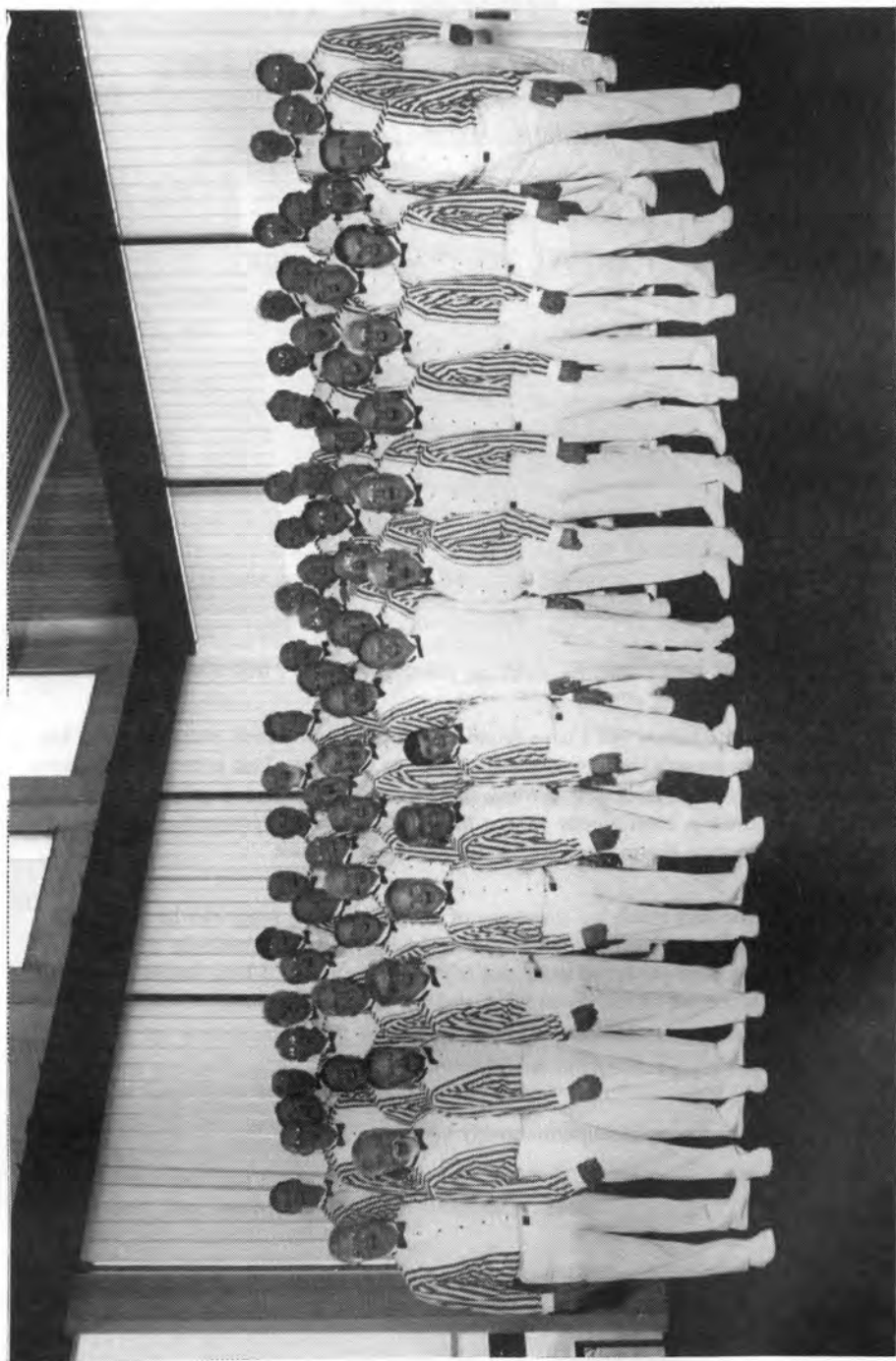
People create history but I have found it impossible to mention everybody who has contributed to the growth and development of Men in Harmony. That is because the chorus has been blessed with a membership which has demonstrated all the finest qualities of good barbershop fellowship, most quietly playing their parts in the best corporate interests of the chorus while enjoying sharing in a wonderful singing experience.

I appreciate very much the assistance of my associates in song who have supplied papers, photographs and memorabilia to help in recording events, especially of the early days. But, having been privileged to be part of it from the outset, I have drawn heavily on my own recollections of all the joy and fun we have had along the way.

I hope you enjoy reading this record as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

Hummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmbly yours,

A.E. (Andy) Aberle



EARLY (RE)CHORDS

The very first seeds that were to grow into Perth's Men in Harmony Barbershop Chorus were sown in December 1984 when Bruce Okely invited a few singer friends to his home and introduced them to the special four-part, unaccompanied close harmony known as **barbershop**.

Those early informal gatherings were the first step in Bruce's plan to bring barbershop singing to WA and, although we didn't know it at the time, to the whole of Australia.

His enthusiasm for the style stemmed from a visit Bruce made, together with three associates, John Little, David Macgill and Laurie Russell, to the July 1984 International convention of the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America (SPEBSQSA) in St Louis, Missouri.

The four men, all trained and experienced singers, were well known around Perth as the quartet, **Four Notes**, singing a wide range of music to an appreciative following.

About a year earlier they "stumbled" on some barbershop music and, immediately captivated by the unique harmonies, sent off to the American Society for more information. The invitation to St Louis followed. Overwhelmed by the hospitality, fellowship and amazing skills displayed at the huge gathering and assured of maximum US encouragement and support, the foursome returned determined to share the joy of barbershop with fellow Australians.

1985

Following an enthusiastic response to the first few meetings, a public get-together sing-in was advertised for Friday January 18 at 7.30 pm in the Subiaco Theatre Centre.

It is obvious that the quartet was surprised and delighted by the number of men who gathered on that and subsequent Fridays - there was no doubt - barbershop singing was under way in Perth!

Recruitment was largely by word of mouth and by mid-March had reached more than thirty, now meeting in the Assembly Hall of Perth Modern School.

The **Four Notes** had become the barbershop quartet **Vocal Connection** (a symbolic

reference to the musical link that had been forged with US barbershoppers). Laurie Russell decided not to remain in barbershop singing and his place as a tenor in the quartet was taken by Wally Bucknell, an experienced barbershopper who had learned his craft in Canada. The quartet, Bruce, John, David and Wally, became a vital teaching aid and inspiration to the band of raw recruits who had gathered. Bruce also began producing learning tapes, recording in his own voice with piano support each part of every song. They were enormously helpful.

Gradually the novices began to experience that incredible thrill of hearing themselves contributing to a growing number of acceptable barbershop chords.

THE FIRST TRIUMPH

There was shocked surprise and almost disbelief when Bruce announced on March 22 that the group was invited to provide a ninety-minute show at the Subiaco Theatre



The first concert presentation - Subiaco Theatre Centre, April 1985

Centre (Hole in the Wall Theatre) on Sunday April 14 at 2.30 pm as part of the Perth Theatre Trust Community Arts program of free concerts.

The Theatre Centre Coordinator asked Bruce for a name for the ensemble for publicity and other purposes. The musical Director suggested that "Men in Harmony" was an accurate and appropriate title and would suffice for the time being. Apparently a few ideas had been canvassed but there had been insufficient time to progress the matter.

The concert was a triumph beyond the wildest dreams of any of the thirty-three participants. The theatre doors were opened at 2.10 pm and had to be closed seven minutes later with people sitting in the aisles and a large, disappointed throng locked out. In response to a plea from the theatre management, Men in Harmony agreed to a second, modified presentation at 4.30 pm for the two hundred people who had patiently waited.

The three chorus appearances in the program were augmented by items from four quartets (barbershop?) **The Four Herdsmen, The Triune Four, The Haloes** and, of course, **Vocal Connection**. There was also an outside group from Kalamunda, **The Hillsiders**. The compere was Tony Howes.

Costumes consisted of the singers' own grey trousers and white shirts with cravats supplied by the chorus (a \$2.00 donation is not compulsory but will help, thank you) and largely the result of great effort and time by Alice Okely.

The chorus sang: *Give Me That Barbershop Style, Shine On Me, Girl Of My Dreams, Carolina In The Morning, Memories* and *Wild Irish Rose* (would you believe!).

Men in Harmony earned its first performance fee - \$100.00, which was applied to the purchase of music from the US.

Members celebrated on May 17 with a social gathering at the conference room of Wright's Hardware Centre in Beaufort Street, courtesy of Dick Lambert. They invited potential members and entertainment included the **Barberettes** (soon to become a chapter of Sweet Adelines) who had strongly supported the April Show. This was the first sharing with the lady barbershoppers and the beginning of a very happy association which continues today.

FORMALISATION

That first successful outing had also clearly demonstrated that Men in Harmony was here to stay and a steering committee met on Anzac Day to consider the group's future. Those men, **Andy Aberle, Wally Bucknell, Neil Durston, John Little, David Macgill, Bruce Okely, Frank Parrotte** and **Arthur Tonkin**, recommended the formal establishment of Men in Harmony Barbershop Chorus and approved a draft constitution. They, incidentally, also recommended the formation of a controlling body, the Western Australian Association of Men Barbershop Singers.

On Friday June 14 1985, at a Special General Meeting, members enthusiastically adopted the Men in Harmony constitution and the first officers were elected. They were - Gerry Chrystal, President; Wally Bucknell, Vice President; Don Bowes, Secretary; Frank Parrotte Treasurer and Neil Durston, Graham Okely and Dan Dowsett, Committeemen. Don Bowes and Frank Parrotte did not take up the above posts, Bruce Okely, who had been appointed Musical Director, acted as Secretary until Dan Dowsett could take over a month

or so later and Neil Durston became inaugural Treasurer.

At that time work began on a major refurbishment of Perth Modern School but Men in Harmony rehearsals continued in the common space area of one of the classroom blocks with access to a staff room for tea making.

In August, Graham Okely (Bruce's son) was appointed Deputy Musical Director and a drive was begun to increase membership. As an aid in promotion, the Men in Harmony logo was professionally commissioned and adopted.

BIG PLANS

During their visit to the US the quartet had talked to Frank Pipal of Windsor travel, Chicago, about the possibility of a visit to Australia of a top American quartet, the type of project in which Frank specialises. During September of 1985 he visited Perth as part of an exploratory tour of the whole country. Closely attended by Men in Harmony officers, he was shown all the city's attributes (including a trip on the Swan River in Gerry Chrystal's boat) and departed with plans firming for a tour of Australia by a champion quartet. After further negotiations (by the national body) a booking of Perth Concert Hall was made for April 1987 - at the time an amazingly ambitious proposal for the fledgling chorus!

With membership steadily growing, on Sunday afternoon, October 13, Men in



Government House Ballroom - October 1985

Harmony combined with the ladies, now the **Perth Harmony Chapter** of Sweet Adelines, to provide a benefit concert for the Save the Children Fund at Government House Ballroom. The finale, which brought wild applause, was the first concert presentation of *Lida Rose* and *Will I Ever Tell You*. It was to become a favourite of the combined choruses and fans alike.

In those early days risers consisted of about thirteen metres of single step, eighteen centimetre high units made by Andy Aberle. These were augmented when necessary by hiring some box-like units from **Perth Harmony Chapter** but it was obvious that eventually something better would have to be found.

The first year's engagements finished with a return invitation to Subiaco on Sunday December 15 followed the next evening by a concert for residents at Rowethorpe Home. The Subiaco fee, incidentally, doubled to \$200.00.

Fifty five members farewelled that hectic first twelve months at a social evening at the Wright's conference centre "bring your wife (or friend), a plate and \$2.00 to cover incidental costs."

1986

1986 opened with rehearsals at a new venue, the Nurses' Training Centre at Princess Margaret Hospital, Roberts Road Subiaco. Arranged by members Adrian Briffa and Dr Peter Masters, it was to be home for Men in Harmony for that year.

Work began immediately on preparing repertoire, including new songs, for an Australia Day sing out in the forecourt of the Perth Concert Hall on January 25. This successful outing, which gave the chorus great exposure, set the scene for special recruiting nights in February.

The growing standing of Men in Harmony was demonstrated by an invitation to sing for the Gilbert and Sullivan Society on February 11 which was well received by a discerning audience.

Increasing membership prompted concerns about caring for new members, improving the induction process and setting entry and ongoing standards. Section leaders (administrative) were appointed to assist with communication and liaison, and to this end, a newsletter, **Chordbuster News** appeared. Unfortunately there was only one, excellent, issue and, although the need was obvious, it was to be some time before a regular publication was to appear.

Of particular interest is one item:

- We are many voices but one instrument
- Learn the words
- Get the new tunes into your head quickly
- Place the music in your file for later referral
- Give the hardworking conductor your whole attention during training rehearsals
- Polish the harmonies

- Practice the breathing
- Relax and enjoy singing.

Sound familiar? and the chorus was only one year old!

LET'S GET THE SHOW ON THE ROAD!

During those first few weeks of the new year, a great deal of effort and planning was devoted to arrangements for a Men in Harmony tour to Bunbury and Albany during the March long weekend. The party of seventy (including partners) set off in two coaches on Saturday March 1 for a concert in Bunbury that evening - a brave new touring company determined to infect the South West with this exciting singing style!!

Unfortunately the results were not quite like that but it was a wonderfully exciting and stimulating adventure for the participants. All staying together in the same motels, roadside picnic lunches and, in defiance of the Musical Director's instructions, almost constant singing along the way. - "don't worry he's on the other bus!"

With some help from the South West Music Society, the Bunbury audience in the Mechanics' Institute Hall was reasonable but short of expectations. With no local supporting group, numbers for the matinee and evening shows in the beautiful Albany Town Hall were even more disappointing.



Picnic lunch at Kojonup - South West Tour

The resulting financial shortfall was recouped by increasing the personal contributions from the singers. But no-one was dismayed and this relatively minor hitch did not detract from the overall enthusiasm and fun that was evident throughout the project - it was voted a huge success and the fellowship enjoyed by all added a new quality to chorus activities. A great deal had been learnt from the venture as well.

Incidentally, in Bunbury most members met, for the first time, Don Amos, Life President of the British Association of Barbershop Singers. Don and his wife were visiting their daughter in Bunbury and the meeting with Men in Harmony was to be the first of many over the years during which Don has given great advice and support to the Chorus.

A quiet period of consolidation followed but by mid-year members were asking for more opportunities to sing. This request was met by several outings. One evening in July a sizeable chorus descended on Braemar Lodge in Bicton. The usually sleepy retirement home resounded to the lively *Chordbusters March* but peace was restored with *Kentucky Babe* and *The Lord's Prayer*.

Earlier that day a small group had attended Saint Hilda's Girl School to demonstrate barbershop to the morning assembly. Quite a daunting assignment for the men but they were well received and looked the part in the newly issued Men in Harmony blue wind cheaters. They wore the same rig a week later on a Saturday morning singout at the Carillon Centre in the heart of the city. All good exposure and enough to satisfy the craving to sing in public, for the time being.

Later that month Bruce and Graham attended Harmony College in the US and returned, newly enthused and with sharpened skills and additional resources and learning aids from which the entire chorus benefited.

THE FIRST BIG SHOW

Meanwhile, parallelling Men in Harmony's growth had been the formation and development by some members of the chorus of a national barbershop body. The original concept of a Western Association of Men Barbershop Singers had been superseded by a wider vision, the Australian Association of Men Barbershop Singers (AAMBS). As part of the promotion and establishment of this new body, AAMBS conducted an Australia wide contest for barbershop quartets. Contestants submitted a video of a performance and, from seven entries received, the **Barbertones** (No. 1) quartet from Brisbane were judged the winners. Plans were immediately formulated for a grand concert featuring the quartet at the newly remodelled Perth Modern School Auditorium in September.

The **Parade of Barbershop Harmony** on Thursday 25, Friday 26 and Saturday 27 evenings and a matinee on the Saturday afternoon was a huge success. It was Men in Harmony's first "big" show and included the **Perth Harmony Chapter** and their top quartet, Striking a'Chord, together with Vocal Connection. It was also the first time Perth audiences and, for that matter, Men in Harmony, had seen or heard other barbershoppers

live and the **Barbertones** were immensely popular with a smooth and professional presentation.



Perth Modern School - Parade of Barbershop Harmony

The show had been the catalyst for hastening the provision of the most professional green waistcoats, designed and produced by Alice Okely, Cheryl Okely (Graham's wife) and Cheryl's mother. Individually fitted, it was an enormous task, expertly undertaken by the three ladies. Later complemented with bow ties and arm bands, they proved wonderfully versatile and served the chorus well for some time. Alice stored and maintained the waistcoats for several years.

Staged in the name of AAMBS, **Parade of Barbershop Harmony** achieved over \$4500 profit which was donated to the national body to help finance the big show planned for April in the following year at Perth Concert Hall and preparation for that event now took on a high priority.

The steady development of Men in Harmony, both musically and numerically, continued to raise questions for the executive about formalising induction procedures and standards and resulted in the drafting of the first set of guidelines. Wally Bucknell was appointed the inaugural Chorus Manager and Bruce continued to produce single-handedly, learning tapes for all songs and these were sold to members at four dollars each - a one dollar mark up for general funds.

The year remained busy to the end with quite a few Christmas engagements. These included an exciting invitation from Channel 9 to record a song for Christmas broadcasting. Extra rehearsals were scheduled and the recording took place on the evening of December 5. It was extremely hard work. About forty "takes" occurred but very little use was made of it. The producer was obviously dissatisfied with the singers' inability to smile. It was a sobering experience and a hard lesson for Men in Harmony.

Among the other outings was a presentation in the foyer of the Concert Hall and a very important invitation to sing for visiting parliamentary delegates in the entry hall at Parliament House.

The end-of-year function was a very happy social evening held at the Royal Commonwealth Society Hall, Subiaco.

The seasonal break was a short one because important invitations were increasing and 1987 was shaping up to be the busiest yet.

1987

Whilst the nurses' training facility at PMH had proved immensely helpful to Men in Harmony in that early stage of development, it was a crowded venue and something better had to be found. The chorus expressed its gratitude to the hospital with a \$500.00 donation.

AMERICA'S CUP FEVER

Rehearsals resumed on January 9, at a new venue, Royal Commonwealth Society Hall, Subiaco, to prepare for Men in Harmony's appearance at the grand American's Cup Ball, to be held at Elders Wool Store, Fremantle on January 28. The chorus presentation was well received with dinner suited VIPs clapping along to the harmony. A handsome \$500.00 fee resulted. A feature of the chorus repertoire were songs representing countries involved in the cup challenge - *Pokare Kare Ana* (NZ), *Give My Regards to Broadway* (US) and *Advance Australia Fair* (Aust).

The reward was even higher when the chorus appeared, on February 5, aboard the cruise ship **Vista Fjord** in Fremantle harbour for a fee of \$750.00. The passengers, mostly wealthy Americans, responded enthusiastically to familiar tunes sung in the crowded, luxurious ship's lounge.

Two weeks later the chorus took barbershop to the foothills with an afternoon concert at the Gosnells Amphitheatre, the group's first experience with open air presentation to a fairly remote audience and primitive sound assistance.

There were other less demanding engagements but most chorus planning and preparation was focused on readying Men in Harmony for their most ambitious project to date, the **Best of Barbershop** show at Perth Concert Hall on Saturday, April 11

SIDE STREET RAMBLERS

Once again presented under the AAMBS banner, the show was a resounding success, far exceeding anything that Men in Harmony could have imagined. A near full house of 1574 (about 91%) thrilled to barbershop at its best from Men in Harmony, **Vocal Connection**, **Perth Harmony Chapter**, **Striking a'Chord** and, of course, **the Side Street Ramblers**. The finale, featuring the whole company, was an original eight part barbershop arrangement for ladies and gentlemen's choruses, of *I Wonder Why - You're Just in Love*, specially commissioned from Jeff Carroll. It brought the house down.



Welcome to the Side Street Ramblers

The **Side Street Ramblers** were accompanied by a touring party of about sixty (mostly barbershoppers) around whom a range of social activities and sight-seeing was arranged. Men in Harmony members and partners joined in a wine cruise, a dinner at Kings Park and a very happy picnic at Yanchep on the Sunday. It was a great thrill for the Perth singers to meet and sing with barbershoppers from the other side of the world - participating in their first real afterglow after the show is an experience none will easily forget.

From the show profit of nearly \$7,000.00 Men in Harmony received \$2,000.00 and it was mutually agreed with AAMBS that the national body was now financially secure and

no longer required the fiscal support of the chorus. In all Men in Harmony had donated more than \$10,000.00 to found a national organisation, a remarkably generous gesture!

COMING OF AGE

The outstanding achievement in big time entertainment had a profound effect on the chorus which prompted new initiatives and developments. Len Barnett was commissioned to arrange construction of risers (still in use) based on an English design. With trolleys (built by Alex Pritchard) the kit cost about \$1,200.00 and dramatically changed the chorus presentation. To house the risers and other equipment a 3m x 3m shed was purchased and located in the grounds of the Royal Commonwealth Society Hall.

The Musical Director emphasised the importance of attracting singers who could hold a tune and the need to raise the level of competence of existing singers. His plans to assess members systematically were fully endorsed by the committee. Official name badges were issued and a procedure instituted for new members to be formally welcomed by the President and Musical Director in front of the whole chorus.

Ways and means of improving stage presence was a frequent topic and it was suggested that maybe a very large quartet (VLQ) could be formed to meet the increasing request for day-time singouts. A new chorus letterhead was devised which reflected the increasing professionalism of Men in Harmony.

The chorus was in demand for engagements and the Musical Director and committee became more discerning in those accepted but it was still a heavy program.

On June 7 the chorus returned to the Subiaco Theatre Centre for a Sunday afternoon performance and the next week a group of members began working with Jeff Carroll in his plan to form a new barbershop chorus. The assistance continued for some weeks and resulted in the creation of the **A Cappella Fellas**.

ANOTHER FIRST

In a year of highlights and firsts, July saw the initial collaboration between Men in Harmony and the Karrinyup Symphony Orchestra in a joint concert presentation at Perth Modern School. The two-night season on July 3 and 4 followed by a return appearance on July 25 (in aid of Save the Children Fund) was another triumph and broke new ground for both the chorus and orchestra alike. The *Old Songs* medley and special *Blue Danube* arrangement were great successes.

The second television experience for Men in Harmony occurred on July 11 when they appeared for Channel 7 in support of the Miss Personality Quest awards at Observation City. The chorus sang the *Gay Nineties Medley* and, although the broadcast was live the singing was pre-recorded in a special sound studio and the men experienced miming for the

first time. It was a very glamorous occasion.

In August, a delightful Sunday barbecue in the hills provided a welcome social diversion for the hardworking chorus and it was well supported

Following the success of the Barbertones visit in 1986, AAMBS conducted



And welcome to the Barbershop Boys

another quartet contest. The winners, Linc Abbott's **Barbershop Boys** from the Gold Coast, Queensland, were brought to Perth for Men in Harmony's annual show, **Barbershop Harmony Time**, in September, this time at the Octagon Theatre.

The **Perth Harmony Chapter** was not involved but the top ladies quartet Striking a'Chord appeared along with A Cappella Fellas in one of their first public outings. Variety was added by the inclusion of two young ballroom dancers who performed in front of the chorus during the singing of the *Blue Danube* and other waltz numbers. The new risers were a huge success for Men in Harmony's presentation.

The **Barbershop Boys** were polished and entertaining, but for the first time, houses fell short of expectations and there was a realisation that maybe the Perth "barbershop market" did have a saturation level. Happily, a break-even financial result was achieved but, after the earlier easy sales successes, it was a chastening experience.

However, the reputation of Men in Harmony was evident in invitations to sing at a

Freemasons concert at the Concert Hall in October, at the Tall Ships farewell in Fremantle in December and at the Fremantle Arts centre annual craft fair the next day. For this outing the full chorus made appearances and several quartets moved among the crowd giving more intimate, informal items.



Tall Ships Farewell

A LADIES SUPPORT GROUP

To this point Men in Harmony had received great support and encouragement from their wives and partners in all chorus activities - costumes, meals, selling tickets and attending performances. In November some of these ladies met to consider their role in chorus life and the result was the formation of a ladies support group. The chorus was, and remains, immensely grateful to their ladies whose contribution in some way or other to all Men in Harmony's successes can not be overstated. From those early, informal beginnings the group consolidated and thrived and, in its organisation, efficiency and consistent support over the years probably remains unique in Australian barbershop experience.

As usual, recruiting had been ongoing throughout the year but there had been wastage and 1987 finished with a membership of sixty - seven tenors, twenty five leads, fourteen baritones and fourteen basses. There were several potential new members. The question of how best to facilitate the induction of these people was a recurring topic and, as the year drew to a close, Bruce actively encouraged the development of a Music Leadership Team to assist him in dealing with this and other issues.

Financially the chorus was sound with \$4,000.00 in the bank and new risers, shed and costumes all paid for. The Royal Commonwealth Society Hall was working well for most aspects of chorus work.

1988

The new year commenced with the committee's resolve "to do something about choreography" and also get a newsletter started. At the same time initial enquires had begun as to the feasibility of a Men in Harmony chorus making an overseas tour to the UK in 1989 and a sub-committee was working on the project. Early indications were very positive.

There was great excitement and anticipation for two educational projects being planned by AAMBS - a visit by Line Abbott in March and another from four of the world's best barbershoppers in September, the **Kenosha Chordsmen** from SPEBSQSA headquarters in the United States.

A concerted recruiting effort (with newspaper advertising costing over \$500.00) resulted in a reasonable response but only about four new members passed the audition. It was concluded that the experiment had not been worth the expense and that personal contact and other low key methods were more effective means of attracting new members.

Line Abbott arrived on March 3 for a ten day stay. He worked with men in Harmony on two evenings and with other groups over the period. This included the five quartets currently active within Men in Harmony ranks.

Several opportunities occurred for Line to see the chorus in action. On the Thursday Men in Harmony sang, for the first time, on Jack Clancy's charity concert at the Wesley Centre in the city. This has become a regular annual outing that members look forward to. On Friday evening the chorus staged the **Barbershop Expo** show at the Royal Commonwealth Hall and sang two shows at the Subiaco Theatre centre on the Sunday.

The sessions with Line highlighted several basic weaknesses in Men in Harmony's work and emphasised one overriding point - barbershoppers must sing correct notes before chords will ring!! - a piece of advice that has been heard many times since.

Some interesting engagements followed including singing at the opening of the new Forrest Place in April by Her Majesty the Queen. The line-up included top performers like Jackie Love. The **Perth Harmony Chapter** invited Men in Harmony onto their annual show in July and on September 15 the chorus once again sang in the foyer of Parliament House for another gathering of distinguished international visitors. The standing of the chorus was reflected in the payment of a fairly standard fee of \$500.00 for these and other engagements.



Parliament House Foyer

THE KENOSHA CHORDSMEN

There is no doubt that the highlight of 1988 was the visit of the **Kenosha Chordsmen**. Tom Gentry, Mel Knight, Jim De Busman and Bill Myers represented the pinnacle of barbershop singing expertise and the chorus capitalised in full on their visit to Perth.

There was a solid program of workshops for the chorus and quartets with Men in Harmony families providing accommodation and transport and a range of social activities for the four specialists and their wives.

However, much planning and effort was centred on the big public show at His Majesty's Theatre on September 30 and October 1. With the **Kenosha Chordsmen** as the top draw card the program also included Men in Harmony, the **A Cappella Fellas** and **Perth Harmony Chapter**.

Audience numbers for **Barbershop Showtime** at about 1,200 were quite reasonable and the show a great barbershop success. However, the major benefit from the visit was the immense amount of knowledge that the foursome were able to impart in such an accomplished and generous manner. The friendships established with the distinguished visitors were deep and abiding and have proved of great value to Men in Harmony over the years.

Barbershop Showtime also prompted another review of chorus costumes. the result was the provision of a comprehensive new outfit; white shoes, white rousers, blue shirt and a white bow tie, together with a straw boater and hat bands. David Morrison made up white belts. It was the first complete costume planned and supplied in total by the chorus to sixty three members. It was a popular rig with the men for quite a time.

As the record of engagements shows it had been a very busy singing year finishing with a return visit to the Fremantle Arts centre on December 11.

A NEWSLETTER AT LAST

Another notable event in 1988 was the emergence in May of the chorus magazine, "Chorus Chatta". Edited and produced by Doug Barber with the help of his son John, it was an instant success and very quickly became the vehicle for carrying a wide range of news, information, reminders, etc.

The second committee objective was fulfilled with the engagement in September of professional choreographer, Barry Sreagh to help with stage presence. Unfortunately, the experiment was not a success. Barry's ideas were too elaborate and not suited to the more mature barbershop "hooper". However, all agreed it was worth the try.

THE DOWN UNDER CHORUS

Throughout the year plans had progressed for the trip to Britain and, with about thirty singers indicating a definite commitment, arrangements had firmed for an April 1989 departure. The group was meeting and rehearsing on Sundays at the Greetings Hometel Hotel managed by Pat and Rae Knight. Pat also chaired the organising committee.

At the urging of the British hosts the group had settled on a distinctly Australian name, the **Down Under Chorus** and in December accepted a contract for several engagements at IKEA showrooms in Osborne Park.

1989

The overseas project dominated Men in Harmony activities for the first half of 1989. Each participant self-funded travel and accommodation costs but the group conducted fund raising events to subsidise the cost of the special "dinky di" costumes the travellers wore. There was a barbecue and a quiz night both well supported by all Men in Harmony members.

Normal chorus activities continued with the whole group learning some of the special music that the tourists were working on. Most notable was *A Transport of Delight*, Bruce's arrangement of the Flanders and Swann fun song. It was to prove popular, not only on tour but also later in local presentations.

There was a string of engagements, including a February appearance in the Ross

Memorial Church in aid of the organ fund and also Jack Clancy's concert in March. For the Save the Children Fund Concert a week later at Perth Modern School, in addition to the full chorus, the **Down Under Chorus** made its first public appearance in costume. This was repeated when Men in Harmony travelled to Harvey on April 8 to sing on a fund raising concert for Muscular Dystrophy. The local group, **Pieces of Eight** shared the program and this was to be an association which has continued over the years.



Down Under Chorus - Perth Modern School

The planned trip overseas had generated a great deal of media interest. A story appeared in the *West Australian* (with photo) and Men in Harmony were invited to sing on the ABC's **In Tempo** program on April 15. While **Vocal Connection** sang "live" on Channel 10 Andy Aberle was interviewed about the project.

The fifty-eight member party (twenty-nine singers) departed on April 22 amid great TV and newspaper coverage and farewelled by a strong contingent of Men in Harmony members remaining behind. This was typical of the support, encouragement and enthusiasm displayed by members unable to make the trip for one reason or another and a reflection of the genuine fellowship and barbershop camaraderie that had developed in Men in Harmony.

The venture was a resounding success, not only for the wonderful reception, hospitality and fellowship extended to, and enjoyed by, the tourists but also for the great learning experience for each Men in Harmony member. Most had never seen or heard another barbershop chorus "live" and, all of this, culminating in a mass sing on stage by



Look out Brits - here we come!

1,400 men, was like being in another world for the Down Under singers. The Aussies did not, or course, compete but were invited to perform on a couple of concert programs and were very warmly received by the British audience. The visitors made news in the UK.

They were filmed arriving at the airport and at other times and the documentary was shown around Britain for some years after.

Back home the half chorus remaining carried on a regular work program under Deputy Musical Director Graham Okely but there was a limit to what the depleted group could do. As the travellers trickled back to base and numbers gradually recovered, engagements were undertaken.

MORE COUNTRY TRIPS

Almost by way of consolation for those who “held the fort”, country trips were a feature of the latter part of the year.

President Len Barnett had been progressing enquiries for some months and arrangements firmed for the chorus to make a trip to Geraldton over the weekend of October 10/11. Most of the men and partners travelled by coach and all stayed in dormitory accommodation at the Bill Sewell Centre.



At the Bill Sewell Centre, Geraldton

Men in Harmony shared the program at the beautiful Queen's Park Theatre with the Geraldton Choral Society Choir. It was a first class venue and a great show. Support was less than hoped for but was adequate.

The touring party stopped off at Moora on the way home and presented a mini-concert on the Sunday afternoon to an enthusiastic local audience. Earlier it had been hoped that a deviation to Three Springs might have been possible but this did not eventuate.

The only sour note for the trip was the loss of a great many personal items such as cameras, shavers, radios etc stolen from members' gear while the party was away at the Geraldton theatre performing. Fortunately, all insurance claims were met and, in spite of that setback the trip was voted a great success.

The next month the Men in Harmony were Narrogin bound for the weekend of November 19 and 20. This invitation resulted from a connection Bruce had with the town through his son and reinforced by the temporary presence there of Graham Bishop.

Once again, the majority travelled in coaches but were all billeted in private homes in the town. The Saturday show was in aid of the instrument fund for the local high school band which contributed to the program at the Narrogin Town Hall. It was well supported and so too was the delightful ecumenical church service in the big Roman Catholic church on the Sunday morning. Bruce Okely gave the address and the Men in Harmony chorus

provided all the music. The congregation sang along to rousing hymns arranged in the barbershop style and the chorus presented special anthems and other pieces.

They very successful weekend was considerably assisted by sponsorship from the local newspaper and its editor, John Proud.

During that weekend, the Men in Harmony quartet, **Scotch & Dry**, entertained patrons at a restaurant after the show on the Saturday evening. This group, like **Vocal Connection** were great ambassadors for Men in Harmony and popular with Perth audiences. The two quartets combined for a novelty outing earlier in the year when they sang aboard the Flying Scotsman train during that locomotive's visit to Perth. The other active quartet of the day was **A Little Off the Top**.

Men in Harmony had, from the outset, endeavoured to foster quartet singing but a shortage of tenors was a limiting factor. Several foursomes had come and gone over the years including, **The Morley Four, The Triune Four, Sentimental Blokes, Six Foot Four, Three and a Bit** and **The Haloes**.

John Little was playing an increasing role assisting with the musical work and his contribution was recognised with his appointment as Assistant Musical Director.



Wembley Downs Shopping Centre

The engagements' schedule remained heavy including two visits to Fremantle in November, a spot on Graham Maybury's fund raiser at the Concert Hall and a series of singouts at the Wembley Downs shopping centre for Christmas.

1989 ended with membership down to fifty five but, considering the disruption the overseas venture had caused to normal chorus activities there was no dismay and it was resolved to actively rebuild in the new year. More importantly, it was evident that the full chorus had benefited greatly and was singing better barbershop as a result of the experience gained overseas. As Len observed in his annual report "... everyone returned full of their experience and with a new vigour and drive. This has since been transmitted to Men in Harmony as a whole."

Plans were in place to mark the chorus' first half decade with a special celebration in March 1990 and work was also progressing on a big show in October around another visiting champion quartet from the United States.

CHORUSMAN OF THE YEAR

At the annual breakup, Sam Jacobs was nominated inaugural **Chorusman of the Year** for his continuous contribution in arranging refreshments at rehearsal and other occasions and also for his work on the costume sub-committee. This new award, carried a perpetual trophy donated by Peter van Noort and Bryan Kendrick, a genuine barbers shaving mug. The award has acquired a very prestigious standing with the membership.

Men in Harmony's sixth year maintained the momentum and level of achievement that had marked its progress to date.

1990

Bruce Okely retired from the position of Clerk of the House of Assembly in the state parliament and Men in Harmony were invited to join the tributes offered by his associates at a special gathering in Parliament House. The chorus presence was a surprise, especially to Bruce, and a great privilege for his barbershop friends to share in a delightful occasion. Bruce was made a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of his services to the Western Australian Parliament.

FIVE YEARS CELEBRATED

Men in Harmony extended their own tributes to Bruce at the special Five Year Anniversary Dinner, held at the Joan Watters Centre, Wembley, on March 24. At that event Bruce was awarded the first Life Membership of Men in Harmony for his outstanding contribution to the foundation and development of the chorus.

It was a very special evening highlighted by the attendance of quite a number of former members. In all, 175 singers, partners and friends gathered to reflect on the past and enthuse about the future. Ladies from **Perth Harmony Chapter** kindly helped in waiting on tables and also entertained with some songs. Senior member of Sweet Adelines, Rae Knight graciously proposed the toast to Men in Harmony.

A February membership drive had resulted in ten new members which restored to total to sixty six (30 leads, 20 basses, 10 baritones, 6 tenors). This build-up was timely because the growing maturity of the chorus was raising new issues.

The need for higher standards of musicianship and for each member to accept personal responsibility in this regard resulted in the implementation of assessment and testing by use of audio tapes. The membership endorsed the plan and saw it as essential if the chorus were to progress. They found great benefit from the comments on their work by section leaders.

FUND RAISING A GROWING NEED

The other important realisation at this time was the growing need to raise funds to finance important chorus projects in the future. For the early years of its existence Men in Harmony managed quite well on revenue from annual and weekly fees and engagement fees. Plans to finance the big show in October (budget \$18,000.00) emphasised that a new approach was required.

The ladies support group, headed by President Marion Grigor and which shortly after took the appropriate name, "Partners in Harmony", offered full support for fund raising projects and offered members for a joint sub-committee. The team were: Ken and Noreen Talbot, Doug and Joan Barber, Neil and Vi Durston and Peter and Julianne van Noort. Tom Clayton was coordinator.

A dedicated group organised by Wilf and Edna Eccleston regularly attended at Sunday swap meets (mainly Karrinyup). Supported by many members this proved a steady "money spinner". It involved a great deal of hard work, finding stock, storing it and transporting goods to and from the venue. But it was also enjoyed by the participants who provided a mini-chorus each time which generated very good publicity with the passing public.

Two other very successful ventures during the year were a beetle night in June and a film day in August.

In addition to all these efforts, Men in Harmony funds received a healthy boost when the **Down Under Chorus** affairs were wound up and a surplus amount of \$4000.00 was passed to the main chorus, earmarked for the purchase of costumes.

Meanwhile, normal chorus activities continued at a demanding pace with an emphasis, once again on country trips. There was a return visit to Harvey in April, a fund raiser for the Como Uniting Church in May and a very happy one day trip to Quairading in June. After the previous year's successful trip to Narrogin, the chorus once again headed that way for the weekend of August 11 and 12. Run on similar lines with private billeting, it was another happy venture.

In September the Moora Woolarama committee invited Men in Harmony to provide the

music for an ecumenical church service followed by a public show. Held in an historic old barn on a pioneer property the enterprise was a novel and exciting success with a high level of support from the local townspeople.

INTERSTATE RIVALS

These demanding engagements (and others) helped ready the chorus for the **Harmony on Parade - Barbershop Style** show at the Perth Concert Hall on October 12 featuring the 1988 International Champion Quartet **Interstate Rivals**.

Negotiations and planning for this visit had been in progress for over twelve months between AAMBS and Frank Pipal's Windsor Travel. Once again the quartet was accompanied by about sixty touring supporters (mainly barbershoppers) and the party was scheduled by AAMBS to visit all Australian barbershop centres.

In the past all the big Perth shows had been staged in the name of AAMBS because the national body's incorporated status offered a legal protection that the chorus did not have in its own right. Early in the year it was decided that Men in Harmony should incorporate and the task of making the necessary changes to the constitution was set in motion. This was completed in time for the October show to be staged in the name of Men in Harmony (Inc).

Also, on the Musical Director's suggestion that a curved riser complex would produce a better sound, inserts were designed and fitted between the modules in readiness for the big event.

The show was another triumph. The Perth ladies had taken out the Silver Medal at the first ladies national competitions in Melbourne earlier in the year and **Mischief Down Under** carried off the national quartet championship. Both groups featured on the bill. Men in Harmony, **Scotch and Dry** and **Vocal Connection** were well received and Roy Smith tied the program together with his very entertaining *Odd Odes*.

The big, appreciative audience revelled in the dazzling performance of the **Interstate Rivals**. The finale, featuring the quartet and the rest of the company singing the old favourite *Lida Rose*, was brilliant.

The visitors were complimentary about Men in Harmony's singing and it was clear that the raising of standards and extra work was paying off. Once again, the newer members of Men in Harmony had seen, and heard, the best in the world in action for the first time.

There was a busy social program (including the traditional picnic at Yanchep) which rounded out a wonderful occasion.

After the show members were on a high but there was no room for complacency because AAMBS had announced that the first Australian National Convention was programmed for

July 1991 and that Queensland's Gold Coast Chorus had been charged with hosting it.

The singing year finished on a quiet note with some return Christmas engagements at Wembley Downs Shopping Centre.

At the wind-up the sectional part items topped the celebrations and Ken Talbot was named Chorusman of the year for his outstanding work, since the chorus was formed, as music librarian.

On a less joyful note members farewelled Graham Okely as Deputy Musical Director. Graham had found it necessary to resign from the chorus due to family commitments. He and Cheryl were given a resounding ovation for all they had done for Men in Harmony since its formation. His departure was (hopefully) recorded as "leave of absence".

1991

A NATIONAL COMPETITION?

Of all the goals that Men in Harmony had pursued (and achieved) in the past, none was as exciting or stimulating as planning and preparing for the inaugural national competition. Members knew that Men in Harmony was the biggest club in Australia but had very little knowledge of the status or competence of other clubs in the eastern states.

The Musical Director, in collaboration with the Music Leadership team had narrowed a list of potential contest songs to *Sunny Side Up* and *From the First Hello* with a supporting contest package.

It was timely that this important year should commence with an AAMBS sponsored visit by a top US educator, Ron Black and his wife Elaine. (He's the one who said "Perth isn't the end of the earth but you can see it from there!").

Men in Harmony went into camp at Kum-Ba-Yah centre, Marmion, over the weekend of February 22/24 for a very solid workshop with that talented couple. Temperatures around the forty degree mark were ignored.

Working closely with Bruce, Ron Black highlighted weaknesses in vowel matching, note accuracy and overall quality while Elaine concentrated on stage presence. She emphasised two key concepts, "energise" and "use your personal 2½ inches of space", exciting new ideas for most members.

The experts were able to see the chorus in concert at a small show hosted by, and held in, the North Beach Baptist Church. Also, before departure, they suggested some movements for *Sunny Side Up* and left no doubt that there was a great deal of work to be done. At the same time they had instilled a new confidence in Men in Harmony that would carry the chorus to great heights.



North Perth Baptist Church

For the most part, the Royal Commonwealth Society Hall had proved a very suitable rehearsal venue but some problems had arisen with noise from other activities and availability. When a rent increase was proposed Men in Harmony located an alternative venue at Saint Nicholas Anglican Church Hall, Floreat and the move, including the shed, was carried out at the end of January.

After the AGM, the Committee published in *Chorus Chatter* a set of guidelines aimed at helping members achieve personal and group goals and setting some rules for participation in the competition chorus. The emphasis was on personal responsibility for achieving certain standards in the barbershop art form.

To assist in bringing greater discipline to rehearsal activities, John Christie was appointed the first Program Director, charged with keeping the evening on track and achieving the goals for that night.

The chorus was not seeking engagements but there a few Fremantle outings, including singing at the Royal Fremantle Golf Club in March and a return to the Fremantle Arts Centre in April. One lucrative invitation that could not be refused was a singout for the Golden Oldies Rugby Convention at the Fremantle Passenger Terminal. The conditions were not conducive to good barbershop but the fee of \$800.00 made the effort worthwhile.

THE EXCITEMENT BUILDS

A sub-committee, headed by Len Barnett, had been working for some time on travel arrangements, accommodation etc. for the convention and had progressed details with the Queensland Travel Centre in Perth. It had been recommended by the Committee and endorsed by the members that, in order to take the largest possible chorus to the competition, the best possible travel subsidy should be offered to members and partners, and with this in mind, there was no let-up on fund raising. The local swap meet team kept hard at it, John Minchin organised chocolate sales, there was a big barbecue at David Bennet's Gosnells home and a dinner at Dorchester Lodge.

A feature of the barbecue was Dusty Durston's produce stall. The onions sold well but few knew that they started out as several bags of "over-ripe" product which had been washed, peeled and packed by loyal barbershoppers earlier in the day - their first introduction to "onion skins" and enough to bring tears to the eyes and hinder good breathing. In fact, the range of items sold to raise money at different times was almost limitless. These included pears, preserves and plants, horse and sheep manure, jams, firewood and even "harmony herring" in season.

The result of all this and earlier hard work made it possible to subsidise members and partners by \$390.00 each which helped considerably in easing the total burden of about \$1,200.00 per person.

When the **Down Under Chorus** disbanded in 1989, the participants decided to set aside \$500.00 of the surplus funds to finance the provision of a suitable memorial to commemorate that incredible adventure. Members saw an opportunity in the forthcoming national competitions and offered the money to AAMBS to provide a suitable perpetual trophy for presentation to the champion chorus. The offer was accepted and the **Down Under Chorus Trophy** is now a feature of the National competitions.

GOLD COAST HERE WE COME!

The conscientious personal application by members of Men in Harmony and a heavy program of extra rehearsals brought the chorus to a top level of readiness and anticipation for the big event.

The **Perth Harmony Chapter** and other friends farewelled the men at a special concert evening in the Karrinyup Community Centre on Friday, July 5 and most of the party flew out for the Gold Coast on Sunday, July 14.

The forty-eight singers and thirty-seven supporters were housed in high rise apartments, over seventy in the same block. The remainder, about a dozen, were in an adjacent building.

Daily rehearsals were held in a surf club building nearby. This work was an important final preparation but there was still time for group outings to places of interest.



Inaugural Australian Gold Medal Champions

The convention, held at the Sheraton Mirage Hotel, was a very successful event and a triumph for Men in Harmony. Judged by the newly crowned International Champion Quartet, **The Ritz**, ten choruses competed and the Perth group were placed first with the **Gold Coast Chorus** second and **Bathurst** third. Five Men in Harmony quartets had registered but unfortunately, **Scotch and Dry** were forced to withdraw due to illness. In seventh place, **Vocal Connection** was the best scoring WA foursome.

It was observed at the time that the inaugural national convention represented a “coming of age” of barbershop singing in Australia and there was no doubt that each member of Men in Harmony felt that statement also applied to the Perth chorus.

Apart from the sheer exhilaration of winning, so much had been learned and enjoyed and so many new friends in harmony made. The Perth contingent were thrilled by performances from **The Ritz**, the **City of Sails Chorus** visiting from New Zealand and their champion quartet **Vocal Minority**.

Back in Perth, with some pride, Men in Harmony took the risers as guests on the **Perth Harmony Chapter's** annual show in September, wearing their shiny gold medals and a smart new striped shirt.

BIG DECISIONS

Following the convention success two new important issues arose for Men in Harmony - should the chorus take up an invitation to represent Australia at the International

competition level and secondly, should Men in Harmony bid to conduct the next (1993) convention.

At a Special General Meeting which preceded a celebration dinner on September 15, the club resolved to proceed with both projects. It was recognised that the overseas trip would only be possible with substantial sponsorship to achieve a target of up to \$300,000.00 and that an enormous amount of work would be involved.

Normal chorus activities continued. To cater for a growing demand for daytime singouts at nursing homes, retirement villages and hospitals a special sub-group of retirees was proposed. It was an immediate success. With David Martin coordinating and John Little directing, the group took the name **Harmony Handful**. Over the years the group has brought great joy to many hundreds of new fans. Its strength is in the special fun and fellowship that the twenty-five or so members enjoy on these outings.

As the exciting year drew to a close, the chorus once again teamed with the **Karrinyup Symphony Orchestra** to present a fund raiser for the Save the Children Fund at the Octagon Theatre on November 23.

There were Christmas outings at the Hyatt Hotel, **Carols by Candlelight** at Bassendean and a prestigious private party engagement in Peppermint Grove.

IS FRIDAY THE BEST NIGHT?

Plans were formulated for a strong membership drive next year. For some time opinion had been expressed from members that Friday was not an attractive rehearsal night for young men. This concern had been re-inforced by what the members had observed at the convention with most other groups (none of whom met on Friday) having a much higher proportion of young men than Men in Harmony. The matter was put to the membership in the form of a questionnaire. The result showed that Friday was popular, closely followed by Tuesday. However, up to ten men indicated problems with Tuesday and the issue was left in abeyance for the time being.

The end of year windup was held at Wembley Lodge and spirits were high with, as usual, the part sections providing great entertainment. Adrian Briffa's "heavenly tenor" presentation was a riot but **Partners in Harmony** showed hitherto hidden talents in an offering almost tuneful and certainly innovative.

Wilf Eccleston was awarded Chorusman of the year for his great effort, together with wife Edna, in coordinating the regular swap meet activities which raised over \$4,000.00 during a period of eighteen months or so.

The evening closed with the focus for the next two years somewhat defined, following an announcement that Men in Harmony had been assigned the task of conducting the second

AAMBS national convention in 1993.

As Special Events chairman, Andy Aberle was appointed Chairman of the Second National Convention Committee and a small nucleus, including Peter van Noort and Frank Lawton, began work immediately on this, Men in Harmony's greatest undertaking to date. **1992** The Perth Concert Hall was booked for October 15/16 1993 and enquiries begun regarding suitable convention headquarters venues and accommodation options.

Another sub-committee was working on the Calgary Project (Calgary being the location for the 1993 International). This included the potential for very big raffles and other fund raising ideas.

Because of the magnitude of these two undertakings, President Rob Walley proposed some special workshops involving club officers and other chorus leaders. Coordinated by Rob Sproule, they were aimed at analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the chorus, considering policy and setting targets in a wide range of chorus activities. The objective was not to produce hard and fast rules or solutions but rather canvass ideas for building a better Men in Harmony barbershop chorus. As much as anything the discussions were a reflection of the growing maturity of the chorus and confirmed that for the most part, it was developing along sound, well managed lines.

ANOTHER NEW HOME

The annual recruiting drive brought numbers close to seventy and, with an urgent need for more separate spaces for sectional work and for **Partners in Harmony** to meet, it was obvious that Saint Nicholas Hall was no longer adequate for rehearsals. At the end of February, through the good offices of John Christie, chorus activities shifted to the Red Cross Hall in the grounds of the Hollywood Repatriation Hospital. The venue offered plenty of space and facilities that met all Men in Harmony's needs. It has proved ideal and continues to serve the chorus well.

In his first report for the year the Musical Director emphasised the need to maintain high standards for recruiting. He was continuing to selectively assess and change parts for some singers and was particularly pleased with the assistance he was receiving from the Music Leadership Team. The committee re-affirmed its support for the Musical Director and changed John Little's title to Deputy Musical Director.

BARBERSHOPPER OF THE MONTH

To provide an avenue for acknowledging the contributions or achievements of individual members in chorus or other activities, a new award was instituted - **Barbershopper of the Month**. A large ornate medal (with ribbon) was supplied for presentation monthly for noteworthy achievements. Maurice Dixon was the first recipient (in February) for rescuing a wheel chair bound lady caught on railway tracks. It was designed to include an element of fun and continues to be well received by members.

Engagements early in the year were kept to a minimum while the chorus prepared for a visit in May by US educator, Gary Bowles and his wife.

Bruce and John Little flew to Sydney to attend a special workshop for Musical Directors as part of a weekend gathering for the Eastern Region. Andy Aberle also attended, mainly to use the opportunity to promote the Perth convention with New South Wales barbershoppers. The response, indicating strong support for the WA event, was very heartening.

Men in Harmony moved into the Anglican Training Centre, Morley over the weekend May 8/10 for forty-eight hours of solid work with Gary Bowles.

He was an accomplished teacher who raised the quality of Men in Harmony's singing to a new plateau. He also worked with quartets with, sometimes, brutal frankness but all agreed the pain was worth it. His objective and positive summing up after the workshop gave the music leaders and administrators great help in planning for the future.



Anglican Training Centre - Garry Bowles visit

The chorus was in top form a week later singing in a fund raising concert at the Perth Concert Hall for Soroptomists.

During the first weekend in June the **Perth Harmony Chapter** very successfully hosted the second national convention for Australian Sweet Adelines and Men in Harmony members assisted the ladies in the conduct of the competitions. Later, in August, the men joined the ladies in a special show at Perth Concert Hall featuring the top US ladies quartet, **La Fiesta**.

THE FIRST RECORDING

From about June onwards most of Men in Harmony's energies were directed to preparing for the chorus' first recording. Graham Bishop had carried out a very thorough investigation of various options. These culminated with the chorus gathering in a recording studio at the WA Academy of Performing Arts during the weekend of July 24/26. Recording proved to be very hard work but quite exciting - although the novelty wore off as the task progressed and four or five "takes" became the norm before Bruce and the recording engineers were satisfied.

However, the result was another first for Men in Harmony in the Australian barbershop singing scene with the production of the seventeen song **Harmony Gold**, first on audio tape and later in compact disk form. Initial sales were brisk.

The recording project had highlighted the need for a much more disciplined approach to the question of copyright in every chorus activity. All "unofficial" copies of music in the hands of singers were recalled and disposed of. Veteran Music Librarian, Ken Talbot conscientiously applied the new chorus policy.

For years Bruce had single handedly produced learning tapes for all chorus music but now the work was being carried out by the Music Leadership Team, Len Barnett, David Martin, Frank Lawton, Allan Tuckwell and Graham Bishop. Bruce assisted where necessary and later established quartets did some of the work. In the early years singers paid for their tapes but the chorus was now providing them free on the basis of out-of-date tapes being recycled.

It was also time to review the movement of the risers for outside engagements. From the time they were built, these units had been transported by a succession of chorus members using private trailers and handling the equipment piece by piece or, if possible, rolling the trolleys on to the trailer. Alan Hughston donated a trailer frame and Keith Davies designed and supervised the building of an oversize trailer, complete with its own ramp, which greatly simplified the chore. The chorus remains indebted to members who volunteer for the task of towing.

CALGARY BEYOND REACH

A great deal of effort had been devoted to the Calgary Project by an energetic and hard working sub-committee. This included many meetings and a range of investigations. There had been many fund raising events such as the quiz night in May, the ongoing swap meet and a big raffle. There was also a novelty activity in the weekly visit, each Monday, to an orchard that Bruce and Alice were caretaking at Dwellingup. A number of members and wives visited to help with the work and fruit from the exercise was sold for chorus funds.

However, after twelve months it was clear that the target was well beyond what could be realistically achieved and about September the project was reluctantly abandoned.

MLC AUDITORIUM - A NEW VENUE

The removal of this load was timely because a great deal of energy was concentrated on preparations for the annual show, **Harmony Celebration**, at the Methodist Ladies College auditorium, Claremont on October 2/3.

Featured artists were the champion New Zealand quartet, **Vocal Minority**, who Men in Harmony brought to Western Australia specially for the occasion. With the **Perth Harmony Chapter** also on the bill together with Silver Medal ladies quartet, **Hot Gossip**, the show was a great success returning a handy profit. The new venue proved ideal for the barbershop singing style.

Musical commitments were heavy for the remainder of the year. In November the chorus sang with the Karrinyup Symphony Orchestra in Winthrop Hall to raise funds for Save the Children Fund. Early in December some Christmas songs were recorded as the nucleus for a second tape but unfortunately the quality of the work was not of a good enough standard to proceed with the project. This was another sobering experience for the chorus.

The singing year ended with a return to Bassendean for Carols by Candlelight. There was a repeat invitation to the private home in Peppermint Grove and a singout in Forrest Place on December 23.

Harmony Handful's popularity had continued to grow throughout the year and they too had a busy end-of-year program.

The Christmas function was a formal dinner at Dorchester Lodge, Melville. It was a very happy experiment. The part contributions were outstanding (including the ladies) but the baris took the honours with Doug Davies' *Ballad of Bethmal Green* about a dumb blonde who marries a man of Mediterranean origin. Neil Durston was awarded Chorusman of the Year in recognition of his and Vi's great contribution in a variety of fund raising activities.

Appreciation was expressed to **Partners in Harmony** for their loyal and generous assistance to the chorus in many ways, including the provision of new costume pieces.

1993

Throughout 1992 a lot of work had been done in preparation for the AAMBS second national convention and, with the new year, increasingly the huge task dominated Men in Harmony activities.

However normal chorus life went on. In February, Men in Harmony welcomed Joe Husstege, an Associate Director of the **Big Apple Chorus**, New York, who was touring Australia on a private visit. Over several days he coached quartets and the chorus and was guest of honour at a happy evening barbecue by the river at Crawley. It was a very stimulating start to the year.

The annual recruiting drive produced disappointing results with only about three new singers but the total of seventy members was considered satisfactory.

With a demanding year ahead the Musical Director kept up his individual voice improvement program. He also emphasised again the need for a disciplined approach to rehearsals to achieve best use of every minute. This included early erection of risers, starting on time and adhering to the work plan.

Singing commitments for the year commenced with a concert at Perth Modern School. Staged by the **Perth Concert Band**, Men in Harmony made two appearances in very cramped circumstances but it was a happy outing and a warm audience in one of Men in Harmony's favourite venues. A week later it was off to Northam to sing on the program for the **Avon Valley Harmony Chorus** show.

There were other outings but efforts were concentrated on preparations for a visit in June from Tom Gentry, Australia's first Veteran in Residence. Sponsored by AAMBS, the program involved a tour of the country, giving every Australian barbershopper access to this legendary teacher.

OVERSEAS AGAIN?

The pressure was relaxed in May when the chorus took a weekend off to join the ladies of **Perth Harmony Chapter** for **Barbershop Bonanza** on Rottnest Island. It was a very happy and relaxed break with barbershoppers from both groups literally "taking over" the permanent camping area. There was some serious work on craft, Bruce and Cathy Rainey (Musical Director of **Perth Harmony Chapter**) sharing the instruction. Activities ended with an impromptu concert in the primitive island "theatre". Surprised and delighted holiday makers revelled in some great a capella music and heard the first public airing of Bruce's beautiful arrangement, for combined choruses, of *Perhaps Love*.

Over the years, the number of active quartets in Men in Harmony ranks had remained at about four. As a positive step in encouraging more interest, a monthly "quartet night" was commenced in May. Coordinated by Gordon Grigor, the gatherings proved popular and provided opportunities for members to try out in various quartet situations.

The quality of Men in Harmony's stage presence was a recurring concern and, in an effort to improve the overall standard, Carol Macintyre, Deputy Musical Director of **Perth Harmony Chapter**, was engaged to work with the men, especially on potential convention competition songs.

The growing sophistication in recording training tapes resulted in the acquisition of a four track recording unit which greatly assisted the Music Leadership Team in that task and produced a high quality product. Alan Hughston's technical advice was of considerable help in commissioning the new gear. As well as this, the Chorus received a grant from the Lotteries Commission to help purchase a computer to assist with the arrangement and

preparation of new music. The Musical Director quickly became expert in the use of this tool producing new music for the Chorus very economically.

TOM GENTRY RETURNS

Tom Gentry's visit in June was a very busy time. Men in Harmony went into camp at the Anglican Centre in Morley and, once again, worked through a very solid program. The principal objective was to settle on the competition songs and endeavour to pinpoint specific weaknesses that Bruce could continue to work on. As usual, there was time for fun - like learning to woodshed - and all agreed it was a great weekend.

The quartets, too, benefited from intensive sessions with the expert and Tom also managed some time with the ladies' chorus and quartets. He was farewelled at a relaxed and happy evening at Sizzler Restaurant, Innaloo.

The key point to emerge from the exercise was the importance of individual responsibility for each man's own performance (again!!). Collectively, the chorus had to work on improving the flow of sound and maintaining true pitch. Among other things were some experiments with the arrangement of the singers on the risers calling for continuous adjustments by Chorus Manager, Vic Richards.

Meanwhile, working to a detailed plan and strategy, the Convention Committee had gradually been assembled as the various preparatory tasks were activated. By mid-year the team was at full strength, nineteen men and women. Tom Gentry, as Chairman of Adjudicators, had approved arrangements for the competitions and everything else was in place and ready for an indicated registration of more than four hundred delegates.

Late in August, Men in Harmony once again conducted an intensive weekend workshop, this time back at Kum-Bah-Yah. Old friend, Gary Taylor, lead of **Vocal Minority** and Musical Director of the champion New Zealand **City of Sails Chorus**, was flown over for the task.

He was a practical, down-to-earth teacher to whom members immediately warmed as he concentrated on the two competition songs. Gary had the opportunity to see the chorus in action when the men bussed into the MLC auditorium on the Saturday night to do a spot on the **Perth Harmony Chapter** annual show. The weekend also included intensive sessions with quartets.

Gary was complimentary about the standard of Men in Harmony's work and the chorus was buoyed and enthusiastic in the run-up to the convention. Extra rehearsals were scheduled in September and during the final week the chorus met daily.

THE PERTH CONVENTION

A total of 405 delegates (260 singers) began arriving in the second week of October for an extremely successful national gathering. Nine choruses and twenty five quartets competed, Unfortunately, in a repeat of the first convention experience one Men in Harmony quartet, **Vocal Connection**, was forced to withdraw through illness.



Perth Convention - Mass Sing - Forrest Place

The **Gold Coast Chorus** won gold and Men in Harmony took silver with **Central Coast** (NSW) placed third. There was a consolation when the Perth quartet, **Bad Habits** (old friends of Men in Harmony) were crowned champion quartet.

A big public show, **Best of Barbershop**, featuring the award winning groups and special guests, **Mischief Down Under**, was held in the Perth Concert Hall on the Saturday evening, October 16. The near full house of Perth barbershop fans revelled in a great production.

Full details of the AAMBS Second National Convention are recorded in a comprehensive report in Men in Harmony records. It should be noted in this journal that the event was yet another triumph for the Perth chorus, its members, **Partners in Harmony** and friends in the **Perth Harmony Chapter**. Visitors were lavish in their praise for the hospitality and fellowship they had enjoyed in WA and there were many letters of appreciation and congratulation.



Convention Show



Partners in Harmony

The enterprise achieved a profit of nearly \$16,000 (mainly from the public show) half of which was passed to AAMBS in accordance with Men in Harmony's convention bid.

Surprisingly, there was very little disappointment displayed by Men in Harmony singers. Most members acknowledged that they had been outsung on the day and were well satisfied that the chorus had never performed better. There was confident optimism about "next time" in Canberra, 1995.

And there was no time to dwell on the past with a Save the Children Fund raiser at the Octagon on November 27 and Carols by Candlelight at Kardinya on December 19. The two outings required almost completely separate repertoire so there was some hurried brushing up, especially the Christmas music.

At the windup dinner in Dorchester Lodge, Graham Bishop's leads provided a forgettable cameo from the Mikado (in full costume) and the basses took liberties with *The Old Songs*. Renne Dewaard was awarded Chorusman of the Year for his work on the new riser rails, riser transport and management.

Andy Aberle was presented with Men in Harmony's second Life Membership for his contribution to the chorus over the years.

1994

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The high level of conferencing and administrative work that had been necessary during the past year or so in dealing with the big projects had highlighted the advantages of good forward planning and goal setting. With this in mind, a **Future Directions Workshop** was convened by President Rob Walley for all day Saturday January 29 at the Booragoon Hotel. About twenty members, drawn from the Committee, the Music Leadership Team and the general membership, reviewed and developed the work of similar earlier workshops. Practical workable guidelines were devised in the areas of recruitment, standards, skill development, quartet development, choice of music and funding.

One fact of life became very clear to the chorus leaders that, while the convention at home had provided a respite from travel for Men in Harmony, in the foreseeable future competitions would be somewhere in the Eastern States and there would be an ongoing need to raise money to subsidise members' air fares. In practical terms, about \$1500.00 per month was a desirable savings level in addition to normal operating costs.

At the annual General Meeting, members' annual fees, which had been a modest \$5.00 since the formation of the chorus were increased to \$20.00 per annum. The weekly attendance fee was raised from \$2.00 to \$3.00.

The second national convention had once again demonstrated that most other choruses had a higher proportion of younger men than Men in Harmony and the membership pressed the chorus administration for a resolution of the meeting night issue. The Committee had not shelved this question but moving the night had not proved easy. It was resolved that the matter would be dealt with as a matter of urgency..

After a demanding convention year, the Committee decided that 1994 should be a year for spreading the barbershop message in country and regional centres.

The first half of the year was fairly quiet musically but the Music Leadership Team further developed induction standards and training procedures, an extension of the ongoing objective of raising and maintaining overall levels of performance.

Eight chorus members flew to the inaugural **Australasian Harmony College** in April. Held on the Sunshine Coast, it provided first class instruction in basic barbershop craft from American experts and Australian & New Zealand support staff. Old friends Mel Knight and Jim deBusman headed the team and were, as usual, brilliant teachers. The **Bad Habits** quartet also attended and all reported a very worthwhile event. Deputy Musical Director, John Little, whose attendance was sponsored by Men in Harmony, brought back a store of new ideas for craft and warmup work.

One of the teaching staff was Gary Taylor and, after the College, he came to Western Australia to work with the **Perth Harmony Chapter** in their preparations for the third ladies national convention in Sydney. He was able to spare time to visit Men in Harmony and, as usual, the chorus thoroughly enjoyed his stimulating coaching ideas.

The May overseas trip to Rottnest was, once again, a happy weekend. The ladies concentrated on their competition repertoire and there was less opportunity for joint work. The concert for holiday makers went well, especially Bruce's latest arrangement for the combined choruses of *Love Changes Everything*.

The men were able to extend their best wishes to the Sweet Adelines when the ladies and their friends were farewelled at a special function at the Red Cross Hall on Friday June 3. The evening was run on pseudo-competition lines to help the women prepare for the big tasks ahead and the large audience assisted in providing the right atmosphere. Men in Harmony were overjoyed a week later with the news that **Perth Harmony Chapter** had "scooped the pool" in both quartet and chorus categories.

Later that month, in appreciation for the facilities enjoyed by the chorus at Hollywood, Men in Harmony staged a fund raising variety concert on behalf of Red Cross at the MLC Auditorium, Claremont. **Bad Habits** performed together with other choral and instrumental groups. Red Cross handled the marketing and ticket sales. All agreed it was a first class show although the house could have been better.

MEETING NIGHT CHANGED

In June the decision was taken to change the meeting night to Tuesday. It had been a long difficult issue. The main concerns were for the half dozen or so members for whom Tuesday still presented a problem. Despite this, the men concerned each generously suggested that the move should at least be tried in the best interests of the chorus. There had also been a problem in finding a venue because the first response from the Red Cross was that the hall was unavailable. However, they were able to negotiate with the group involved and the way was clear for Men in Harmony, after nearly ten years of meeting on Friday, to change to Tuesday.



**Men in Harmony Musical
Director- Bruce Okely**

Over a period of several months, Stan Prentice had pursued the possibility of obtaining sponsorship from the Challenge Bank. These enquiries came to fruition in July with a donation of \$2000.00. The grant was loosely conditional on Men in Harmony acknowledging the support publicly, when appropriate, and also directing some effort into promoting barbershop singing in schools, an objective that complemented Men in Harmony philosophy.

In July the chorus returned to Government House, after a nine year gap, for an afternoon fund raising concert in aid of Friends of Government House. It was an elegant, prestigious outing well received by a capacity audience, including the Governor.

John Little directed the men on that occasion because Bruce Okely had only just returned from a trip to the United States Harmony College. Sponsored by Men in Harmony, the Musical Director came back enthusing about his experience and with new ideas to share with the chorus all aimed at raising standards and building a better Men in Harmony.

PARTNERS IN HARMONY - A NEW STATUS

For some time, **Partners in Harmony** had been considering their relationship with **Men in Harmony** and whether the informal system needed reviewing. The issue was brought about by the **Men in Harmony** committee resolving that, for future conventions, the chorus would subsidise the travel costs of singers only. As the ladies had contributed substantially over the years, it was felt that there should be some equitable basis for continuing to work together and sharing the money raised. The matter prompted many considerations but it was finally resolved mid-year by appropriate amendments to the **Men in Harmony** constitution

These moves cleared the way for the ladies to continue to work with the men as a sub-group of the main body. Interested ladies became Associate Members of **Men in Harmony** and representatives of **Partners in Harmony** were invited to sit in on Committee meetings for the items of mutual interest.

BACK TO THE BUSH FOR BARBERSHOP

Meanwhile the plans for country touring had been pursued and Andy Aberle, assisted by Merrill Claessen, had visited Bunbury several times to finalise arrangements for a concert at the fine Bunbury Entertainment Centre on Saturday August 13.

The **Harmony Parade** show, featuring **Bad Habits** along with **Pieces of Eight** from Harvey and the **Newton Moore Senior High School Concert Band** from Bunbury was a great concert.

Despite a heavy advertising and promotional program, the support was disappointing but this did not dampen the spirits of **Men in Harmony**. As always on such outings, the fellowship was great and the afterglow was no exception. The chorus treated the guests to a traditional barbershop singalong and the Musical Director managed to teach a couple of tags to the happy crowd.

The Perth party, which numbered eighty-five including partners, all stayed at the Welcome Inn Motel and about half travelled together by coach. The party stopped off at Mandurah to stage a show on the Sunday afternoon. On this occasion, **Hot Gossip**, the ladies' quartet, joined the bill along with a local string group. It was a happy deviation, much more intimate than Bunbury and a very appreciative audience gave the chorus and friends a wonderful reception.

The following month **Harmony Parade** went to Kalgoorlie/Boulder for a show on September 3 at the Kalgoorlie Centennial theatre. This time **Mischief Down Under** joined the company along with local men's and women's barbershop groups and a swing band. Once again most of the party travelled by coach but it was a smaller group with only a few partners making the journey.

For the first time, a grant was obtained for the project from the Department for the Arts. At \$1500.00 it covered the cost of the coach charter fee. Andy and Vic Richards put a great deal of effort into marketing, making two promotional trips to the Goldfields but numbers were no better than Bunbury. However, prices had been increased and this produced a better return which, coupled with the grant, produced a favourable result and a useful offset to the Bunbury shortfall.

A public workshop on the Sunday morning was well supported and the two Kalgoorlie/Boulder barbershop groups benefited considerably from the publicity.

Men in Harmony members voted the two country excursions great successes and of course revelled in the fun and fellowship of the adventures.

BARBER POLECAT SCHEME

The monthly quartet nights had tended to falter and it was decided to shift the emphasis to general singing training while still using the quartet as the teaching vehicle. Graham Bishop and Howard Hughes joined Gordon Grigor in organising the nights and the Barber Polecat training scheme was adopted.

It was instantly popular with members. For the remainder of the year, singers old and new participated under the direction of the Music Leadership Team and a steady stream of men began qualifying in the various stages of singing polecat songs faultlessly. The project is clearly an enjoyable and satisfying way for members to raise individual skills and, of course, benefit the chorus.

Meanwhile, some members of the Chorus were enjoying great benefits from a weekly, south-of-the-river afternoon gathering which became known as the **Thursday Group**.

It began as a few singers experimenting in quartetting but gradually expanded to fifteen or more who met to improve their skills and just "enjoy a sing." Held at the home of either Ernie Turpin, Peter Raven or Peter vanNoort and with Allan Tuckwell directing and advising, it proved not only good fun but also of great assistance in the training of new members.

In September, with the changed rehearsal night firmly in place, it was decided to test thoroughly the theory that Tuesday would be more attractive to new members than Friday. A special recruiting program was put in motion and, over succeeding weeks, about thirty potential recruits came to the rehearsal evenings - the majority younger men. The whole chorus worked to welcome the visitors and ease their induction. By the end of the year some had passed their auditions and others were progressing well.

Vic Richards conducted a music theory class for the newcomers (and for some old

hands) with a very pleasing response and the whole recruiting exercise was an encouraging and positive indicator for the future.

Fund raising for the year centred on two occasions. A quiz night at the Manning Hotel in July was well supported and raised more than \$2000.00. An evening of dancing of various styles held at the Floreat Forum Hall was also a resounding success and there were suggestions that both should be repeated.

In November, Men in Harmony were invited to sing for a morning service at St Francis Anglican Church in Karrinyup. It was an impressive occasion with all the music provided by the chorus including support for the congregational hymns

There was an opportunity to sing Christmas music at a **Bad Habits** fund raising concert at the MLC Auditorium on December 3 and again at the final engagement for the year, an open air singout at Adventure World on December 17. The latter confirmed that outdoor presentations always pose problems for a capella singing but the men enjoyed it and the \$600.00 fee made the outing worthwhile.

A substantial formal dinner was planned for March 1995 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the formation of Men in Harmony and, with this in mind, a lower key annual breakup was proposed. This took the form of a barbecue held at St Christopher's Church, Bicton. It was a happy and relaxed occasion at which Peter vanNoort was awarded Chorusman of the Year for his outstanding work for Men in Harmony over many years.

CONCLUSION

In recounting the history of Men in Harmony one is struck by the fact that, at any given point in the last ten years, the chorus always seemed to be poised and ready to tackle a new challenge or particular goal in the immediate future, invariably with great success.

As a new decade dawns that is certainly the case in January 1995. Such constant striving is the ongoing stimulation that has been the life blood of the organisation and promises a continuing lively and exciting life for the chorus.

The Men in Harmony Barbershop Chorus has demonstrated by its record of sound management, both musically and administratively, that it has the capacity, strength and healthy philosophy to reach even greater heights in the future.

Andy A

MEN IN HARMONY - MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

YEAR	PRESIDENT	VICEPRESIDENT	SECRETARY	TREASURER	MEMBERS
1985	Gerry Chrystal	Wally Bucknell	Bruce Okely Dan Dowsett	Neil Durston	Don Bowes, Frank Parrotte, Graham Okely, John Little, David Macgill
1986	Wally Bucknell	Neil Durston	Vic Richards	Malcolm Duff	Dan Dowsett, Alex Pritchard, Graham Okely
1987	Andy Aberle	Neil Durston	Vic Richards	Stuart East	Dick Lambert, Wally Bucknell, Maurice Dixon, Ken Talbot
1988	Andy Aberle	Neil Durston	Vic Richards	Stuart East	Tom Clayton, Maurice Dixon, Gordon Grigor, Ken Talbot, Frank Lawton
1989	Len Barnett	Andy Aberle	Vic Richards	Stuart East	Tom Clayton, Maurice Dixon, Dick Lambert, Adrian Briffa, Sam Jacobs
1990	Tom Clayton	Andy Aberle	Rob Walley	Stuart East	Len Barnett, Vic Richards, Maurice Dixon, Dick Lambert, Sam Jacobs, Adrian Briffa
1991	Andy Aberle	Vic Richards	Rob Walley	John Nelson	Len Barnett, Maurice Dixon, Peter vanNoort, Frank Lawton, Sam Jacobs, John Christie
1992	Rob Walley	Vic Richards	Peter vanNoort	John Nelson	Andy Aberle, Frank Lawton, Graham Bishop, John Christie, Maurice Dixon, Sam Jacobs, Tom Clayton
1993	Rob Walley	Pat Knight	Peter vanNoort	John Nelson	Andy Aberle, Vic Richards, Graham Bishop, Sam Jacobs, Stan Prentice
1994	Rob Walley	Vic Richards	Bob Patterson	Stan Prentice	Andy Aberle, Peter vanNoort, Peter Raven, Sam Jacobs, Merrill Claessen, Allan Tuckwell

Note:

BRUCE OKELY

was appointed Musical Director every year from the formation of Men in Harmony and, in accordance with the constitution, was a senior officer and member of the Management Committee.

GRAHAM OKELY

served as Deputy Musical Director from August 1985 to October 1990.

JOHN LITTLE

was appointed Assistant Musical Director from April 1989 and Deputy Musical Director from January 1992

ALAN PARSONS

served as Auditor from the formation of the Chorus

MEN IN HARMONY ENGAGEMENTS

1985

- 14 Apr Subiaco Theatre Centre
 13 Jul Bentley - Canning Music Society
 13 Oct Government House Ballroom SCF Fundraiser
 15 Dec Subiaco Theatre Centre
 16 Dec Rowethorpe Village

1986

- 25 Jan Perth Concert Hall Forecourt - Australia Day Concert
 11 Feb Ukrainian Hall - Gilbert & Sullivan Society
 1 - 3 Mar Bunbury/Albany Tour
 14 Mar Nurses Quarters Princess Margaret Hospital Concert
 11 Jul Braemar Lodge Bicton
 18 Jul Carillon Centre
 16 Sep Attadale Probus Club
 25/27 Sep Perth Modern School "PARADE OF BARBERSHOP HARMONY" SHOW
 (Barbertones)
 18 Oct Perth Concert Hall Foyer
 3 Nov Parliament House Foyer
 28 Nov St John of God Hospital Subiaco
 10 Dec Pagoda Ballroom Senior Citizens
 11/20 Dec Carousel Shopping Centre
 20 Dec Southlands Shopping Centre

1987

- 28 Jan Elder's Wool Store America's Cup Ball
 5 Feb Cruise ship "Vista Fjord"
 22 Feb Gosnells Amphitheatre
 6 Mar Charles Hotel (mini chorus after rehearsal)
 30 Mar Floreat Probus Club
 14 Apr Perth Concert Hall "BEST OF BARBERSHOP" SHOW (Side Street Ramblers)
 7 Jun Subiaco Theatre Centre
 3/4/25 Jul Perth Modern School combined show with Karrinyup Symphony Orchestra
 11 Jul Observation City - Miss Personality Quest
 21 Jul Building Association Ball
 18/19 Sep Octagon Theatre "BARBERSHOP HARMONY TIME" SHOW (Barbershop Boys)
 14 Oct Floreat Forum Hall - Western Squares, square dance club
 30 Oct Perth Concert Hall - Freemasons Concert
 10 Nov Ukrainian Hall - Gilbert & Sullivan Society
 12 Dec Fremantle Harbour - Tall Ships Departure
 13 Dec Fremantle Arts Centre

1988

- 16 Feb Karrinyup Shopping Centre with Karrinyup Symphony Orchestra

10 Mar	Wesley Centre - Jack Clancy Show
13 Mar	Subiaco Theatre Centre (2 shows)
16 Apr	Esplanade Hotel Fremantle Hi-fi Convention
23 Apr	Forrest Place Opening
4 May	Trinity Church lunchtime (mini chorus)
14 May	Perth Concert Hall - Rotary Concert
8 Jun	Cottesloe Civic Centre (mini chorus)
15/16 Jul	Perth Modern School Sweet Adelines Concert
15 Sep	Parliament House Foyer
30Sep/1Oct	His Majesty's Theatre "BARBERSHOP SHOWTIME" (Kenosha Chordsmen)
16 Oct	Perth Modern School with Perth Concert Band
2 Nov	Trinity Arcade (mini chorus)
13 Nov	Perth Modern School aid for Sister Ella
7 Dec	Blue Gum Reserve - mini chorus
11 Dec	Fremantle Arts Centre
10/17/ 22/24 Dec	IKEA Osborne Park (Down Under Chorus)
1989	
24 Jan	University of WA - Octagon lunchtime
2 Feb	Ross Memorial Church - organ fund
19 Feb	Gosnells Amphitheatre
16 Mar	Wesley Centre - Jack Clancy Show
18 Mar	Perth Modern School SCF Fundraiser
8 Apr	Harvey tour in aid of muscular dystrophy
15 Apr	ABC Studios live broadcast "In Tempo"
Apr - May	Down Under Chorus trip to UK
30 Jun	Hollywood Salvation Army Village
10 - 11 Oct	Geraldton/Moora Tour
5 Nov	Fremantle Samson House
10 Nov	Fremantle Town Hall - Fremantle Music and Drama Club
12 Nov	Perth Concert Hall - Graham Maybury Fund Raiser
19 - 20 Nov	Narrogin weekend trip
2 Dec	Swan Cottage Homes
19/21/23 Dec	Wembley Downs Shopping Centre
1990	
12 Jan	Parliament House - Bruce's retirement
16 Mar	Scotch College Assembly - demo
24 Mar	Joan Watters Centre FIFTH ANNIVERSARY DINNER
7 Apr	Harvey tour in aid of muscular dystrophy
1 May	Perth Town Hall - Seniors Week
26 May	Como Uniting Church
4 Jun	Bishop's House - singing for visitors
30 Jun	Quairading - one day trip
11 - 12 Aug	Narrogin weekend trip
18 Aug	Swan Cottage Homes

31 Aug	South Perth Civic Centre fundraiser Mischief Down Under
2 Sep	Moora day trip - church service and show
12 Oct	Perth Concert Hall "HARMONY ON PARADE" SHOW (Interstate Rivals)
11 Nov	Fremantle Hospital for Soroptimists
12 Dec	Trinity Arcade
22/24 Dec	Wembley Downs Shopping Centre
1991	
22 - 24 Feb	Kum-Ba-Yah - Workshop Ron/Elaine Black
23 Feb	North Beach Baptist Church - concert
8 Mar	Royal Fremantle Golf Club
14 Mar	Wesley Centre - Jack Clancy Show
14 Apr	Fremantle Arts Centre
30 Apr	Sheraton Hotel - Institute of Valuers
1 Jun	Fremantle Passenger Terminal - Golden Oldies Rugby Tour
5 Jun	Belmont High School
5 Jul	Karrinyup Community Centre - our send off
19 - 20 Jul	Gold Coast - FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTION
20/21 Sep	Perth Modern School Perth Harmony Chorus Concert
23 Nov	Octagon Theatre SCF Fundraiser
18 Dec	Peppermint Grove - Private home function
22 Dec	Bassendean - Carols by Candlelight
1992	
12 Mar	Wesley Centre - Jack Clancy Show
8 - 10 May	Anglican Centre, Morley - Garry Bowles workshop
16 May	Perth Concert Hall - Soroptimists Concert
13 Jun	Kelmscott Hall - Armadale Primary School
26 Jun	Gosnells Hall - Amaroo Homes Dinner
3 Jul	Quality Langley Hotel - Am cham Luncheon
9 Aug	Perth Concert Hall - Sweet Adelines "La Fiesta" Concert
2/3 Oct	MLC Auditorium "HARMONY CELEBRATION" SHOW (Vocal Minority)
8 Oct	Red Cross Hall - show for patients
20 Oct	Burswood Showroom - Quality Control Conference
28 Nov	Winthrop Hall - SCF fund raiser
17 Dec	Peppermint Grove - Private home function
20 Dec	Bassendean - Carols by Candlelight
23 Dec	Forrest Place - carols
1993	
27 Mar	Perth Modern School Concert with Perth Concert Band
3 Apr	Northam Town Hall - Avon Valley Ladies Concert
22 Apr	Hyatt Hotel - Australian Insurance Trust
22 May	Burswood Ballroom - Speedcar Association
5 Jun	MLC Auditorium Mischief Down Under Show
3 Jul	Hyatt Hotel - Charity Ball
28 Aug	MLC Auditorium Perth Harmony Chorus Show
14 - 17 Oct	SECOND AAMBS CONVENTION

16 Oct	Perth Concert Hall - Convention Show
31 Oct	St Mark's School - concert
27 Nov	Octagon Theatre SCF Fundraiser
19 Dec	Kardinya - Carols by Candlelight
24 Dec	Forrest Place - carols
1994	
11 Jun	Kelmscott Hall - Armadale Primary School
18 Jun	MLC Auditorium Red Cross Concert
24 Jul	Government House Ballroom Fundraiser for Friends
13 Aug	Entertainment Centre, Bunbury HARMONY PARADE
3 Sep	Centennial Theatre, Kalgoorlie HARMONY PARADE
24 Sep	MLC Auditorium Perth Harmony Chorus Show (2 shows)
20 Nov	Anglican Church Karrinyup - church service
3 Dec	MLC Auditorium Bad Habits Show
17 Dec	Adventure World - Christmas singout

Note: The venues in which Men in Harmony have most often sung are:

Perth Concert Hall, 10; Perth Modern School, 8; MLC Auditorium, 6; Subiaco Theatre, 4; Wesley Centre, 4; Octagon Theatre, 4; Fremantle Arts Centre, 3; Parliament House, 3

HARMONY HANDFUL

ENGAGEMENTS

Harmony Handful was established in September 1991

1991

28 Oct Melville Aquatic Centre
10 Dec Melville Care Group

1992

10 Mar Postal Institute
12 Mar Wesley Centre Jack Clancy Show
30 Mar Hamersley Hospital
14 Apr McCallum Park
6 May Scottish Masonic Homes
10 Jun Halidon Primary School
5 Aug Whitfords Pensioners League
19 Oct Melville Aquatic Centre
24 Nov McCallum Park
6 Dec Loftus Centre
10/18 Dec Whitfords Shopping Centre

1993

10 Feb Fremantle Darby and Joan
20 Mar St Stephen's School Fete
6 Apr McCallum Park
19 Apr Kimberley Nursing Home
11 May Armadale Lodge
16 Jul La Villa Restaurant
26 Aug St Michael's Nursing Home
25 Oct Queens Park Senior Citizens
23 Nov McCallum Park
3 Dec Red Cross Concert
23 Dec Sorrento/Duneraig Senior Citizens

1994

5 Feb	Salvation Army North Fremantle
24 Feb	South Perth Senior Citizens
10 Mar	Wesley Centre Jack Clancy Show
22 Mar	Joondana Villas
24 Apr	Duncraig Seniors
24 May	Lefroy Centre Bull Creek
22 Jun	Bentley Seniors
5 Jul	Trinity Village Duncraig
28 Jul	St Michael's Nursing Home
8 Aug	Rowethorpe Centre
16 Aug	La Villa Restaurant
24 Aug	Armadale Shopping Centre
26 Aug	Scotch College Assembly
5 Sep	North Beach Autumn Centre
20 Sep	Grace Haven Rockingham
24 Oct	Queens Park Senior Citizens
8 Nov	Subiaco Home of Peace
1 Dec	Bayswater Day Care Centre
11 Dec	Perth Zoo

MEN IN HARMONY BARBERSHOPPER OF THE MONTH

1992

February	MAURICE DIXON	Great initiative and courage in rescuing a wheelchair bound lady caught in railway tracks
March	GORDON GRIGOR	Cheerfulness in coping and recovering from illness
April	RAY FOSTER	Unflagging support in kitchen duties and at swap meets
May	IAN MCALLISTER	Outstanding efforts in learning new and old repertoire
June	ALAN PARSONS	Constant and willing work on the riser team
July	HOWARD HUGHES	All round willingness to assist in a variety of tasks
August	GAVIN ARCHER	For making the weekly trek from Mandurah
September	STAN JACKSON	Cheerfulness and a fine example
October	JOHN CHRISTIE	Good work and enthusiasm as Program Director
November	DAVID MARTIN	Great efforts as coordinator of Harmony Handful
December	ROY SMITH	Fine contribution as singer and story teller

1993

March	ROB SPROULE	Assistance in planning workshops and general good example
April	SAM JACOBS	Untiring efforts with supper and costume duties
May	RAY GRACEY	For enthusiasm and singing at the drop of a hat - or flat!
June	BRUCE OKELY	Unstinting efforts for Men in Harmony
July	RENNE DEWAARD	Work on Riser rails
August	TOM CLAYTON	Great contribution and comic relief at rehearsals
September	DAVID MORRISON	Energetic work in the warm up sessions
October	MERRILL CLAESSEN	Excellent with transport arrangements for Conventions
November	ANDY ABERLE	Contributions to the convention project
December	BILL COLE	Travelling from York for rehearsals.

1994

March	DENIS CONNOR	Thumbs up for great (and painful) work in transporting risers
May	ARTHUR BODDY	Cheerful and conscientious application to his work
July	KEITH DAVIES	Generous sharing of musical skills in training role.
November	MERRILL CLAESSEN	More good work in arranging country trips