

# COMMUNITY MUSIC-MAKING FOR CHILDREN AND OLDER PEOPLE NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2006



## **£50,000 Project to expand Silver Song Club Programme**

Arts Council England/South East have agreed to support a project costing £50,000 to extend the Silver Song Club programme into East & West Sussex, Surrey and Brighton & Hove UA. The programme will be managed by Sing For Your Life Ltd in partnership with Making Music South East, Music Mind & Spirit and Music for Change.

The project will run for 18 months and will provide participatory music programmes for older and socially isolated people and their carers. Hubs will be created in each County to manage up to four Clubs each. The Clubs will be led by trained facilitators and supported by volunteer groups from local choirs, choral societies and orchestras – many of which will be members of Making Music. A donation will be made to each volunteer group to cover travelling and administrative expenses.

Monitoring and evaluation of the project will be undertaken by The Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts & Health which is attached to Canterbury Christ Church University.

## **New Partnership with Alzheimer' Society**

Sing ForYour Life Ltd and Making Music members in Berkshire are supporting an initiative by Singing for the Brain in Newbury. Volunteers have completed a five day course spread over October-December to acquire the skills to start new therapeutic social singing groups. The course was financed by West Berkshire Community Education Fund and organised by The Active Therapy Partnership.

The course was evaluated by The Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts & Health who will produce a tool kit. This segment is financed by Arts Council England/South East.

Implementation of the programme will be undertaken by Sing ForYour Life Ltd and applications will be made to Awards For All for funding support.

## **Contract Renewal**

The contract with Dover District Council Delta Project to operate Clubs in Dover, Deal & Aylesham has been renewed for a further 12 months. This programme is financed by Dover District Council and the PCT.



**Roger De Haan**



**Sandra Howard**

## **PATRONS**

We are pleased to announce that Mrs. Sandra Howard and Mr Roger De Haan have agreed to become patrons of Sing ForYour Life.

### **The People behind the Company**

**Patrons:** Mrs Sandra Howard

Mr Roger De Haan CBE

**Trustees:**

Stephen Clift (Chairman)  
Professor of Health Education,  
Canterbury Christ Church University

Grenville Hancox MBE  
Professor of Music,  
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## Facilitators Conference

Twenty Five Facilitators and County Co-ordinators attended a Conference at St. Gregory's Centre for Music at Canterbury Christ Church University in January. The all day conference supported the expansion of the Silver Song Club network into Sussex, Surrey and Berkshire.

Presentations were given by Professors Clift and Hancox which put the programmes into context, outlined aims and objectives and described the creative thematic approach which had been adopted.

Delegates, who included representatives of Music, Mind & Spirit and Singing For the Brain, were able to discuss how singing was incorporated in their programmes and the benefits which had been observed.



## EDITORIAL

The Annual Report of the South East Regional Director for Public Health for 2005 is devoted to the challenges posed by the growing proportion of older people living in the South East. In October 2005, Population Ageing Associates published Ageing Assets – the implications of population ageing for the South East region and The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has reported on The Social Exclusion of Older People. These reports serve to emphasise the importance of our work.

We need to ensure that not only the needs but also the contributions of older people are recognised and factored into the planning process. We believe that regular singing is one of the activities which delays ageing. It can therefore be argued that the Silver Song Club programmes not only supports older people and their carers but also benefits the volunteers who manage the Clubs. We will be devoting more resources to investigate this hypothesis.

The network continues to expand as fast as we can find the resources to meet demand. New Clubs are being formed in Maidstone and Thanet and the first Clubs in each of the new networks which have been commissioned in Sussex & Surrey, should start in February.

Our sister organisation, The Sidney De Haan Research Centre, will be undertaking research into the benefits of singing by observing and gathering information from the thousands of people who sing regularly. We also intend to undertake robust cost/benefit analysis of our programmes.

## SongTrees

*"The songs that we sing in SongTrees are much more fun and much nicer to sing than pop or modern music, because you can't sing pop music with your grandparents but everyone knows the SongTrees songs!"*

*SongTrees performer, age 12*

SongTrees, which operates under the aegis of the Music Mind Spirit Trust, began with the aspiration to bring together all generations in a shared musical experience. Children, their parents and grandparents throughout the Cranleigh area have been working together for the past three years to make this possible. Armed with simple questionnaires, nearly 1000 pupils from Cranleigh Preparatory School and all local Cranleigh schools interviewed their elders to discover their earliest musical memories and favourite songs. On the way, these intrepid youngsters discovered a previously unexplored world of family, social and cultural history, stretching right back to the early part of the 20th century.

Much of the musical material revived during the children's interviews is being reintroduced into school music as 'Songs My Granny Taught Me', via heavily subsidized violin, 'cello and singing lessons through SongTrees, with additional support from Southwest Surrey County Arts. Children and senior citizens share these same songs together through regular concerts within the community.

Medical experts are evaluating the results of the questionnaire, which is creating a valuable database of earliest musical memory. This research will further the understanding and utilisation of the therapeutic potential

of musical memory for older citizens through the Music Mind Spirit Trust.

The world premiere of Jonathan Willcocks' brilliant composition 'Across the Years', which was commissioned specially for the SongTrees' launch, masterfully draws together these many themes of musical memory across the generations. It links families together within a unique performance arena in which amateurs, including the audience, and eminent professionals, such as Peter Donohoe, are able to perform alongside one another, highlighting the musical gifts we all possess.

As SongTrees continues to grow and develop, it is particularly excited about its partnership with Sing for Your Life and the Sidney De Haan Research Centre. Further information can be found on [www.songtrees.com](http://www.songtrees.com) or [www.musicmindspirit.org](http://www.musicmindspirit.org).

Music Mind Spirit is a charitable trust dedicated to nurturing the role of Music and the Arts in Health, Education and Leadership.

**Dr. Chika Robertson,**

SongTrees Director  
Music Mind Spirit Trust

## Evaluating 'Music Start' - A major initiative to promote music-making with 0-5 year olds

The Sidney De Haan Research Centre are the external evaluators of an innovative project on the Isle of Wight to promote music-making and singing with children from birth to five years. Maggie

O'Connor, Musician in Healthcare within the Healing Arts Unit of St Mary's Hospital, is leading the project, which includes musicians, a speech and language therapist and outreach workers. A novel feature of the project has been the development of a 'Music Start Pack', which is being delivered free of charge to families with young children across the whole of the island by Health Visitors. The pack includes a songbook, activities cards, two musical instruments, finger puppets and a specially prepared CD. The Music Start team has also provided an island-wide programme of training for

Early Years Practitioners to enhance provision of opportunities for music making in Early Years Settings. A particular focus of the team's work has been in two socially disadvantaged areas of the island where Music with Babies sessions have been set up, and two outreach workers are available to visit homes and offer support and

encouragement to families in making music and singing with their young children.

The team evaluating the project – Stephen Clift, Karen McKenzie and Fiona Bushell – have gathered feedback from the Music Start team from the outset, with information on the impact of their work coming from questionnaires, telephone interviews and direct observation. An island-wide survey has been undertaken of families receiving the Music Start Pack, and overwhelmingly the response has been positive.

A survey of Early Years Practitioners is taking place during February 2006 to assess their reactions to the training received and its impact in early years settings. A final report on the evaluation is due to appear in June 2006.

**Stephen Clift**

## Music Arts and Health at Canterbury Christ Church University

One of the great opportunities presented to those of us fortunate enough to work in Education is that of witnessing changes in perception. Such is the privilege that I am enjoying in the third year of running an undergraduate course Music Arts and Health at Canterbury Christ Church University as students of a variety of ages and backgrounds engage in theoretical and practical issues associated with a rapidly changing society where the demographic shift is such that a third of the UK's population will be over 60 by mid century, requiring Higher Education to respond to new challenges.

The course allows students to develop an understanding through lectures and seminars of health being affected through and engagement with arts activities. Working with such luminaries as Professor June Boyce-Tillman, whose view of self has been carefully crafted through many years of study, research and professional arts activity, (together with living for a period of time with a tribe of North American Indians), is inspirational. As too is listening to accounts of young offenders being challenged through the medium of contemporary dance or reading background literature supporting the fact that a holistic rather than a mechanistic view of health is not only preferable but also more effective. This important theoretical context provides a platform from which students develop a collaborative approach to participation in a Silver Song Club held at Folkestone Age Concern.

The impact upon students and participants alike of the practical sessions held at three weekly intervals at the centre has been very encouraging. It is one thing to read of social isolation, to be presented with demographic statistics, or to read about cold weather allowance, but another to observe and learn about such things 'face to face'. The warmth of response from clients as they engage in singing, show concern for students welfare and academic progression, or reminisce about times past, excite and stimulate the younger visitors. Similarly stereotypical perceptions disappear quickly as clients engage with students and respond to their musical expertise enjoying the realisation of thematic approaches to sessions (e.g. 'You ai'nt nothin'but a hound dog'). Clients appreciate that students are responsible, do care, show affection and display traits of behaviour that bind us together as humans. These are not the stuff of newspaper headlines but are the foundations of a more caring society and of changes in perception.



**Grenville Hancox**

## Black and Minority Ethnic Communities

One aspect of the changing demographic structure of the South East is the growth in the number of older people from Black and Minority ethnic groups. The much younger age structure of these groups, means that over the long term, an increasing number and proportion of the population of the South East will be from these groups, and that ethnic elders – who currently number about 60,000 – will also represent a growing proportion of those aged 65 and over.

Sing For Your Life Ltd has joined with Music For Change to undertake a mapping exercise of BME music groups in Kent. It is intended that this will lead to pilot projects which will provide participatory music programmes for BME communities.

# Singing for the Brain

Singing for the Brain is a weekly stimulation session for carers and people with dementia supported by a few volunteers and led by an inspiring facilitator. Neurological exercise is imbedded in the joy and solace of singing new and familiar music. Care is taken to promote social interaction – each session begins with chat and refreshments. Funding came originally from the Berkshire Foundation, Newbury PCT Health Promotion and the Anne McCulloch fund. We then had a grant from Newbury Working Arts Trust and latterly a wonderful private donation. We funded our training Course through the Community Education Fund with help from West Berks Council staff.

It all began with Gladys, an 85 year old in residential care. She often could not remember her name and lived in a fog. I was the activities person (amongst other things) and had borrowed a poor quality music quiz. I tried this out on three successive Wednesday afternoons. In the first session there was bewildered attention with some smiles and very little participation. The second time there was recognition, more smiling and still only a little participation. The third session everyone sang! Gladys knew the words to every song and beamed from ear to ear, continuing to beam every time we met. She was very proud! I was thrilled!

*"Gladys knew the words to every song and beamed from ear to ear.."*

I became a support worker for the Alzheimer's Society. It seemed to me that people affected by dementia needed an opportunity early on to develop social networks. Carers wanted purposeful activities they could enjoy together and, in any case, carers-only activities provoked anxiety about leaving their person or difficulties in finding befrienders. Developing strong links with others in the same boat is a well-recognised strand of work in all neurological illness and in disability work. The traditional support group works well but it became clear that people don't necessarily want to focus on their difficulties preferring to have other interests. These two strands of experience led to my searching for a collaborator to devise "Singing for the Brain".

Dr Nicholas Bannan (late Director of The Music Teaching in Professional Practice Initiative at University of Reading and now at University of Western Australia, Perth) was

intrigued and agreed to devise a program to see how this could work.

We created a warm and friendly start with flowers, tablecloths, nice coffee/tea biscuits and a team of greeters who introduced people to one another and gave refreshments. Registration was made easy and name badges given out. People did not have to worry about being late and so arrived with less stress. They were met in the car park the first time (Jan 2003). We used a drama studio with very resonant acoustics (very important). We were arranged in a circle - carers and people with dementia as they wished, undifferentiated for the facilitator. The sessions began with warm-ups using clapping and singing of people's names. Songs were chosen for a variety of emotive qualities – some featuring repetition, others narrative – one was a round.

In the three sessions people with dementia learned it very well and used it to greet others. Questionnaires were completed by all after each session with carers helping some people with dementia. It was clear from the evaluations that we had every encouragement to continue.

Demand has grown so that we have run a course for "Singing for the Brain - Making Singing for Health Happen" attracting over 30 people who wish to be part of teams to start 6 new groups. We are working with Making Music South East and the Sidney De Haan Centre for Arts in Health, Christ Church University Canterbury to develop a framework for expansion with centralised funding and billing, monitoring and development using a not for profit company "Sing for your Life" which will have an interactive website to collect data and services to groups. Our hope for the future is that Singing for the Brain will become a part of treatment alongside drugs to restore confidence in people with dementia who have had this eroded over many years and to reduce the damage caused by fear, frustration, loneliness and stress on both carer and cared for.

**Chreanne Montgomery-Smith**

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## Southampton Silver Song Club

The picture is of students from Southampton University Music Department taking part in the Southampton Silver Song Club held at the Age Concern Centre Padwell Road. This club is the result of an initiative between the Volunteer Bureau of the University (organiser Kate Smith) with funding from Southampton PCT. The photographs reproduced here with permission were taken by Kate Smith.

## ***New Sidney De Haan Research Centre publications on Music, Arts and Health***

Stephen Clift and Grenville Hancox have written a chapter on 'Music and Wellbeing' for a new book entitled 'Integrating Spirituality in Health and Social Care' edited by Wendy Greenstreet (Radcliffe Publishers, 2006 ([www.radcliffe-oxford.com](http://www.radcliffe-oxford.com))). The chapter exams the links between spirituality and health and music, and argues that music can offer a powerful vehicle for engaging with the spiritual dimensions of life and for enhancing wellbeing. The particular roles that music can play in medical treatment and healthcare are explored through the work of organisations like 'Music in Hospitals', which provides as many as 4,000 live concerts every year in the UK in health and social care settings. Another recently established project described is 'Singing Medicine' based in the Birmingham Children's Hospital, which promotes singing activities with children to help improve the social and emotional atmosphere of hospital wards and aid the children's recovery. The chapter concludes:

'Music has a profound capacity to connect with and express our emotions, and can open up a world of experience and beauty, which goes beyond the mundane and banal realities of everyday life. It can therefore provide a powerful resource in promoting health in a holistic sense, embracing physical, social and mental wellbeing.'

The Centre has also taken a lead in promoting awareness of the field of arts and health through encouraging two nationally important journals – Health Education and the Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health to devote special issues to Arts and Health and to publish more research on the role of the arts in health promotion. The special issue of Health Education, which appeared in Autumn 2005 (Vol 105, No 5 ([www.emeraldinsight.com](http://www.emeraldinsight.com))) includes papers on:

### **Researching the benefits of arts in health**

**Art in the community for potentially vulnerable mental health groups**

**A qualitative review of Walsall Arts into Health partnership**

**Dance-based exercise and Tai Chi and their benefits for people with arthritis**

**"You could see it on their faces..." : the importance of provoking smiles in schools**

The themed issue of the Royal Society's journal will appear in Spring 2006 ([www.rsph.org](http://www.rsph.org)), and will include important papers by Lara Dose on lessons learned from six years of work by the 'National Network for Arts in Health', Rosalia Staricoff on methodological issues in researching the value of arts for health, Colin Greaves on evaluating the work of the 'UpStream Healthy Living Centre' in Devon and Jenny Secker describing the findings from an on-going review of arts and mental health projects across England.

## ***New Phase in the Work of the Sidney De Haan Research Centre***

The Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health was established in 2004 to promote the value of music and the arts for the wellbeing and health of individuals and communities, and more specifically to undertake research on the benefits of active participation in music-making and singing for older people. During its first year of operation, it worked closely with Making Music South East to establish the Silver Song Club Project and launch a new charitable trust Sing for Your Life to take responsibility for delivering and further developing this initiative. The work of the Centre is therefore moving into a new phase in focusing primarily on research and evaluation. A five-year business plan and research strategy has been developed, and the Centre has successfully secured further substantial funding from the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust to pursue its mission and central objectives:

### ***Mission:***

The Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health is committed to researching the contribution of music and other participative arts activities in promoting the wellbeing and health of individuals and communities

### ***Objectives:***

- To undertake scientific research and evaluation on the potential benefits for wellbeing and health of active engagement in music making.
- To document and provide the research evidence base for establishing 'Singing on Prescription' for its wellbeing and health benefits
- To work in partnership with health and social care agencies and service users in the South East to promote the role of music and arts in healthcare and health promotion
- To contribute to the wider development of the field of Arts and Health research and practice through membership of national and regional networks, publication and educational activities

Key priorities for the current year of operation are to appoint new research staff and to begin the process of systematically reviewing published scientific evidence on the value of music and singing for health and wellbeing. It is hoped to appoint a Senior Research Fellow in the early Spring, and a Research Assistant starting early Autumn to work specifically on evaluating the Silver Song Club Project, and a major programme of fieldwork will begin in the academic year 2006-2007.



**This Newsletter is published by Sing For Your Life Ltd., 11 Church Street, Folkestone CT20 1SE.**

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