

Sing for your life

COMMUNITY MUSIC-MAKING
FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR CARERS

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2012

Crawley's Silver Birch Singers perform in Calais

We had been rehearsing songs in French for four months, but 24 May arrived at last, when we were to perform them to a French audience at the Restaurant-Club Bleriot in Calais.

Despite some concerns about early rising we had an early start and caught an early Channel Tunnel Shuttle, arriving at our venue in good time. The location certainly knocked our day centre into a cocked hat! Spacious, well-decorated, and a stage with a colourful backdrop. Long tables laid with white table cloths, water and carafes of wine or beer. We enjoyed a very nice three course lunch and discovered that most of the 60 or so French audience were singers, all in white tops like ours. When their leader, Daniel, arrived, he played a Madison line dance. We joined in, then I played with Daniel (Da doo ron-ron and Mockingbird Hill in French). We presented the Crawley coat of arms, then we performed. They loved it, applauding with recognition as we began songs, and generally joining in.

Then the French chorale sang - many more of them but fewer men, with quite loud backing from Daniel, a bit like Rock Choir. Very enjoyable to see that they were doing the same sort of thing as us - I had no idea before we arrived. Then it was warm goodbyes and hopes from them that they can come to us in Crawley (where would we entertain them and provide as good a meal for five Euros?).

We were running a bit late by then, but we still had time for a most interesting guided tour of the town, albeit a very shortened version, and we made the Shuttle in good time. The singers were still on a high next day and, I must say, it's still very much on my mind. **Truly, we were all blessed.**

People were most gracious in their thanks to me but in reality it was their day. I was just so pleased for the singers. It was courageous of them to learn French songs with no prior knowledge of the language, let alone perform them to a French audience. They did a lot of homework between our weekly sessions. One singer, who has been almost blind since childhood, had to learn her solo (Les feuilles mortes - Autumn leaves) by heart. I'm very proud of them.

John Scott Cree
Silver Song Club Facilitator in Crawley



*Improving the health and wellbeing
of people through music.*

**Endorsement of Sing For Your Life's work
following the research project conducted
by the Sidney De Haan Research Centre**

**Study into benefits of singing proves positive impact
on health**

Funded by the NIHR's Research for Patient Benefit Programme, the world's first randomised controlled trial into the health benefits of community singing for older people assessed the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness for older people taking part in singing groups and the impact it has on their physical and mental health. The two year research project conducted by the Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health at Canterbury Christ Church University, has revealed a consistently higher measure of health for those involved in community singing programmes and has been recognised by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE).

Best wishes

Professor Dame Sally C Davies
Chief Medical Officer & Chief Scientific Adviser
Department of Health



WONDERFUL WHITSTABLE!

A marvellous musical evening was held at St Alphege's Church on Saturday 15th September. The Medics & Scientists Musical Ensemble's inaugural concert demonstrated that they are indeed a very gifted group of people. There was a varied programme of music which included Opera, Jazz, Harp, Flute and Clarinet solos and a Choir - beautiful renditions enjoyed by everyone! This was interspersed by audience participation, encouraged and conducted by Adrian Bawtree who introduced the Sing for Your Life's musical programme to one and all. We would like to give our special thanks to Drs Angeline and David Kanagasooriam without whom the tremendous efforts before and during the concert would not have happened. It allowed for a real meeting of minds to demonstrate the benefits that music making can have on the Health and Wellbeing of all those involved. The evening had a great atmosphere and was great fun. Friends of Whitstable Hospital served tea and cakes at the end, which sent everyone home very content! An amazing £450 was raised for Sing For Your Life - FANTASTIC and so a big thank you from all of us!



ITS GOOD TO VOLUNTEER

A while ago Adrian contacted Seaford Choral Society to see if there were some volunteers to help with our Music Box activity in a local residential care home. He was delighted to have a great response from some of the members, and in particular from Margaret Hopkins. Margaret (pictured second right) writes:



A few months ago, I expressed an interest in finding out more about "Sing for your life." I met with Adrian Bawtree, listened to and read about

the aims of the organisation and was taken to visit Clifden House which is a Dementia Care Home in Seaford, East Sussex. There we discussed starting a Silver Singers Group and a date was fixed for our first session. Three other local singers had already volunteered to help me lead the singing and the home's Events Organiser offered to operate the Silver Song Box which for me was a great bonus.

As I arrived at the home a week later for my first session I was extremely nervous. I looked around the lounge where most of the residents appeared to be asleep and wondered whether I could actually walk in there and confidently start to sing. I plucked up courage and strumming my guitar started to sing "Daisy, Daisy." As I walked from one end of the lounge to the other I started to get a response. For the next hour we sang a wide variety of songs and I was aware that most of the residents knew far more of the words than I did! We handed out percussion instruments for them to play and encouraged them to move or dance to the music.

The hour passed very quickly and at 3pm it was time for afternoon tea to be served. What a difference the singing session had made! Now the residents were sitting forward in their chairs, talking and interacting with each other. There was a happy buzz in the lounge, quite different to how it had been when I nervously entered it one hour before. I have now led two more sessions and many more are planned. I am very grateful for all the help I get as I could not do it alone.

We are always on the lookout for volunteers, and you can see what a really worthwhile experience it is.

New Team Member

We are delighted to welcome our latest recruit to the Sing For Your Life team. Her name is Lisa Pinner and she joined us earlier in the year as an Administrative Assistant. She is now Office Manager - need we say more!

The main areas of her work are the Accounts and the development of the web site, which those of you who have access to our web site will have noticed. It has certainly become more accessible and interactive.

Lisa fitted in from day one and was quick to learn that some of the more mature members of our team might need IT support!!! This has been a great help to us and has certainly benefited the charity and our supporters.

Members area on our web site

Great strides have been made to develop a members area on our web site launched in November and spearheaded by Lisa.

We are very excited about this new facility, as it allows us to communicate easily with the homes, day centres, hospitals etc that use a Silver Song Music Box. We needed to have easier access for the music updates we provide on a regular basis. Now the homes will be able to download the latest updates of music on the memory stick which we provide. Themes such as Christmas carols and songs, hymns for harvest festival and Easter, community songs, songs from musicals etc.

For the future we plan to develop an Open Forum for the sharing of new ideas to help facilitators in the delivery of the music sessions as well as training opportunities and videos.

SING FOR YOUR LIFE FOUNDATION – CANADA

The Sing For Your Life Foundation is based in Kelowna, British Columbia. Kelowna enjoys a temperate climate and being situated in an area of natural beauty, is an attractive retirement location with a high concentration of assisted living and residential care homes.

The Foundation is led by Nigel Brown and Jill Hilderman supported by a newly appointed Board of Directors, chaired by Anita Bakker. Musical support is provided by five freelance facilitators and an intern. There are three Silver Song Clubs and three Silver Song Music Box systems, on loan from Roland Canada, that are on trial in residential care facilities.

I was able to meet the Board as well as attending a Silver Song Club meeting held in a community venue and a participatory singing session using the Music Box in the dementia unit at the Sun Pointe Baptist Housing Complex.

SUPPORT FROM LLOYDS TSB FOUNDATION

Sing For Your Life have been awarded a grant of £35,000 for 2012-14 to support the employment of two staff members. This grant is particularly valuable as most funders prefer to support programme delivery. It is a constant challenge to fund office staff and overhead costs.

 **Lloyds TSB** | Foundation for England and Wales

LOCAL AUTHORITY GRANT FOR EAST KENT NETWORK

The **Kent County Council Community Engagement Scheme** is providing a grant to fund the provision of Silver Song Music Box systems in The Age Concern Day Centre and two residential care homes in Deal, Kent. Training and commissioning will be completed in time for the systems to be in use in January.



THE MUSIC BOX

In October of last year we started promoting the benefits of the newly developed **Silver Song Music Box**. We were rather tentative at first as we were promoting a new concept. People loved the energy and fun it promoted.

The system is designed to provide cognitive stimulation and reminiscence therapy as well as,

- * Provides an inclusive activity (especially for those who are isolated or lonely)
- * Helps reduce stress and anxiety whilst increasing energy levels
- * Provides an inter-generational opportunity.

Travelling around to demonstrate the Music Box we realise what a pleasure it is for people to sing and enjoy music together. Music is one of the greatest forms of communication possible especially for those living with Dementia, Alzheimer's, Stroke and Parkinson's

We have a number of great anecdotes to relate...

In Thames Ditton a very distinguished man entered the room. Having recently suffered a stroke he found it difficult to communicate and was unable to sing but he expressed great joy in the music. He was noticed by a charming very agile lady from the other end of the room. His eyes immediately sparkled, she came to meet him, took his hands and helped him to stand and they enjoyed the music together with much clapping from the carers and other residents.

In Hampshire after our demonstration a carer came up to say that a resident had spoken for the first time in five months due to singing a song he remembered from the past. The carer immediately phoned the family who were overjoyed.

At a day centre in Kent the group wanted to sing topical music, we put together a programme for Harvest Festival it went down a storm!

The programme included favourite hymns, "We plough the fields and scatter," "All things bright and beautiful" plus songs like "Don't sit under the apple tree." This provoked a lot of reminiscence and laughter.

Please contact **Susan Filby** on **01303 847210** if you would like further explanation or to arrange a demonstration.

COMING EVENTS

Carols in Whitstable

Wednesday 12th December at 2.30pm in St Alphege's Church. Free admission, pay to get out. We hope to be joined by the Mustard Seed Singers for this concert. It will last for one hour and will be followed by tea and cakes provided by the Friends of Whitstable Hospital.

Carols in the City of London

Lloyds Choir of London are performing their Christmas Carol Concert at St Catherine Cree Church, Leadenhall Street on Thursday 13th December at 6.30pm (tickets £10/£7) followed by complimentary refreshments. Adrian is playing the organ there and the choir have agreed to hold a retiring collection on behalf of Sing For Your Life.

GETTING OLD IS SUCH A NUISANCE (But it needn't be!)

*Getting old is such a nuisance
And it comes to everyone
We can't stop the years from passing
But we still can have some fun*

*We can sing to keep us cheerful
Banish all our cares away
With a "ditty" to remember
We begin each blessed day*

*Now gloominess is out of bounds
Only happiness allowed
So laugh, sing, dance and interact
Old age should make you proud!*



SONGS MY GRANDMOTHER TAUGHT ME

We are indebted to Jonathan Campbell of Bexhill, who has kindly sent us a copy of his book entitled: "Songs My Grandmother Taught Me".

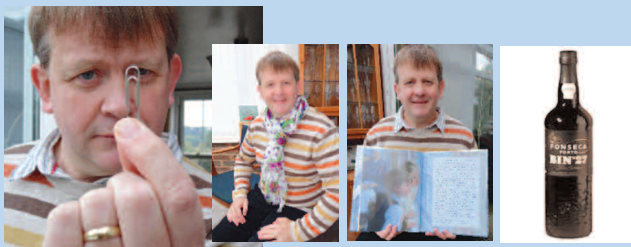
We wonder if there are any of you who have fond memories of songs that you learned as a child. Memories such as those of Peter Fergusson from Kent. All of Peter's grandparents spent periods of time in India, and so his favourite song is "On the Road to Mandalay" (words by Rudyard Kipling).

*On the road to Mandalay
Where the flying fishes play
And the dawn comes up like thunder
Out of China cross the bay*

Do any of you have similar memories, whether songs from home or overseas. We'd be very happy to hear from you.

Please contact Jonathan if you would like a copy of the book at campbelljonathan1@sky.com.

The Paper-Clip Trail



**This trail so far – a paper-clip / a scarf / a fairy story book / a bottle of port
How it works...**

Adrian hit upon an idea that he heard of in which an American made a series of swaps that started with a paper-clip and finished up with a house!

Whilst Adrian doubts we will end up with a house, the paper-clip has so far converted itself to a bottle of vintage port! What will be next???

Adrian Bawtree, Programme Director

Congratulations

Congratulations go to Cathy Richards, our Facilitator in Thanet for coming joint 2nd in the Grundvig Short Story Competition. Cathy wrote about her exchange visit to Spain as part of the EU Grundvig programme and the Music and reminiscence groups in Thanet which were started in Thanet following this visit. The groups are led by Cathy and her colleague, Elaine MacGregor who is an Occupational Therapist. Funding was provided by Sing For Your Life and the Friends of Mental Health (East Kent).

Multi-Centre Trials

Regrettably The Sidney De Haan Research Centre's application to NIHR to fund a multi centre trial was unsuccessful

DONATIONS

We thank the following organisations and individuals who have made donations:

Herne Bay Rotary Club	£60
Alton Methodist Church	£500
Whitstable Friends	£20
Friends of Colla Voce	£720
New Ash Green Music Workshop	£150
Worthing Choral Society	£740
Mr Barry Bates	£100
Salvation Army Sheerness	£45
Whitstable Medic Concert	£460
Alton Community Choir	£500
West One, All Souls, Langham Place	£150



This Newsletter is published by
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