

Sing for your life

COMMUNITY MUSIC-MAKING
FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR CARERS

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2012

Music Box delivers enjoyment and benefits

"As part of our activity programme the Silver Song Music Box helps our residents to live well with their dementia" Clifden House, Seaford



"a song a day keeps the doctor away"

The Silver Song Music Box is a clever piece of kit because it allows the person operating it the same amount of control as a keyboard player or guitarist. This means that non-formally trained musicians are able to support singing sessions at the flick of a switch. I'm a pianist but I don't like being stuck behind the piano. The music box allows me to be hands-free which lets me engage with people more. Not only that, it also allows me to change the pitch and tempo very easily. Another great feature is that you can upload pictures onto it which is a useful tool for reminiscence activity.

Current locations include: residential care homes in Seaford, Folkestone and Church Crookham. There is also one at the National Spinal Injuries Unit at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Buckinghamshire.

We know regular singing is good for us all, but getting hold of a trained facilitator each time is not always possible – so the Music Box allows anyone with a bit of get up and go to get the singing going to support the work of the trained professionals. This fits in very well with The Care Quality Commission's recommendation for increased activity and stimulation for older people.

How does it differ from Karaoke? Karaoke is all about the starlet at the front, whereas the music box is the equivalent of bringing a piano into the room. In the past families would gather round the piano and have a good sing song... it's time to get that going again with the 21st century equivalent!

Adrian Bawtree, Programme Director

The Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia

"Dementia is one of the biggest challenges we face today — and it is one that we as a society simply cannot afford to ignore any longer"



The Challenge will focus on **three** key areas:

- **Driving improvements in health and care**
- **Creating dementia friendly communities that understand how to help**
eg. By 2015, up to 20 cities, towns and villages will have signed up to becoming more dementia-friendly.
- **Better Research**
eg. Doubling overall funding for dementia research to over £66m by 2015.

CALLING ALL SILVER SONG CLUBS!

We are asking as many of you as possible to send us photos of any events that you are holding to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. We hope to run a whole page devoted solely to photos in our next newsletter. Any contributions would be gratefully received at the SFYL office.



Quick quotes from the Sing for your life community

Loved the songs, they brought back a lot of old memories

It's good to come here and sing – even if you can't actually sing in tune

When I come to SSC feeling down, it always makes me feel so much better and I go home much happier

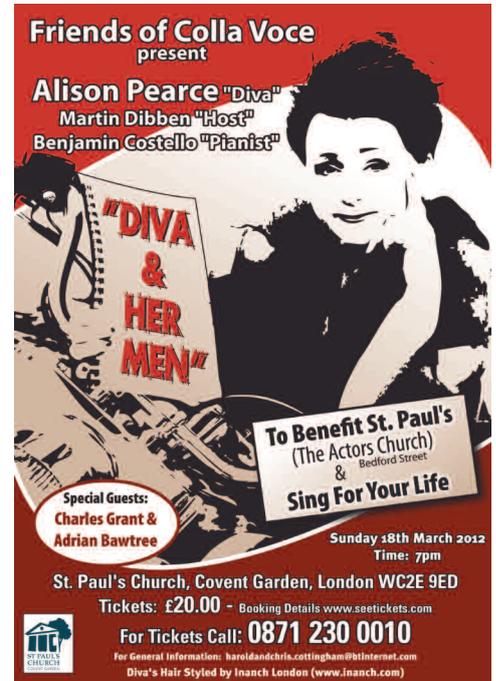
This is just fantastic; you can't buy this in a bottle, this is much better!

Get Hampshire Singing...

Over 100 people joined us for a good hearty sing at The Castle in Winchester. It was a good chance to hear the music box in action...so much so that Lyndhurst Community Centre have bought one!

*Adrian Bawtree
Programme Director*





Excellent Diva's concert helps support Sing for your life!

On March 18th in St Paul's Church, Covent Garden, also known as The Actor's Church, Sing For Your Life was honoured to find itself as one of the charities that was to be supported by the fabulous internationally acclaimed operatic soprano, Alison Pearce. The evening called "Diva and her men" was a sumptuous explosion of grand opera meeting traditional songs and songs from the shows. Our programme director was also able to make a short presentation on the work of the charity and then play the organ to

claim the honour of being "one of the Diva's men" - an honour he thoroughly relished and brought out his best waistcoat for the occasion. Over a hundred people attended and the evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Sing For Your Life is extremely grateful for Alison's support of our work.

Message from the Diva...perhaps not all of us can be Diva's, but all of us can sing...

Forthcoming fund raising events and news and blatant plug for support:

We are embarking on a number of fund raising events and if these inspire any ideas of your own as to how you might be able to help us please do get in touch.

We were delighted to hear that thanks to our presentation at the Rotary District Conference in Bournemouth Last October, the President of **Westgate and Birchington Rotary Club** has chosen us as one of his principle charities to support during his year of office. This will start in July {Are any you members of Rotary/British Lions/WI/MU who might be interested in supporting our work? If so, please contact us.}

- **Saturday 14th July in St Mary's Church, Goring at 4pm**
Worthing Choral Society have chosen SFYL as their charity to support for that afternoon. {Are any of you members of a choir that might support us in some similar way? Again, please contact us if you think you can help.}
- **Wednesday 29th August in Holy Trinity Church, Folkestone at 7.30pm** Adrian will be giving an Organ Recital where a retiring collection will be held on behalf of SFYL.
- **Saturday 15th September in St Alphege's Church, Whitstable at 7pm** there will be a concert by a group of Kent GPs. This is a very exciting development for us as these medics support what we are doing..
- **Saturday 27th October in the Assembly Halls, Worthing at 2.30pm** we are planning a Massed Silver Song Club event. This will be a chance to have a good sing and a fun afternoon. More details to follow.
- Finally, a very generous host has offered her house for a private party to raise funds for us. We will be performing a Christmas Cabaret as part of the evening. **If this is something that you feel put on and would like more detail as to how it might work, please contact us.**
It promises to be a hugely entertaining evening with a lot of fun for the audience and on behalf of an incredibly worthwhile cause!

Re-organisation of health and social services

The re-organisation of Health & Social services proceeds apace. Responsibility for Public Health is being transferred to a new NHS Agency, Public Health England who will deliver services through the Health & Wellbeing Partnerships which are being formed by Local Authorities – County and Unitary Councils. These partnerships will be responsible for delivering Public Health and Social Services. Public Health budgets will be ring-fenced.

The Partnerships are statutory committees of the Council and are monitored by The Care Quality Commission. The new arrangements will become effective in April 2013.

Each Local Authority has undertaken a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to identify the priorities. Older people's social care is one of their responsibilities and Sing For Your Life is reviewing its structure to ensure to conform with the new Public Health commissioning system.

Residential care homes are being encouraged to engage with their local communities and we are looking at ways to partner homes with Silver Song Clubs.

The need for Volunteers to support our programmes is greater than ever and we will be recruiting and training volunteers to support these new activities.

Stroke

Speech is one of the functions which is often affected by stroke. This often results in speech being slowed or slurred. In some cases people who have lost the power of speech are still able to sing.

We know that singing can help to “unlock” and improve speech. A feature of the Music Box is the facility to slow the music without losing the quality of sound, and therefore the Music Box is a useful tool for those helping people to improve their speech. We plan to undertake trials working with a post stroke support group later this year.

Autism

We know that a combination of song and images can change the behaviours of people who are autistic. Our advertisements for the Music Box have attracted the attention of teachers and therapists supporting young people with challenging behaviour and emotional problems. We have therefore started some preliminary work to see whether the Music Box can be used in these settings.

This work is being funded by a small grant from The SFIA Educational Trust. If the results are promising it is intended to seek funding for a more detailed study.

Parkinsons Disease

A Parkinsons Group in The Midlands is interested in using The Music Box to help members strengthen their facial muscles and improve speech. They have noticed that some people experiencing difficulty speaking find it easier to sing!

Edwin Boorman

We are sad to report the death of one of our Patrons, Edwin Boorman, after a short illness. We extend our sympathy to his family and friends.

Multi-Centre Trials

New research project

Encouraged by the promising results of the Randomised Controlled Trial of the Silver Song Club programme in East Kent, The Sidney de Haan Research Centre has applied for funding to conduct a much larger Trial which will be conducted in Kent, London, Bristol, Nottingham and Merseyside.

Five groups of people will be randomly selected in each centre and allocated to singing groups or to continuing their normal activities.

Provided the funding application is successful, the trial will start in September 2013 and continue for 18 months. When the trial is concluded the data which has been collected will be analysed by The Centre for Health Service Studies, University of Kent, who will use nationally accepted measuring techniques to assess the health and well wellbeing of the groups before, during and after the trial ends.

Retirement of Patron

Lady Sarah Howard who has been a Patron of the charity for seven years has stepped down. We thank her for her support.

Funding and support

We are grateful to the following for their recent help and support:

Admiral Nurses, Bolton

Alton Methodist Church

Cantores Dominicae

Friends of Downlands, Peacehaven

Friends of Colla Voce

Folkestone Rotary Club

Herne Bay Rotary Club

Whitstable Friends

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