

COMMUNITY MUSIC-MAKING FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR CARERS NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2009



For the Love of Song

A new initiative in the Sheppey area of Kent has been blossoming in 2008. Receiving funding from the Third Age Trust, Sheppey Matters - designed to run a series of activities – asked Sing For Your Life to focus on the singing aspect.

A new choir entitled For the Love of Song put on a concert in late October. It was their first public performance, and they sang to a packed audience, which included the Mayor and Mayoress of Sheppey.

Led by Julia Manders, a regular facilitator for Sing For Your Life in East Kent, and in particular at Faversham, the concept of For the Love of Song was to build confidence in the participants' ability to sing. "After an initial period of fundamental vocal exercising, the singers have come to love what they do and have really come to believe in their abilities. Their confidence and presentation has



Love of Song's first public performance

Photo KRN Media

blossomed no end," says Julia. "They are all keen to continue, and to develop further concert performances and begin outreach singing. The singers themselves chose the name of the community choir and some members have embroidered a stunning banner with the choir name on it. Another

member created her own percussion instrument for one of the songs." Julia also praises the work of the accompanists, who also come from Sheppey.

The age range of the members starts at 50 and spans nearly 40 years, and a comment on the concert from one member, Doris Willicombe, 86, was "Everyone loved it. We get on very well and it's nice to have the company. Most of us are widows, and you have to be over 50 to join. It's great to sing!" It surely is!



Photo: Dave Boys, West Sussex County Times

Pulborough Silver Song Club

It was time to 'Sing For Your Life' at the Silver Song Club at Pulborough Village Hall on January 12.

Led by trained facilitator Pamela Nickels, and supported by members of Billingshurst Choral Society, the Club meets at 2pm on the second Monday of each month and is aimed particularly at the elderly but everyone is welcome to come along and share the joy of making music. There is no charge to take part and transport can be arranged if required.

Participatory music activity has been shown to have various health benefits including a decreased use of medication and fewer

instances of falls as well as an increased feeling of well-being. The latter was evident as the group sang from the Silver Song Book which is made up of 50 well known songs taken from a variety of eras from Music Hall to The Beatles. As well as singing, club members joined in with percussion instruments. The session ended with tea and homemade cakes before everyone left smiling. In the words of a spokesperson: "You can't buy this in a bottle!"

For further information contact the local co-ordinator Rosemary Pardey on 01444 454091 or visit www.singforyourlife.org.uk





Banstead Silver Song Club in action

Club News



Ashford

This club has moved to Beaver Court and sessions are now facilitated by Saffron Summerfield. We would like to thank the Joe Fagg centre for hosting us over the last two years.

Banstead

Banstead Silver Song Club celebrated its first birthday this October. We meet each month at the Banstead Centre, modern and comfortable, with a lively core membership of around 25 local residents. We all enjoy singing together, revisiting songs from the past, and reviving memories. Volunteers from Epsom Choral Society give support at each session.

What do we enjoy singing most? Recent favourites have been the Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals, hits from the 50s (we still don't know the price of that doggie in the window), and the songs of Jerome Kern and Irving Berlin - a forceful two-part version of "Anything You Can Do" is fixed in my memory.

In December we had a Christmas song session and we welcomed the New Year at our early January meeting.

Bexhill

New facilitator Cheryl Blake has taken over the running of this club and is ably assisted by volunteer pianist Anne Haslam. PCT funding has been renewed for this club to enable sessions to continue throughout 2009.

Bracknell

Facilitator Barbara Rayner and volunteers from Bracknell Choral Society support this club which has only been running since September 2008. The club is hosted by

Age Concern Day Centre in Bracknell and the staff have worked with us to make the first sessions enjoyable and productive.

Canterbury

This club has now moved to Northgate Ward Community Centre. The sessions are supported by members of the Canterbury and District Pensioners' Forum and led by new facilitator Michael Trew. Although Michael is a new facilitator he is familiar with the Silver Song Club model from work undertaken as part of his degree course. We are fortunate to receive support from both the centre and Canterbury City Council.

Eastbourne

Lead volunteer and facilitator, Patricia Culley, reports: "We are doing more and more with our group and we ALL enjoy it so much! Individuals come to us after the sessions and say how much better and happy they feel after their singing. It takes away all the stresses. That alone makes it all worthwhile for us" Sadly Patricia was out of action for a while just before Christmas with a broken bone in her foot, but we understand she is now recovered and we wish her well.

Farnborough

The Church of the Good Shepherd in Farnborough hosts this new song club led by new facilitator Nella Strologo. Please see Hampshire article for more details.

Herne Bay

Our Song Club in Herne Bay has been running for six months and has proved to be popular with people who come from Herne Bay, Whitstable and Canterbury.

Included amongst our members are three very infirm people who come from Sovereign House, a local care home. We try to make their outings as jolly as possible and this seems to be much appreciated.

We meet on the second Monday of each month at the Canterbury & District Pensioners' Forum, in co-operation with Greenhill Senior Citizens Club, who allow us the use of their premises. All are welcome. We are led by Andrew Musset who helps to make everyone feel comfortable with making music. I must say that during our time together our singing has improved greatly, and requests for songs to sing come thick and fast. We love using the hand-held chimes, which we call our ding-a-lings!

It was good to see that even in the cold weather leading up to Christmas, we still had over 20 people coming to sing - we all think that it lifts our spirits and makes us smile...

Petersfield

The recently modernised family centre at the United Reformed Church in Petersfield hosts this new song club led by new facilitator Nella Strologo. Please see Hampshire article for more details.

Southampton

Our link with the University of Southampton has been re-established and sessions have commenced at Age Concern, Padwell Road. Postgraduate Helen Cope is leading the sessions which are supported by undergraduate student volunteers. The sessions take place on the centre's EMI day for participants who have been referred to the centre by their GP and staff at the centre are delighted that sessions have started again.

Sing For Your Life links with Admiral Nurses

The Coleman House Silver Song Club in Dover was conceived at the first Admiral Nursing Forum that I attended in Kent. I was a newly recruited Admiral Nurse standing in the audience at a Kent hotel tapping my feet, whilst singing 'Old Time' favourite songs (slightly out of tune I hasten to add!)

A group of quite inspirational people from the 'Sing For Your Life' project had managed to persuade the delegates; nurses, doctors, managers from various professions, carers and people with dementia to get up from their seats and sing.

I was immediately struck by the ease at which the facilitators had managed to persuade an initially reluctant audience to participate and consequently the seeds were planted for an idea to bring a music group to other people who might have problems engaging. At the end of the day, I found myself talking with Matthew Raisbeck about the potential to develop a new type of Silver Song Club in Dover.



The Admiral, Joe Levy, after whom Admiral Nurses are named

Matthew and I had given a lot of thought to who the group would be for and we mutually decided that a 'drop-in' group for older people with mental health problems (particularly those with memory problems and dementia) and their carers was needed. It was decided to hold the group at a venue familiar to the people attending (which would help with the orientation of those with memory problems). Hence we

now meet at the local Community Mental Health site at Coleman House. Matthew takes the lead with the group and I, (the Admiral Nurse) provide back-up support of all kinds.

The group runs on the first Tuesday of every month. It was felt that having a fixed day every month would help participants to remember when the next group would run. A session has been run every month since July 2008 with a healthy turn out for most sessions. Unsurprisingly, the December/Christmas session has been the most popular!

As well as having an opportunity to choose a song to sing from the selection of old favourites, participants can also reminisce with others in the group, and through offering participants the use of the musical instruments, we have been able to engage those who feel unable to sing. At the same time there are also benefits in terms of helping with co-ordination and upper body mobility.

Membership varies from month to month, however there is a core group who attends every month. Anecdotal reports from participants are testament to the personal benefits that they feel they have derived from the group. For some members this is the only time that they meet up socially with others.

There is a wealth of research that supports the use of music with people with memory problems and dementia, but I do not need to read the evidence to see the positive impact of the group on the people with dementia and their carers. As a practitioner I have derived immense enjoyment and job satisfaction from being involved with this project.

*Pat Brown
Admiral Nurse, Dover*

Hampshire Silver Song Clubs

As is often the way, a chance meeting leads to great things. At the Chances4Change launch event in London last year, Sing For Your Life met Alex Burn, Head of Older People's Well-Being Team in Hampshire County Council.

Following a number of discussions it was agreed that the two organisations would work in partnership to develop Silver Song Club provision in Hampshire to support Older People's Well-Being.

New clubs have been established at Petersfield and Farnborough with a further club planned for Bishops Waltham. We have been fortunate to receive additional support from Meon Valley Carers and Community First East Hampshire.

In addition to Silver Song Clubs we have run three training events. These have covered the guiding principles and best practice of singing with older people and many of the practicalities involved in running group singing sessions.

We are also fortunate in featuring on the front cover of a special edition of Hampshire Now produced specifically for older people.

BBC World Service Broadcast

On 20 October 2008 we were fortunate to be featured on Health Check, the World Service programme focusing on the issues affecting the world of medicine and healthcare.

A large segment at the start of the programme centred on the work of Sing For Your Life and a number of Silver Song Clubs were featured. In addition, there were interviews with those whose lives have been touched by the influence of social music making.

The programme also featured the conference held by the Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health and the on-going research which supports and underpins our work.

Sing For Your Life went global!

In mid December Margaret Barr, the Sing For Your Life facilitator for Hythe, received a phone call from Stuart Brown from the Folkestone office. "Are you doing anything tonight?" asked Stuart. "Well," replied Margaret, who is a mother and grand-mother, and has been happily married for many years "I expect I shall be going to my local bridge club. Why do you ask?" "It's just that I thought you might wish to practise your scales," said Stuart, "tomorrow you're performing to an audience of 65 million!"

This conversation followed a request from the BBC World Service for them to visit a Silver Song Club and record the proceedings. A reporter visited the Hythe Club in mid December to make a recording and to interview some of those taking part. Stuart was also able to explain how older people benefit from the Silver Song Club activities. The World Service programme was broadcast on "The World Today" on Christmas Eve. For further details, please phone Stuart in the Folkestone office on 01303 298546.

Coming soon... Silver Song Roadshow

We have received funding from Awards for All, the Big Lottery Fund small grants programme, to fund a number of one-off

'Roadshow' sessions at venues across the South East of England. These sessions are available to day and community centres, sheltered housing units and voluntary and community associations. If you are interested in hosting one of these please contact us for further information.



LOTTERY FUNDED



Silver Song Clubs a hit in the South West

Sing For Your Life South West started its operations in the South West Region by the opening on Monday 24 February of the first of two Silver Song Clubs to be held at the Age Concern Day Centre in Exeter. Matthew Raisbeck, Programme Director, was in attendance to help South West facilitator Daphne Harlock and her team of local helpers run the opening session. Their experience was the same as that enjoyed in the South East with a lot of happy faces and enthusiastic singing. Peter Clarke, Director of Sing For Your Life South West said "It was a very enjoyable and uplifting afternoon. Everybody had a great time and even though some were caught

out by some of the music games (including me) we all had a good laugh. The second club - dedicated to the Age Concern Centre Exeter Park Club will start on Monday, 9 March. So we will be running two clubs alternating every fortnight."

It is hoped that a third Silver Song Club will be opened later this year in Ottery St Mary with further expansion throughout the Region. For information about Sing For Your Life South West contact Peter Clarke on 01404 814580 or 812556 or email sfylsouthwest@waitrose.com



Photo: The Farnham Herald

A fresh start for Alton Silver Song Club

The first Silver Song Club in our new venue went very well. We had 13 people attend and they quickly got into their stride singing a wide variety of songs from traditional sea shanties to spirituals, American folk songs and songs from the Music Hall era. Some numbers were familiar, others were new and we added a twist to some old favourites by adding actions, or singing one song over the top of another. Everyone entered into the 'have-a-go' spirit and there was plenty of laughter. We hope that even more people will come along and join us for future sessions. The session runs weekly on Friday mornings with coffee from 10am and singing from 10.30am at Orchard House, Orchard Lane in Alton. Anyone wanting to know more about the Alton Silver Song Club can ring Barbara Rayner on 01420 80445 for details.'

Barbara Rayner

For the attention of all facilitators and lead volunteers

We have a newly revised attendance form which can be downloaded from the website. Could this new attendance form please be used from April.

International conference – Music and Health



Christina Grape from Stockholm University and Trish Vella-Burrows from the Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health forging international friendship

In September 2008 the Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health, Canterbury Christ Church University, hosted a two day international conference “Music and Health: Current Developments in Research and Practice”. The Research centre is based at the University Centre Folkestone and the aim of the conference was to provide an overview of current developments in research and practice in the field of music and health. Over 100 delegates from all over the world including the United States of America, Australia, Japan, Finland and Germany attended the conference in Folkestone.

The Conference was opened by a keynote speaker Professor Gene Cohen from the Center on Aging, Health and Humanities in Washington USA, who presented his recent work on the impact of creative activities on the health of older people. Gene Cohen also gave a public lecture in the evening which was open to all and was attended by members of the public and local health care professionals interested in the potential value of the arts in health care.

The conference speakers presented their work and research findings relating to music in health and social care settings, the use of music in health promotion and community development, and the role of music in promoting well-being and health. In addition to the presentations there were a number of workshops for delegates to attend, including a workshop led by Stuart Brown and Matthew Raisbeck of Sing For Your Life who gave delegates a taste of what a Silver Song Club is and what can be achieved.

The conference was a resounding success receiving media coverage both locally and nationally, the evidence presented suggests that music and singing really can have a key role in the health and well-being of the world’s population.



Stuart Brown addressing the conference on Silver Song Clubs

Stunning celebration for charity’s 75th anniversary

Over 600 people packed Worthing’s Assembly Hall for Guild Care’s 75th Anniversary Concert aptly named ‘Live & Kicking’ on 12 July. Attendees included many residents from Guild Care homes, service users, trustees, staff, volunteers, carers and others with long associations with the Worthing charity and members of the public.

A magnificent cake made by Guild Care staff and volunteers was designed with the numbers 1933-2008 and decorated to depict Guild Care’s past and present.



RSPH Award

Sing For Your Life has received a special commendation from The Royal Society For Public Health for contributions in the field of music and health practice.

The Certificate was presented by Professor Richard Parish, Chief Executive to Stuart Brown, the Director of Sing For Your Life.

Kuimba Limited

Sing For Your Life is a registered charity which must not be involved in any activity which is not covered by its charitable objectives. Because of this, we have registered a new company, Kuimba Ltd, which is a fully owned trading subsidiary. Kuimba will manage all activities falling outside the parameters of Sing For Your Life, and trading surpluses will be used to help meet the core overhead costs of the charity. Kuimba Ltd will start trading in the next few weeks.

Department of Health Committee to develop the Arts & Health Agenda

Following on from a debate in The House of Lords last summer, Lord Howarth led a delegation which met Rt. Hon Alan Johnson MP, Secretary of State for Health. Alan Johnson agreed that the Arts have a major role in a variety of Health Care settings and this was confirmed when he announced that he had appointed Professor Appleby to chair a committee to review the recommendations of the Working Party led by Harry Cayton, which were published in 2007.

Regional Arts & Health Partnerships will work together to develop an Agenda and represent the views of the Sector to the Appleby Committee.

A Romanian Visit to Canterbury

In October 2008 Kent & Medway Health & Social Care played host to a group of healthcare visitors from Romania, who were in the UK on a study tour. The Health & Europe Centre in Canterbury spent a considerable time researching appropriate visits for the Romanians, and as part of this research chose to bring them along to the Canterbury Silver Song Club.

Our Romanian Visitors entered enthusiastically into the proceedings, although language did prove something of a barrier. However, they were happy to join in the songs and it was good to see that the two delegates who did speak English engaging members of the Silver Song Club in conversation. Seemingly a good time was had by all.

Sing United

An established partnership with Kent County Council (KCC) has enabled another year of intergenerational arts projects that connect older people with younger members of their community. The projects collectively entitled 'SingUnited', and managed by Trish Vella-Burrows, use a range of creative arts as a catalyst for meaningful and sustainable community engagement.

Let's finish with the Finnish!

Following the successful international Music & Health conference held at the Sidney De Haan Research Centre in September, the Centre was approached by Professor Jukka Louhivouri of Jyväskylä College, Finland asking whether it would be possible to host a visit of delegates from his college in Finland.

9th December saw the start of a 3 day stay in the Folkestone area for a delegation of seven lady members of staff from Jyväskylä College. Five of the visitors were from the Nursing Department of the college, and the remaining two were music practitioners. The programme we arranged for them was full and varied and despite a long journey from Finland, on their first afternoon they were happy to attend a Silver Song Club session in Deal, and entered enthusiastically into the proceedings.

On day two the participants attended a workshop given by Trish Vella-Burrows involving performing arts students from Canterbury Christ Church University.

The visiting speaker was a 16 year old young man with autism, who gave

his perspective on living

with the condition. In the afternoon they attended a meeting in Canterbury at the offices of the Health and Europe Centre - part of the Kent & Medway NHS & Social Care Partnership Trust. The meeting enabled an exchange of views, methods and ideas with practitioners of various disciplines in the fields of music and the arts. In the evening our guests took part in a special Christmas musical evening where novice singers were learning to use their voices to support well-being and health. Our visitors learnt some English carols and enjoyed traditional mince pies and mulled wine. In exchange we were treated to a rendition of a selection of Finnish carols.

Day 3 saw the students back at the Sidney De Haan Research Centre, where they had more presentations from two of the researchers - Hilary Bungay and Ann Skingley - and also from Stuart Brown of Sing For Your Life, before attending another Silver Song Club in the afternoon. This contrasted well with the club they had attended on the first day. The whole proceedings were rounded off by a special dinner before a 6am departure the following morning. We, the hosts, felt that the event had gone very well, and were more than rewarded by the compliments that were showered upon us by our guests. It was a wonderful way to lead up to Christmas.



This Newsletter is published by
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