

COMMUNITY MUSIC-MAKING FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR CARERS NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2010



Whitstable Silver Song Club

We are delighted that we have a Silver Song club in Whitstable. Last year we had a taster session and everyone enjoyed it so much and wanted more! Even so it has been quite a surprise to see nearly 60 people turn up for each of the first two sessions. Many come from local support groups including Breathe Easy, Age Concern and from the memory clinic, as well as a number of clients from our Friends' Visiting & Befriending project which provides support for people being cared for at home. Everyone is welcome.

The Silver Song Club gives the chance for people to sing together in a group with no judgement of



individual performance or talent. Everyone can join in in their own way and can have a go at playing some of the chime instruments provided (not always in the right sequence of course but that just adds to the fun). Joining in with familiar tunes and words also helps in overcoming difficulties in communication. One lady mentioned that although at home conversation with her husband was difficult, he was singing away and remembering the words to the old songs!

The facilitators are friendly, patient and establish a ready rapport with the group which helps make everyone feel at ease. Everyone said how much they enjoyed the afternoon – complete with homemade cakes at teatime – and a chance for a good chat and reminiscences.

*Margaret Walker
Friends of Whitstable Hospital & Healthcare*

Department of Health Health at Work Events

The Department of Health and the NHS are committed to reducing absenteeism. One of the main causes of absenteeism is stress and depression and, as Professor Louis Appleby, DH Director of Mental Health, said during a recent radio broadcast "music is one of the best antidotes for stress and mild depression"

The Department of Health are organising two events for staff at Quarry House in Leeds and Skipton House in London, to introduce staff to Arts programmes which can support their Well Being. Sing for Your Life will be presenting the Music programme.

Department of Health Arts Events

The Department of Health and The Kings Fund are promoting a series of events across the country to promote the role of the Arts in Health & Wellbeing settings. The events will target NHS and Local Authority Commissioners and Providers and will offer information on research, the support which can be given by the Arts, and the economic benefits of Arts programmes at a time when budgets are under pressure.

The events will have a common format but each will include local content. Themes will include The Healing Environment, Music, Dance and Drama. **The first event will be held in the South East Region in the summer.**



Club News

Ashford

Unfortunately we have been unable to continue to run sessions in Beaver Court this year.

A new Ashford Silver Song Club is being launched in Willesborough Baptist Church, Hythe Road in Ashford where we are working in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society and the Admiral Nursing Service. Sessions will take place on the second Tuesday of the month from 2.00-3.30, please contact us for further details.

Bishops Waltham

After only six months of sessions we are regularly seeing more than 20 people at this new club which has quickly become a regular feature for many people living in the Bishops Waltham area. We are particularly grateful to Bill Drake for all his work in setting up and publicising this club.

Eastbourne

Unfortunately Eastbourne Silver Song Club is not running at the moment. We are looking for new funding to enable us to re-start this popular club at a new venue in the town.

Lyminge

Sessions continue to be very popular with the lively and enthusiastic members of this club. Facilitator Margaret Barr leads most sessions at Age Concern, Lyminge where we are fortunate to benefit from the support of all the staff and volunteers.

Northfleet

Age Concern Northfleet continues to host this popular club. We are very fortunate to be supported by members of Gravesham Choral Society who have become good friends with many of the participants. Members of the society have carried out fundraising for the club and we are very grateful for their on-going help and support.

Ramsgate

This is one of our longest running clubs and, despite a couple of venue changes in its four years of operation, continues to attract a good number of participants. There are a number of very good singers in this club and a recent development is the introduction of solo numbers during the refreshment break.

Whitstable

Please see the front page article for full details of this exciting new club.

Aylesham

An apology...to all who live in Aylesham! We apologise for our error in the spelling of your name in our last newsletter. [We had obviously decided that you all lived in Norfolk (Aylsham)!]

Some new appointments at Sing For Your Life



John Scott Cree



John took over the Silver Song Club at Crawley, West Sussex, in October 2009, following the retirement of Adrian Bawtree. John had been a Weald Choir helper at Adrian's successful sessions and had been singing songs in pubs

John writes: "I took over facilitating the Crawley Silver Song Club from Adrain Bawtree. I know the group very well.

We perform many songs from memory, and the group teach me new songs by singing to me. We're learning to use the hand chimes and percussion with some good initial results."

Michelle Harris



Michelle has joined us as Project Manager for the Reserch for Patient Benefit randomised control trial taking place this spring and summer. Michelle will be managing the team delivering Silver Song Club sessions as part of this exciting and innovative project. Michelle is an experienced mezzo-soprano and has performed across the UK and Europe. In addition to her performing

work she is an experienced singing teacher and vocal coach and currently works at Canterbury Christ Church University.

Bernice Murray



Bernice has taken over from Isobel Salisbury in the day to day organisation of Sing For Your Life. Many of you will have already spoken to Bernice, and it's always helpful to be able to put a face to a name. Prior to joining the charity, Bernice had worked for many years in the sales and marketing office of a large group of prestigious hotels, and we are fortunate that she is willing to work for

us as an alternative to enjoying her retirement!

Isobel Salisbury

It's farewell to Isobel Salisbury who is now taking on more work for Sing For Your Life Research. She has been one of our right hand helpers for the past four years and we shall miss her in the office with her cheerful, tireless and patient help.

Karen Wallbridge



We are pleased to announce the appointment of Karen Wallbridge, our Financial Controller, to the Board of Sing For Your Life.



Silver Song Stories

*“When there’re Silver Song Club meetings to be done,
to be done,*

*The facilitator’s lot’s a happy one,
happy one”*

Whilst facilitating for a Silver Song session needs careful planning, it is usually the unplanned moments which remain in the memory bringing a smile and maybe a glimpse of the value that these meetings are to the clients. I will give an example or two from my own experience.

Flo always attended the meeting, but never participated. She was severely disabled and was slumped in her wheelchair, sometimes asleep, but at other times somewhat disruptive. The day in question her carer had to wheel her outside because she was angry and swearing and making it difficult for the other clients. However after some minutes she returned to the room. I made enquiries and discovered that Flo was Welsh, so I decided that with the help of the volunteers we would sing Land of My Fathers. For the first time in Silver Song Club, Flo actually smiled and when we arrived at the chorus she sang lustily “Wales, Wales...” The carer said that this was the most calm Flo had been for a long time.

Phyllis was a good singer and joined in heartily, except for the occasions of rounds, or action songs; she was very aggressively vocal about such songs and refused to take part. The day of the Club had to be altered to a day when Phyllis would not be present. At the end of her last session she said how disappointed she would be to miss the singing – even the action songs!

Geoffrey was a small jolly man who walked with some difficulty with a walking stick. One meeting he arrived with his medals for dancing in the 1950s. a request for Rock Around the Clock saw Geoffrey, minus walking stick, gyrating in the middle. I was worried for his safety, but he was happy reliving his youth.

Margaret Barr

...And then it snowed!

We must apologise to many of you for the Silver Song Clubs that had to be cancelled because of the snow. It must have come as a disappointment to many, but regrettably nobody can be held responsible for the weather, and hopefully we are now back on an even keel with Spring-like days of sunshine and flowers ahead.



LAULULLA ELÄMÄNLAATUA

This title is Finnish for Silver Song Club! Its translated meaning is “Quality of Life by Singing” or “Life Quality by Singing”.

Tiina Mattila, the facilitator, writes: “We have now had two sessions in both a day care centre and the local hospital. We made a good start, and in the day care centre in particular the word soon spread, so that by the second session many more people

wanted to attend, and the feedback I received was very good and enthusiastic. They are eager to ask for requests and happily join in the singing and movement. The pictures shown were taken in the day care centre. The only feedback that I would like to share is that it has now been decided to keep the coffee break until the end of the session. That way we have 100% attention all the time!”

Tiina Mattila



Major new research project on the Silver Song Club Project

The Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health is working with Sing For Your Life in a major new research project to evaluate the benefits of singing. Five new Silver Song Clubs will be set up in East Kent after Easter. Volunteer participants aged 60 and over will be assigned at random to take part in 12 weekly singing groups or will act as 'controls'. The project is funded by NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent, with a grant from the National Institute for Health Research, with support from the Centre for Health Service Studies, University of Kent, who will analyse the findings and undertake an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of Silver Song Clubs. Prof. Stephen Clift, Principal Investigator on the projects says:

'This will be the first major study in the UK to evaluate the effects of singing groups on the health and wellbeing of older people. We are very grateful for the support from NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent, and looking forward to working with Sing For Your Life, who will organise and deliver the singing groups in five different venues in East Kent.'

The project will run for six months, and a preliminary report on the findings is expected in late 2011.



Joyce Clarke's South West recital fund-raising success

In a series of three recitals in her own home in February, local concert pianist Joyce Clarke has raised £1,069.00 for the charity Sing For Your Life, run by her husband, conductor Peter Clarke. In a wide ranging programme which included works by Mozart, Schubert, Rachmaninov, Schumann Chopin, and her father the late Harold Noble, Joyce Clarke's inspired playing entertained an invited audience of 80 friends and guests and the ticket money was added to by sale of her recently published CD of her father's piano music. Well known as a recitalist and for her work with the Beacon Piano Trio, Joyce said " Sing For Your Life is such a worthwhile cause. Devon has the highest incidence of dementia and Alzheimers and music and singing bring real benefits to those suffering from these awful disabilities"

Sing For Your Life (South West) is a registered charity that works with sufferers of dementia, Alzheimer's and other disabilities that cause isolation and loneliness. Regular sessions are given in Exeter and Ottery St Mary and further expansion is planned. For further information email sfylsouthwest@waitrose.com

This year already we have received grants from:

The Ottery St Mary Hospital League of Friends
The Gawthorn Cardiac Trust
Joyce Clare (recitals)
Sidmouth Consolidated Charities
Lions Club of Exeter
Lions Club of Sidmouth

Our latest club in the South West began on 15th March in Sidmouth.

Roadshows

At the start of 2009 we were fortunate to receive a grant from the Big Lottery Fund Awards 4 All programme to fund a number of Silver Song Club 'Roadshow' sessions.

This generous award covered all the costs of the project including a state-of-the-art keyboard system and some eye catching publicity materials.

This project was designed to reach a substantial number of older people who would otherwise not benefit from participation in Silver Song Club activities, by offering one-off sessions to older people's groups, sheltered housing, day centres and community centres.

A total of 30 Roadshow sessions were delivered across the South East of England and over 850 older people benefitted from taking part in a session.

Those who participated in a session enjoyed them greatly and we received universally positive feedback for the Silver Song Club concept.

As a result of these sessions a substantial number of older people have started to attend existing Silver Song Clubs and three groups anticipate forming new clubs in the future.

We are hoping to continue this outreach work and will be looking for funding to allow us to offer additional sessions later this year.

Funding and support

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

Hartley Gilbert & Sullivan Society

for supporting Northfleet Silver Song Club

The Sidney Linkins Memorial Trust

for £2000 supporting Littlehampton SSC

Eastern & Coastal Kent PCT

for supporting Silver Song Clubs in East Kent.

This Newsletter is published by
Sing For Your Life Ltd

**Sing For Your Life Ltd., Shepway Business Centre,
Shearway Business Park, Folkestone, Kent CT19 4RH.**

Tel: 01303 298546/298549

Email makmusse@aol.com

Website: www.singforyourlife.org.uk

Articles for the newsletter are welcomed and should be sent to The Editor.

Any opinion expressed in this Newsletter reflects the opinion of the author and is not automatically endorsed by Sing For Your Life Limited.

The Newsletter is published on the website but hard copies are available on application. If you wish to read the Newsletter regularly please register your Email address with us and we will send out an Email advice when each issue is published.