

COMMUNITY
MUSIC-MAKING
FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR CARERS

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011



Jyvaskyla Finland

Stuart Brown visited the Silver Song Clubs in Jyvaskyla which are led by Tiina Mattila and funded by Jyvaskyla FE College. Stuart also spoke at a seminar organised by The Einho Roiha Institute which is a Foundation supported by the Jyvaskyla Music Campus and Jyvaskyla City Council. He suggested how the Silver Song Club network could be extended.



Community Health Champions

"Altogether Better" started out as a Lottery funded regional collaborative in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The aim was to build capacity to empower individuals and communities to improve their own health and wellbeing by creating Community Health Champions.

Individuals are recruited from communities and given training and support to build knowledge, confidence and social networks. Champions act as a positive influence at home, the workplace and in the community. In just three years, 12,000 Community and Workplace Champions have been recruited and the network has spread far beyond Yorkshire.

The Silver Song Club network is ideally placed to join this programme and we will be recruiting and training Community Health Champions to lead and develop the network over the next five years.

Club News

HORSHAM

Horsham Silver Song Club made its debut at Age Concern in the David Bryce Club behind the Station in April 2006 supported by members of Billingshurst Choral Society.

We now meet in the new purpose built Lavinia House in the centre of Horsham and are encouraged by West Sussex Philharmonic Choir.

Our monthly attendance averages twenty plus and the participants may vary depending on the day, as this moves on each month.

This does mean that many more members are encouraged to sing and make music, though perhaps less frequently.

There is plenty of enthusiasm, our accompanists are excellent and we have lots of fun.



HYTHER

We are a small day centre providing day services for service users with high physical dependency.

The Silver Song Club has been visiting us once a month for the last three years. This group of cheerful friendly singers are led by Margret on keyboard. We have a wonderful time.

Our Service Users have really enjoyed the carefully planned sessions.

There has been a wide range of songs – from low to high notes – all to promote “Singing for Health”. We have had action songs, themed songs and some that have taken us back down “Memory Lane”. A bell ringing session was greatly enjoyed by all and was something different.

We have noticed that our service users enter into the spirit and those that are normally rather quiet have joined in with enthusiasm. The sessions are helping communication through music and singing.

Our claim to fame is that we were on BBC radio, sadly no record deals but a lot of enjoyment was had by all.

We thank the Silver Song Club in Hythe for their commitment and dedication, which is appreciated by all.

Sussex Silver Activities Clubs

The Volunteers supporting Silver Song Clubs in East & West Sussex and Brighton have joined together and created The Sussex Silver Activities Clubs. This newly constituted group is managed by its own committee but is affiliated to Sing For Your Life which will continue to provide full support as before.

Major changes are being introduced in the delivery of Health & Social Care Services. The introduction of GP commissioning, personal care budgets and the opportunity for people to have more influence over their care and social support means that Silver Song Clubs must be firmly embedded in the community.

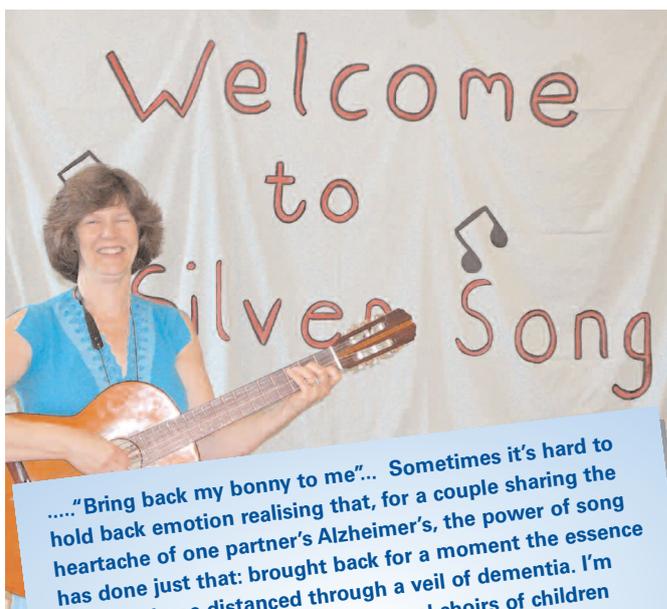
If successful this development will be applied in other parts of the country. The re-organisation will restrict central costs without interfering with the continued expansion of the network. It will also allow volunteer groups to access local funding opportunities.

Hampshire Clubs' News

Clubs in Hampshire are all going well. There is a new club in LISS; the first meeting, which was held in January, was well attended with 20 participants. We are fortunate in having a lovely new venue at the Liss Triangle Centre, which has very good facilities and even its own little café. This first event was well supported by residents of surrounding villages, who brought us lovely home made cakes. All the participants had a good time, singing a variety of songs and readily joining in with the use of instruments. Some people demonstrated the Lambeth Walk, and then we all joined in. Somebody also recited their favourite poem. It was a very encouraging start to a new club.

Other, established, venues in Hampshire, such as Gosport and Waterlooville continue to go well.

Nella. Hampshire Sing For Your Life Facilitator



.....“Bring back my bonny to me”... Sometimes it's hard to hold back emotion realising that, for a couple sharing the heartache of one partner's Alzheimer's, the power of song has done just that: brought back for a moment the essence of a loved one distanced through a veil of dementia. I'm fortunate to be the director of several choirs of children through to experienced adult musicians, but nothing quite compares with the privilege of witnessing a disorientated fellow human being purposefully engaged in the joy of remembered song.

Stella Hull Brighton and East Sussex facilitator.

Sing For Your Life South West welcomes its new administrator Mrs Anne Maher

I became aware of 'Sing For Your Life' through reading an article in the local paper by Peter Clarke, who was appealing for cash and volunteers. I find the concept of SFYL fascinating, and its objectives have a strong appeal for me in many ways.

I have recently stepped down from a twenty year stint working full time as Practice Manager for a large group of local GP's. Running busy doctors surgery has been extremely challenging and rewarding work, with the health and welfare of people at its heart. In the course of my work I had become increasingly aware of the damaging effects that conditions such as strokes, Alzheimer's and dementia can have on the health and well being of so many people, and their families, especially as the person affected was previously so bright, capable and intelligent.

I have been blessed with a lifelong love and appreciation of music and the arts, thanks to my devoted Mother who sang frequently and very beautifully throughout our happy childhood. Mum came from a musical family, and indeed her brother was an accomplished professional musician. I have many happy memories of staying with my Grandparents and being allowed most weekends to listen on the stairs, while the adults all played their part in the 'Family Sunday evening music recital',

Although having no formal training in music, I have always loved singing and dancing, and have enjoyed singing in school choirs throughout my early years. More recently I joined the local choral society and sang with them for three years, performing mostly sacred work.

This year I have joined an inspirational group called Voiceworks. It is clearly extremely popular as it regularly attracts in excess of 100 men women and children people at every rehearsal. We meet in a church hall in a local village and spend a wonderful and enjoyable evening singing our socks off! Several concerts are organised each term, and we undertake the complete range of music that is on offer.

I am now semi-retired, and pleased to have the opportunity to devote some of my spare time to supporting Peter and his fellow directors with this very worthy cause.



Sing For Your Life in Bolton

Fifty people attended a 'taster' session at The Friends Meeting House in Bolton to assess the interest for a singing group to support people with dementia and their carers. The session was organised by the Admiral Nurses in Bolton who are supported by Dementia UK. Building on the success of this event, the group will meet each month for the rest of the year.

The Admiral Nurses will fund these sessions using funds which they have raised in Bolton and will be fully supported by Sing For Your Life whose vision is to provide a Silver Song Club to support every Admiral Nurse.

SFYL and NHS reorganisation

Recent research published by Leeds Metropolitan University shows that by involving members of the public in delivering health programmes, the way is open to utilise the knowledge, skills and resources in communities.

The re-organisation of the NHS has created an increase in resources for reducing social isolation and managing long term conditions including Dementia, Alzheimers, Parkinsons Disease and respiratory conditions. This in turn has created additional opportunities for Sing For Your Life to expand its network and the support the Silver Song Clubs give to their local communities.

The NHS re-organisation has prompted SFYL to re-assess its own objectives and establish the changes needed to adapt to a re-organised NHS. We need to have a more flexible structure which will be able to identify and support the Health and Wellbeing priorities of the community.

Elsewhere in this issue we report on Sussex Silver Activities Clubs - a model which we plan to extend to other parts of the network. Using participatory music as a tool we are developing programmes to support those affected by other long term conditions e.g. COPD. (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) Our volunteers are at the heart of our planning. The value which our volunteers provide will drive service delivery. Volunteers who are willing to make a contribution to improving the health and well-being of individuals and communities are a vital resource. In addition, many of those who benefit from our work can offer peer support to other group members and promote the activities which we provide.

These changes will be introduced gradually and only after full consultation with volunteers. We will recruit and train a number of Community Health Champions to provide support for facilitators and volunteers.



Update on Silver Song Club Research Project

We are now into the second year of our two-year Department of Health funded research into the health benefits of singing for people over 60 years. Our recruitment publicity attracted an amazing 393 enquiries, from which 253 eligible individuals were subsequently recruited to either one of the five newly created singing groups or as part of a comparison group.

Sing For Your Life facilitators devised and delivered the twelve-session programme described in the last newsletter and all participants were asked to complete standardised health questionnaires at the time of recruitment, then after the singing programme and again three months after that. Some 80% of participants completed all three questionnaires which was an excellent response rate. Those questionnaires are now being analysed by the research team at the Sidney De Haan Research Centre and the University of Kent.

Following completion of data collection, a further four sessions were held at each of the five venues, again led by Sing For Your Life facilitators. This provided an opportunity for those allocated to the research comparison group to take part in the singing, as well as an opportunity for the existing singers to continue. These sessions proved very popular and were well attended.

Over the next few months we are hoping to interview a sample of the research participants to learn more about their experiences of being in the project. We hope to have some preliminary findings to report in the next newsletter.

We would like to thank all our participants, as well as the Sing For Your Life facilitators for making this exciting project possible.

*Ann Skingley, Research Project Coordinator
Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts & Health*



Matthew Raisbeck

Matthew Raisbeck, the programme manager for the last four years, has left Sing For Your Life to pursue other interests. Matthew has made an enormous contribution to the success of Sing For Your Life. Apart from his musical knowledge and talent, he is a gifted innovator, trainer and facilitator.

He leaves with our best wishes for success in his chosen career.

New Clubs

Bolton

Admiral Nurses

Gillingham

Alzheimers Support Group

Liss

Hampshire County Council

Affiliated Organisation

Independent Arts Isle of Wight

Funding and support

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

Chances4Change

for additional taster sessions

chances4change
improving health and well-being
for people in South East England

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Brooke Trust

supporting Silver Song Clubs in East Kent

Individual Donations

Mrs. Vicki Eddens
in memory of Alexandra Wateridge,
Supporters of Alton Silver Song Club

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