

COMMUNITY  
MUSIC-MAKING  
FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR CARERS

# NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2011



## Community Matters



Sing For Your Life South West Director, Tony Wilkinson, is presented with a cheque for £310 by Waitrose as part of their "Community Matters" scheme. Many thanks to Waitrose and best wishes to Sing For Your Life South West.

### SINGING FOR HEALTH

SFYL has assumed responsibility for the Singing For Health network in East Kent which supports people with enduring mental health conditions. Other partners are the Sidney De Haan Research Centre, who will continue to evaluate the programme, and the Kent & Medway NHS Partnership Trust.

### MUSIC BOX

We are launching our Music Box programme to provide singing and exercise programmes in residential care homes. Using a modern Music Box care home staff will be trained to deliver a range of participatory programmes to support residents' health and wellbeing. By providing programmes which support holistic health we will contribute to the national policy to reduce the use of anti psychotic drugs.



# Club News

## **NORTHFLEET**

Northfleet has always been one of the best supported Silver Song Clubs – supported by the participants, volunteers from Gravesham Choral Society and the Age UK staff. In fact such is its reputation that it was chosen by BBC TV for an edition of Dom Littlewood's "Saints & Scroungers", and featured Queenie, who spoke very enthusiastically about the health and social benefits of joining a Silver Song Club.

The club enjoys a wide ranging repertoire and participants are particularly keen on wartime songs. The strong support given by members of Gravesham Choral make it possible to tackle quite complicated rounds, canons and songs in up to four parts.

*Andrew Mussett*

## **TENTERDEN**

Tenterden Silver Song Club has been running for over four years, and takes place in The Lindens at West View, an integrated Care Centre for people showing signs of dementia.

Although it is not supported by volunteers from a choral society, the staff are keen to be involved, when their duties permit, and some of the patients are very strong singers, who have obviously had a lot of experience in their younger days and who still have strong voices.

Music Hall songs are particular favourites with them. One member (Peggy) recalls her mother being on the stage and singing many of the songs around the house.

*Andrew Mussett*

## **HERNE BAY**

Herne Bay Silver Song Club takes place at Greenhill Community Centre, and is organised by Ann Belworthy of the Canterbury Pensioner's Forum.

We have built a loyal following of about 20 members who travel there independently and who do not need the support of a volunteer group.

About a year ago the club gained extra 'esprit de corps' when a group of very enthusiastic ladies managed to alter their swimming session so that they could also come to the singing club that they seem to enjoy so much.

The group is always keen to perform in public and has sung at the last three Canterbury Pensioners' Christmas lunches in Northgate Community Centre, Canterbury.

*Stuart Brown*

## **BURGESS HILL**

Lou here - I've been facilitating the Burgess Hill Silver Song Club for several years. How fascinating it's been to watch the group grow in both vocal strength and confidence but also as a close and caring community of people (whilst always welcoming new members). When one of our group died his wife chose to play at his funeral a track from a recording we had made (in which he had participated). I am reminded that the ripple effects of this work go a long way. I always encourage participants to sing in-between sessions to maintain their voices and it's a delight when somebody brings in a song as an idea for the club to try. Some wacky warm-ups create laughter and the sound of this is just as good as the

songs we sing. Recently we've been exploring jazz standards together with improvisation and scatting techniques. The lovely thing about improvisation is the notion that we are creating something in the moment; that there are no 'wrong' notes and everybody has an inventive and inspired gift of notes to offer. Can you tell? ... I adore working with them!

*Lou Beckerman*

## **BANSTEAD SILVER SONG CLUB**

The club continues to flourish. We meet monthly at the Banstead Centre with 20 - 30 people coming regularly, in good voice and keen to sing, and with a band of regular supporters from the Epsom Choral Society. Our oldest member died recently at the age of nearly 102, and had been a strength of our club from its beginning.

For some sessions we'll focus on the songs of a particular songwriter - George Gershwin, Irving Berlin and more - while for others we'll sing songs of a particular decade or else from a musical show. It's a continuing revelation how many good songs there are, and how enjoyable it is to sing them together.

*Tony Woolfenden*

## **ALTON**

When asked to contribute an article about the Alton Silver Song Club, facilitator, Barbara Rayner, asked the participants what the club meant to them. Below Julie and Roger, who attend with their son Rowland, share their thoughts :

'For residents at Orchard House, the Silver Song group is an important part of their week and they look forward to the Friday sessions. Although based at Orchard House, a sheltered housing unit, the group also includes people from the local community with dementia and those with learning difficulties.

It is well supported by friends from Alton Operatic and Dramatic Society and the local community choir which enables round and part-singing to be included in the sessions.

Normally each week's session has a theme and includes requests, mainly from musicals and popular songs of decades ago. Rowland particularly likes music hall / WW2 songs, songs from musicals he has seen and favourite songs from CDs he listens to.

Co-ordinated physical movements (including percussion), tongue twisters and associated mental stimuli are all of benefit to maintaining good health. Who would have thought that TV theme tunes could be so entertaining?

The sessions are very social occasions with plenty of interaction, banter and humour.'

Lyn and Mariana, her 24/7 carer, agree:

'I've learned that the Silver Song is about co-ordination, reacting, breathing, sharing and also about socializing, relaxing and forgetting the problems.

Lyn and I, look forward to coming on Friday mornings for an hour of joy and relaxation at Orchard House. We'd like to thank the entire team for the wonderful job they do'.

Alton Silver Song Club is very fortunate to have received financial support from local groups and organisations within the town including the Alton Burns Supper Committee, The Three Belles vocal trio (to which two of the group belong) and Ancora (a local female choir). It is also well-supported by Orchard House, the host venue, which gives a warm welcome to all.

## A FEW HELLOs...

### Programme Director

A Big Welcome to Adrian Bawtree who joins us 1st September. Adrian, an accomplished organist, choral director and composer, who is already a director, has been appointed Programme Director and will direct the Silver Song Club network.

Adrian and his family have moved to Kent from West Sussex, where he was Head of the Music Department at Christ's Hospital School.

Adrian is no stranger to SFYL – he led the Worthing Silver Song Club for a time.



## AND SOME GOODBYEs...

### Farewell to Fred & Heidi from Seaford Club

Seaford Club will certainly miss Fred and Heidi who have worked hard in recent months organising and helping at the Seaford Club. They will be sorely missed but we hear rumours that both Fred and Heidi may drop by from time to time to check that the high standards which they set are being maintained!!

### Chris Maydom

We also say goodbye to Chris Maydom, our Training Manager, who has also been involved keeping our accounts in order at a time of ever increasing financial pressure.

Chris has decided that the time has come to retire and move to France to concentrate on developing his holiday home in Lot-et-Garrone. He leaves with our best wishes.

## NEWS FROM ABROAD

### CANADA

The Sing For Your Life Foundation has now completed its initial programme of pilot sessions in Kelowna BC.

The Central Okanagan Foundation provided funding. Volunteers from the Kelowna based Sweet Adelines White Sails Chorus supported the Facilitator and an inter-generational aspect was provided by 16 year old, Amanda Cawley, who is a talented pianist and who coached the elders in the use of hand chimes.

Sonia who attended all 6 sessions said " Oh I so look forward to this. I would like to see it more often than once a month. I like it because there are so many smiles. Singing makes you smile. Music makes you smile, especially when they play the songs from our era. It give you a different kind of energy - it's such a good feeling energy."

### FINLAND

Hannu Perala who initiated the Silver Song Club programme in Jyvaskyla, Finland will be visiting Kent in early September together with other colleagues from Spain and Slovenia who are part of the EU sponsored Octavia project.

There are 2 Silver Song Clubs in Jyvaskyla. Both are led by Tiina Mattila who is a professional free lance musician. One Club supports the Stroke Unit in Jyvaskyla Hospital and the other meets in a Day Care Centre for older people. During Hannu's visit we will be developing plans to expand the network.

### ITALY

Two Silver Song Clubs have been commissioned in Rome by Elizabetta Corvo who is a post graduate research student at Canterbury Christ Church University. The project will support research for Elizabetta's PhD thesis and is being undertaken in association with the University of Rome.

## NEW DIRECTORS

We are delighted that Richard and Veronika Segall Jones have become Directors. Their extensive knowledge and experience in the NHS will be of great help as SFYL introduces new programmes to support people with long term conditions. Richard was Assistant Chief Executive, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Trust before forming a consultancy with Veronika. Assignments include Interim Head of Corporate Affairs, NHS NW London. Veronika has acted as Associate Director of Clinical Governance with West Herts NHS Trust and undertaken assignments for the Health Service Ombudsman.



## **News from the Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health**

The academic year 2010-2011 has been the most successful year yet for the Sidney De Haan Research Centre. We have worked in close partnership with Sing For Your Life in setting up and evaluating five new song clubs as part of a major National Institute for Health Research project. Nearly 300 people over the age of 60 volunteered to take part in what is the world's first randomised controlled experiment to assess the value of singing for wellbeing. The trial was completed earlier this year and the results were highly significant, demonstrating clearly the positive benefits of regular singing. The East Kent 'Singing for Health' network for people with enduring mental health challenges also continued successful for a second year. Our evaluation of the project has shown for the first time, that singing can help to foster mental health and wellbeing of people who have experienced serious mental illness.

The Centre was also successful in achieving a new research grant from the Dunhill Medical Trust to set up a feasibility study on the value of singing for people with serious lung disease (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease including bronchitis and emphysema). We are currently in the recruitment phase, which is going very well, and five new singing groups are due to start across East Kent in September.

Finally, our biggest success this year has been securing a major grant from the Oak Foundation to provide core funding for the next three years. This means that the Centre is financially secure until 2014 and this will allow us to continue to develop our research programme exploring the health benefits of singing. Our next major projects will be to establish a national multi-centre trial on the value of singing for older people in partnership with other universities across England. We also plan to evaluate the benefits of singing for maintaining and improving speech quality in people with Parkinson's disease.

*Stephen Clift, Research Director  
Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health*

## **Hull Silver Song Club**

A welcome is extended to all involved with the creation of the Hull Silver Song Club.

The first meeting of the Hull Silver Song Club took place on 15th July at the Endsleigh Centre in Beverley Road, Kingston upon Hull. The session was led by Andrew Mussett and Stuart Brown and more than 40 people enjoyed tea on the lawn before an afternoon of participatory singing.

Admiral Nurses and NHS staff took part and special thanks to Melissa Brolls of the Hull Public Health Directorate who organised the session. We initially plan to have two Clubs in Hull. The programme is funded by NHS Hull.

## **CHANNEL 5 DOCUMENTARY**

Channel 5 are presenting a short series of programmes to raise public awareness of long term health conditions. The programmes will cover Autism, Diabetes and Dementia. The programme featuring Dementia and the impact it has on both the person with the disease and their family will feature the work of Sing For Your Life.

Filming has started and it is expected to be shown in October in the early evening. As soon as we know the day and time we will post it on the website.

## **Funding and support**

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

**Admiral Nurses, Bolton**  
**NHS Hull**  
**Office for Civil Society**  
**Chances4Change**  
**Hampshire County Council**  
**Awards4All**  
**Henry Smith Charity**  
**Waitrose, Sidmouth**  
**Alton Burns Supper Committee**  
**The Three Belles Vocal Trio**

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