

COMMUNITY MUSIC-MAKING FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR CARERS NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2009



Silver Song Club marks D-Day anniversary

To mark the 65th anniversary of D-Day, the Alton Silver Song Club paid its own special musical tribute to the men and women of the Forces. Led by The Three Belles (all members of Alton Operatic & Dramatic Society and regular singers with the Silver Song Club), the group sang a selection of wartime favourites from both sides of the Atlantic, including Bless 'em All, We're Gonna Hang Out the Washing on the Siegfried Line, Kiss Me Goodnight Sergeant Major and Glen Miller's Chattanooga Choo Choo.

The club, which is free to attend, meets every Friday morning at Orchard House in Alton to enjoy a good, uplifting community sing. Music includes rounds, folk songs, and popular songs from the music hall era onwards. 'We are not a choir' said Facilitator, Barbara Rayner. 'We are just a group of people who come together to have fun and share in a musical journey down memory lane, whilst also giving our brains a bit of a work-out with tongue-twisters, rounds and songs sung by heart. It is a very social activity and we are keen to encourage more people to come along and join us.' Anyone wanting to know more about The Silver Song Club should contact Barbara Rayner on 01420 80445.



The Three Belles at Orchard House. From left to right: Edith Wilmot, Susie Dean and Barbara Rayner.

Research round-up

Sing For Your Life is pleased to be involved with an upcoming research project funded by the Department of Health's Research for Patient Benefit Programme.

The project is being led by the East Kent Coastal and Teaching PCT and the Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health, and is supported by others including the Centre for Health Service Studies.

The project will investigate the health benefits of Silver Song Clubs and their cost-effectiveness.

We are also involved in establishing a European-wide learning partnership funded by the European Union's Grundtvig Project.

Partners have been recruited from across the EU to work together and share experiences of using the arts to contribute to people's health and well-being.

An initial meeting is planned for later this year and a full programme of events is planned for 2010.

We are grateful to the Health and Europe Centre for their assistance in developing this project.

Training news

Sing For Your Life is now an accredited training provider and has won a contract from the Learning Skills Council to deliver vocational training. We are developing courses which will be particularly useful for voluntary organisations and their staff who operate in the Health & Well-being sector.

The Courses are designed to help voluntary organisations to become more efficient and deal with the ever increasing volume of bureaucracy and regulation with which we have to cope.

The courses are FREE. For more information contact Stuart Brown at makmusse@aol.com



The Silver Song Club

As the group sing songs from yesteryear,
The sentiments of some might cause one to
shed a tear -
Remembering when they were a current hit in
olden times,
With words that were so meaningful, as each sweet
verse rhymes.
Holding on to those memories of family and friends
in days gone by,
Brings about such a wealth of joy that those songs
still imply.
Happy to recall each numbered song that we
render forth,
Not wanting to make one more relevant or give
cause to dwarf -
Enabling in the theme of things to gain more worth
than one could wish for,
Will inevitably allow each shared moment a
promising score
Half way through the afternoon we stop for tea,
and biscuits too,
It gives us all a chance to have a chat and say
"How Do You Do."

Peter Vincent Morris

Bexhill Silver Song Club at St Peter's Community Centre

Bexhill Silver Song Club

The Bexhill Silver Song Club, held on Mondays at St. Peter's Community Centre, is going from strength to strength, with numbers frequently reaching 50. The club is organised with the help of the Alzheimers Society and MAST, The Memory Assessment and Support Team. Frequent singer, Peter Morris, is a local poet - who recently had a collection of poems entitled "A Mind in Action" published by United Press Limited - turned his poetry skills to the Song Club to sum up just how important these clubs are"

Cheryl Blake,
Facilitator, Bexhill Silver Song Club

Club News

Tenterden

West View Silver Song Club

The group, which meets here on the last Tuesday of each month, has proved to be very popular with those that attend. It has brought happiness, evoked forgotten memories, and is a fun time with lots of laughter.

Through the eyes of the facilitator other benefits can be seen. Many of the group members have blossomed during these visits. For example, a previously withdrawn, shy gentleman now sings along to songs he knows and claps so enthusiastically to those he doesn't. It's a delight to see. We look forward to future visits and would like to send our heartfelt thanks to those involved in this project.

Bracknell

A generous grant from Awards for All will allow sessions to continue here throughout 2009.

Dover

The experiences of those who attend this club will be shared at the Dementia Services Development Centre's international conference later this year. This presentation will be given in partnership with forDementia and the Admiral Nursing service.

Gosport

A new club has been established in Gosport funded by Hampshire County Council and led by facilitator Nella Strologo. We are working with Club Hampshire who have helped considerably with both venue and advertising. The club is the first in a series of joint initiatives between our two organisations.

Sheppey

For Love of Song continues to bring joy and delight to older people in venues across the Isle of Sheppey through their touring project. Funding has recently been received to allow this work to continue.

Littlehampton

Rosemary Pardey, the Area Co-ordinator for West Sussex, recently visited the Littlehampton Silver Song Club, and was thrilled with what she experienced "Rita, the facilitator, is such a lively extrovert that she attracts everyone's attention right from the start. There were two birthday celebrations, - one for a lady of 97. Len, the pianist, who is about 90, played a medley of well known TV signature tunes for everyone to guess at. He is a fantastic pianist and can play almost anything - mostly without music. All in all there is a wonderful mix with the support of some exceptional volunteers, whose talents included some excellent guitar playing and arrangements for hand bells"

Sidney De Haan Research Centre news.

Following the formative evaluation of the Silver Song Club Project, (see Newsletter Summer 2008) the Sidney De Haan Research Centre is planning, in conjunction with Sing For Your Life, a more ambitious piece of research into the health and wellbeing benefits of the Clubs.

Although the initial evaluation was very positive, and provided some very compelling feedback, it only drew on a small sample of people involved in the Clubs within the project. There is now a need, in addition to collecting individual testimonies, to attach some 'hard' figures to the evidence. This means trying to quantify how much, and in what ways, health and wellbeing may be improved, as well as costing the Song Clubs so that their value can be compared with other health and social care costs.

This will take some time and money and we are applying for research funding to support the project. If successful, we are hoping that SFYL will set up 5 new clubs so that we can, over a period of time, compare their effects on individuals taking part with those not taking part. We hope to provide more information in future newsletters.

Roadshows

Almost a dozen roadshow sessions have now taken place to introduce the Silver Song Club concept to new areas and groups. These have included a number of sessions in Portsmouth and mid-Kent.

If you are involved in running a charity or community group and would like to host a session please contact us.

KUIMBA

Sing For Your Life is a registered charity, and because of this any activity, which is not covered by our charitable objectives, must be managed by a separate organisation; this is why Kuimba Ltd was established. The company is wholly owned by Sing For Your Life and the profits are coventanted to Sing For Your Life. The purpose is to create a sustainable income stream to support the charity.

These are some of the activities and ideas in which Kuimba is involved:

Delivering training to our own staff and volunteers and to other organisations

A programme to reduce the social isolation of older people by providing an IT mentoring service

"Good Health makes Good Business" – to emphasise the importance of a Healthy Life Style to reduce absenteeism from work.

"Chamber 50 Plus" This is to support people pre and post retirement in their endeavours to continue to work or perform voluntary services.

Singing in Canada

A multi-faceted research project led by the University of Prince Edward Island has been awarded \$C2.5 million grant by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to create significant new knowledge about a basic human activity – singing.

Advancing Interdisciplinary Research in Singing (AIRS) will last seven years and will involve all Canadian Provinces as well as co-laborators all over the world. It will focus on three areas:

The development of singing ability

The connections between singing and learning

The enhancement of health and well being through singing

Stephen Clift and Stuart Brown will be attending the opening Conference.

News from the South West

Mondays have now become one of the happiest days of the week at Age Concern Exeter, with the opening of the fortnightly Silver Song Club at their premises in Corwick Street, St Thomas. It is widely believed that singing and music can improve people's health and sense of wellbeing, and that's exactly what the Exeter pensioners have noticed already. In the words of one of the members (aged 83) "I think it's wonderful. The first time I attended I got into it straight away; once you start you can't stop! It's a lovely way to spend one's time, and you leave a lot happier than when you arrived!"

Silver Song Clubs are not passive. Everyone joins in with a range of musical activities – not only singing but also using percussion instruments, as well as doing gentle chair-based exercises.

It is hoped that a further group will be established later in the year in Ottery St. Mary. New volunteer helpers or trained leaders are always welcome.

For more information visit www.singforyourlife.org.uk or telephone Peter Clark on 01404 812556.



Photo: Express & Echo

The South East Arts and Health Partnership new website: www.seah.org.uk

The South East Arts & Health Partnership is one of a number of Regional Partnerships which promote the use of the in Arts in Health & Well Being settings. The South East Partnership has recently commissioned a new website **www.seah.org.uk**

Any organisation or individual, be it from the public, private or Third Sector, who has an interest in this work is urged to register on the website. We not only want to know what is happening in the Region but to be able to inform practioners of opportunities to offer their work, be informed of events etc.

It costs nothing to register so please access the website today and register. Help us to help YOU!

The London Arts and Health National Forum

The London Arts & Health Forum is leading a project to create a National Forum to represent and lobby on behalf of the Sector. The project will last 2 years and is funded by Arts Council England. LAHF are supported by an Advisory Group which represents the other regional partnerships.

Strategic objectives are being developed, but one of the priorities is to follow up Lord Howarth's initiative, which resulted in a Department of Health Working Group being formed under the joint chairmanship of Professor Louis Appleby, National Director for Mental Health and Professor Rob Smith. Other interest groups will also be represented and it is expected that the Working Group will re-visit the findings of the Cayton Report.

New advertising

After many years' faithful service we have decided to update our promotional material. Claire Whiddon, of Profile Graphics, has produced eye catching posters and flyers with lots of photos and these will be rolled out across the Silver Song Club network over the next few months.



Funding and support

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

Dartford Borough Council

for supporting Punjabi clubs in North Kent

Kent County Council

for supporting Silver Song Clubs in both East and West Kent

Queenborough Fishery Trust

for support towards 'for Love of Song' in Sheppey

Henry Smith Charity

for supporting Crawley Silver Song Club

Awards 4 All

for supporting "Singing for the Brain" in North Hampshire

It's good-bye East Kent – hello Buckinghamshire

It has been my privilege to work with Sing For Your Life over the last six months, facilitating many Silver Song Clubs all over East Kent.

Since graduating in July last year, I have regularly facilitated at Silver Song Clubs in Canterbury and Ramsgate, and filled in at others in East Kent. Each Song Club is unique; At a recent club in Tenterden, a participant with mid stage dementia was sitting silently with her face down and arms tightly crossed. As we sang "Early One Morning" she opened her arms and sang each word perfectly. Her carers and other participants were astonished and exclaimed: "This music thing really works!"

The Ramsgate Silver Song Club are a very creative group who are always ready to try new things. We have learnt a range of new songs from Israel, Africa and Canada, and through these songs I have enjoyed building up rather complex arrangements with multiple voice parts, chime bars and other instruments. Of course we still sing all the old favourites such as "Cockles and Mussels," and "The Skye Boat Song," when we like to give members the opportunity of singing a solo verse.

In July this year I will be moving from Canterbury to Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire. I hope to continue my involvement with Sing For Your Life in pastures new, as well as pursuing other creative community music opportunities. These past few months have been a wonderful experience, and I have enjoyed being involved in so many people's lives by making music with them!

Michael Trew

Fond farewells.

We are sorry to be losing two facilitators this summer. **Adrian Bawtree** will be leaving us as he takes up the post of Director of Music at Christs Hospital. Adrian's inimitable style and musical talents have been greatly appreciated at Silver Song Clubs throughout West Sussex and we wish him every success in his new post. **Michael Trew** is also leaving as he begins training with Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy. In his brief time with us he impressed all those he met with a kindness and sincerity beyond his years.

We are always looking for potential facilitators to work with us. If you or someone you know would be interested in sharing the joy of music making with older people please contact us.

Ed.

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