

News from the Network

Seasons Greetings to Network Elves everywhere. I'm sure you're all madly carolling and wassailing and singing various seasonal songs. It's a busy, busy time of year for us so look after yourselves, Elves.

I'm still looking at good practice and thanks to those of you that have been in touch. Dave Camlin's a good example. Dave does a lot of work up in the Sage Gateshead. Some of you might have come across him through the Sing Up programme in schools or his fabulous group Mouthful.

Dave has been working in music education for years- community music mostly. He didn't train as a musician; he trained as a teacher; but through being a performer and working with other musicians for many years and having an instinct for inclusive empowering music learning, he found himself teaching and researching community music.

Dave now splits his time three ways between performing, teaching and research. His research in community music is still based at the Sage but he also teaches Community of Practice at Trinity Laban in Cambridge.

That's lucky for the Network as Dave has offered to help in developing our awareness of ourselves as a C.O.P.

Dave remembers what it was like to feel on the outside of a musical community and what enabled him to develop himself musically until he became part of it. That's why he joined the NVN 10 years ago - because of our "birthright" and "peer to peer" principles. Dave also works with other community music groups, bands, classically trained musicians and jazz musicians. He points out that each has its own terms and language but all are focused on the same thing: the ways to give people the opportunity to express their authentic musical selves. Even though the sectors are different we all have the same aim. Like Jo Cox, Dave points out that we are all the same in our differences. Even in the Network we have Singing for the Brain, lung health, healing, choirs of every conceivable hue and hopefully we are all working towards the same aim.

Dave's NVN choirs are in West Cumbria and Gateshead. His big choir "Sing Owt" (Owt is pronounced exactly like "out" but means "anything" up north - no of course I don't think you're stupid, it's just in case!) Anyway, "Sing Owt" grew and grew in popularity over 10 years to the point where Dave wasn't sure folk were getting the musical experience they needed. Dave says you never teach the same choir twice - like jumping in a river, it's different every time. It needs sensitive reflection and awareness to keep in touch with your singers. The very experienced singers were waiting for the newer ones to catch up. New members needed time. It's a common problem for those of us who teach big community choirs. Dave's solution was to start "Sing In" a year ago. One choir is for experienced

committed singers, and the other is for beginners or drop-ins. The choirs meet in different towns and the split has been friendly and successful.

Do keep warm songsters. Look after your voices. See some of you at the AGM.

Jules Gibb - November 2017