



Developing New Ideas

Mrs H and the Sing Along Band

I took my son to Mrs H and the Singalong Band's weekly events in London when we lived there. I was deeply moved and really engaged by what I experienced with Harriette, I was engaged because she expects the adults to try to learn the words to the songs and expects us to sing along. She often divided us into groups to sing a round and she added the harmonies. This woke me from the stupor induced by the umpteenth rendition of the 'wheels on the bus' that parents with young children are usually offered. We sang great songs together and we sounded wonderful. Ted the 'banjo man' was a great hit with my son who was fascinated and learned first hand how magical real music is. One day at Harriette's when my son was not yet two, during a particularly lovely song he turned to me, held my face in his hands and looked deep into my eyes. A space for emotional connection through music is a rare and wonderful thing for children and parents and Harriette offers it with such style.

I have wanted to invite Harriette to my home town of Dorking, where we now live, to work her magic since 2011. It was a dream come true when she arrived in the forest clearing where my husband, son and I run our forest school sessions. She had Ted with his banjo and Gill with her accordion so we felt extra lucky. They proceeded to draw us out of ourselves and into their wonderful musical world. Forest school regulars were amazed to see the event unfold, a local family who were just on a walk in the woods came and joined in. Children who had known each other since they were tiny danced together and people made new friends as they made a train and went through the tunnel made of grown ups arms. Baby George took bare footed tentative steps and a granny jiggled to the rhythms. Even my husband who never dances has been caught on film moving to the groove of the train song.

