

YAMSEN AGM reports 2022-2023

Christmas Concert and Art Exhibition

J Winster

The Christmas concerts happened this year in two ways because the Leeds Town Hall, our traditional YAMSEN Christmas concert venue, is being refurbished. Wakefield Accord used their final December rehearsal as a Christmas concert, as last year. One Accord and YAM, both based in Leeds, sang together at Pudsey Civic Hall during the afternoon of Wednesday 14th December.

The Pudsey concert featured songs our singers had learnt to perform, plus familiar carols for the audience to join in. This year, with easing Covid restrictions, allowed us to have a small audience of just under 100 people, including family, friends, YAMSEN volunteers and a class from Green Meadows Primary.

Involved in the concert were:

- Leeds Accord choirs—members from four schools
- YAM singers—about 15 members, plus volunteers and carers
- The Lord Mayor of Leeds, Cllr Bob Gettings, who gave a reflection and word of thanks
- Artists, who had photos of their work displayed on screen during the concert
- Father Christmas
- Our leaders, volunteers and trustees, with a special thanks to Diane who led as MC and all who helped in the planning and running of the event

The concert overall cost about £949, consistent with last year. We have been able to support this with a grant of £682 from Opus 44 and with funding for the choir from LMEP. The feel of the concert was inclusive, inviting and joyous. There was an open reception afterward for any who wanted to stay and celebrate. Thank you to Mavis and the team who set this up so quickly after the concert finished.

Thoughts about the next Christmas concert:

- The Pudsey concert was mostly singing, much of which was interactive, and not much talking. This seemed to be a good balance which kept the concert lively.
- The Art Exhibition had few entrants other than YAM, who had a workshop dedicated to Christmas art and crafts. We will consider who we send the spec to, when, and if we can tie it into a workshop for schools as well. It will remain non-competitive.
- We did not make or sell charity Christmas cards.

YAM

J Winster, M West, S Siddall

We are grateful to our YAM members and volunteers for making our weekly Friday morning choir and workshops a wonderful place to be. We are enjoying being able to interact with our wider community after a long period of post-covid rebuilding.

YAM, or YAMSEN Adult Music, runs a choir fortnightly alternating with music workshops on termtime Friday mornings at the West Park United Reformed Church. We have between 25 – 30 Aspire members every week plus 13 – 16 non Aspire members. Aspire gives YAM a core grant of £5465 to sustain activities over the year, and contributed an extra £2000 last year on the retirement of CEO Andy Rawnsley, showing how much they value our service. We hope to build a similar relationship with Zoe Bawn, the new CEO. We are also active on the Aspire Friendship group on Facebook and make contributions to the Aspire Newsletter. YAM is one of the few places that adults with learning disabilities can meet up regularly in a big group, so this social element, as well as the music itself, is very important to our members. YAM is slowly growing, but it is a large group and we are not actively recruiting any more members. The Off the Cuff band is growing too, with Eddie, our new bass player-- it now has 10 members!

In early 2022 YAM was still building up its numbers, and instead of travelling out, we gave a concert at WPURC in late May, inviting friends to join us and where we met new Aspire CEO Zoe Bawn. All workshops had been done in-house.

YAM has opened up to guest performers Skyfallers and Mrs Porter's Concert Band from September, as well as external and volunteer workshop leaders. Guest leaders have included Nic & Sarah Shipp and Judith Kennedy. Many thanks to Royal Mencap Leeds for a transport grant—this took us to Christmas concerts at Pudsey, Hillside and St Matthew's Christmas tree festival, plus the Rothwell Festival in March.

We wish the warmest thanks to our dedicated volunteers who make the morning a friendly and easy place to be, and a special thanks to Charlotte, who is interning with YAMSEN for the 22-23 academic year and is rising to every challenge. One of our volunteers said 'You don't realise how much you need a hand until Charlotte is right beside you.'

We warmly invite YAMSEN members to join us for an open house concert at West Park URC, Spenn Lane, on May 26th 10:30-12.

Accord choirs (Leeds and Bradford)

S Thiruchelvam

The Accords choirs are monthly-meeting multi-school community choirs for pupils with additional needs and the staff who work with them. They participate in performances at Christmastime and at the end of the school year as part of the Wharfedale festival

Staff:

- Sophie Thiruchelvam—choir leader
- Joanna Winstler—choir leader
- Diane Paterson- choir leader/ admin assistant/accompanist
- Charlotte Smith- Intern and accompanist
- Jo Brook—occasional accompanist
- Donal O'Kane—volunteer

The challenges

We are still finding it very hard to get schools to come out to rehearsals in person and even participate online at times. Attendance has gone up and down through the year, as always many attending rehearsals prior to the Christmas concert so they could participate, but then not re-joining in the new year.

We had one school join us for the summer Wharefdale festival concert and another school who were showcasing their band also joined in with the singing, as many members had been past choir attendees. The pupils really sang well and put all their positive energy into the concert and it was lovely to have them back performing in person, even though numbers were small.

The Autumn term was a slow start, with no one attending our first rehearsal and we put the second and third ones on zoom to make sure we could reach as many people as possible. We welcomed the great addition of Charlotte as our intern and now accompanist for the choir as Joanna moved onto a different role as was unable to carry on with the choir. The schools worked hard to get through all the material in the shorter zoom time and our face to face rehearsals were attended by 3 schools, which was great.

We had 5 schools attend the Christmas concert, with a total of 36 pupils, which was our biggest number post pandemic. The pupils sang well and loved the opportunity to get up and dance to some of the YAM songs and band music.

Due to lack of commitment of schools we put our January rehearsal on zoom, welcoming Diane Paterson to come and support in any way she can – this has included co leading and zoom co-ordinating so far! Zoom was popular, having 4 schools attend, which was great. Our February rehearsal was only attended by one school, so we decided to try hybrid rehearsals, allowing a few keen classes, who can't get out to rehearsals to participate. We had technical issues in March but we were successful in April with it.

We are looking at reviewing how to run rehearsals, whether it is more in school visits to increase participation, rather than centralised rehearsals. We are also going to review how we charge schools as the current model doesn't work so effectively when we need to be flexible with schools joining zoom some weeks and not others.

Since Joanna has left it has been a fluid changeover, so there are still things occurring that Diane and Sophie are needing Joanna to assist with, but hopefully by Summer 2023 this should have been resolved.

Current work

We are rehearsing once a month and Sophie is visiting two schools in the South SILC and one in the West SILC to try to encourage choir participation and help those classes who can't get out for staffing reasons. She is trying to expand this work to help increase regular numbers at choir.

We have two schools who join us in person for rehearsals and one on zoom.

Thanks

Thanks to Joanna, who has helped with various tasks over the year, despite leaving her role. Thanks to Mel at Meanwood, who has been very accommodating when we have had to cancel or move rehearsals due to strike action. Donal has been his usual efficient self, providing all our refreshments and keeping Sophie updated on supplies needed. The choir

runs as a team effort so thanks to all the leaders and accompanists, everyone approaches rehearsals positively and makes them run smoothly.

Wakefield Accord Choir

J Craig

The Wakefield Accord Choir is for both secondary and primary pupils in the Wakefield and local surrounding areas, for pupils with additional needs and for the staff who work with them. Meetings take place monthly to include rehearsals and performances during the year.

Staff

- Jackie Craig - choir leader/accompanist
- Kate Ghent - choir leader/accompanist

The remaining rehearsals of the 2021 - 22 school year continued to take place at Highfield School, with a class from Greenacre School joining either in person or via Zoom. The last rehearsal of the year also had Oakfield Park joining us for the first time since pre-lockdown.

September 2022 saw a slow start to the choir. We took the decision to move back to Manygates for rehearsals as it is a more central location for all schools, but unfortunately Highfield School did not attend, Greenacre School did not respond to any emails and Kingsland School were still not attending sessions out of school.

Despite this we had a core group of 8 Oakfield Park pupils plus a home educated YP who has a 1:1 music lesson each week with JC. We agreed to move the rehearsals to Oakfield Park School for the term as they were the only school attending.

This situation continued into term 2, but despite this the choir sounded amazing and worked hard towards their performance at the Wakefield Music Hub's Hubalaboo concert at Wakefield Theatre Royal (details of which will be in next year's report, but spoiler alert: It was awesome!)

We successfully applied for funding from Kirklees Year of Music 2023 (KYOM23) through a fund distributed by Creative Minds, solely for music projects linked to health and wellbeing. As a result Jackie Craig has set up a Kirklees Accords choir with Diane Paterson kindly volunteering as accompanist. Part of the bid was also to give a member of Kirklees Musica staff the opportunity to work with large groups of young people with SEND, so Jo Worboys-Hodgson has been joining us, and will be developing her skills along the way.

We have experienced difficulties in schools attending rehearsals, but luckily were given an extra £1000 of funding which has enabled us to run rehearsals in each of the schools that have signed up, which in turn means that two of the schools have taken full advantage of more of their pupils being able to take part as there has been no transport restrictions re numbers.

The schools taking part are Southgate, Castle Hill and Ravens Hall. We have been invited to take part in the Big Sing at Dewsbury Town Hall on Tuesday 4th July and will be teaching the other young people attending

Membership

B Barnes

Membership is going well. We are focusing a lot more on schools and organisations rather than individuals with 10 schools being paid up members at the moment .

I use "statements" to follow up unpaid invoices .

Keeping contact details, names and especially emails as up to date as possible can be challenging. I am trying to use school reception emails from websites, but getting communication to the correct people who are actually involved in YAMSEN activities can be tricky.

Multisensory days

D Paterson

In June 2022 we planned to get back to running our annual multisensory music days with the theme: YAMSEN World Tours, exploring music from around the world through sensory and musical activities. However, we discovered that schools weren't ready to bring children out to a large communal event. The reasons were threefold:

- concerns about covid,
- staffing problems
- high cost of transport.

In response to this, we arranged for our usual musicians Kate Badcock and Roddy Johnson to go onto schools. This worked well with schools enjoying the fact that more of their pupils could take part. We followed this up by re-running the days in October. This time we ran them as a hybrid event, running two days of activities at Pudsey Civic Hall and two days in schools.

Staff

- musicians: Kate Badcock, Roddy Johnson and Nic Shipp,
- set and artistic activities were created by Kate Rossiter
- the days were led by and supported by Diane Paterson, Joanna Winster, Chloe Wood and Lynn Swithenbank, Brigitte Gronke and Charlotte Smith.

We would like to thank:

- Leeds Music Education Partnership (LMEP) and the Liz and Terry Bramhall foundation for their financial;
- ArtForms for their support in kind in the form of staff and van with driver.
- Leeds Equipment store for providing hoists

Core activities in schools supported by LMEP funding

Music Therapy

For several years LMEP core funding has subsidised Music Therapy sessions at Richmond Hill Primary school. These were run by Alice Nicholls who worked very effectively with pupils with autism in the specialist unit there. At Easter these were handed over to the Operas North In-Harmony project. This runs throughout the school. We would like to thank Alice for all the work she did there.

Singing workshops in schools

Since lockdown ended Sophie has returned to leading singing workshops in the Broomfield and Rodillion sites of the South SILC and also the West SILC - see Accord report.

Wharfedale Festival working with YAMSEN

In May we ran the **Music Makers class** for the first time since lockdown. Four classes from different schools in Leeds came to the Craiglands hotel and performed their class singing and instrumental compositions in front of the other groups. It was a very enjoyable morning.

This was followed by the **Summer Concert** in July at the Kings Hall where members of the Off BY Heart Choir and the Accord choirs sang together. Again, this was the for the first time since lockdown. A special feature was the song "We All Stand Together".

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
33			Designated Funds	£2,772.34				
34			Restricted Funds	£4,585.02				
35			General Funds	£33,575.54				
36			Total	£40,932.90				
37			Uncleared cheques					
38			Virgin Statement	£26,409.74				
39			Santander statement	£14,523.16				
40			Closing Balance	£40,932.90				

December 28th Dec 2023

Diane Paterson, YAMSEN Secretary

**c/o ArtForms
Pudsey Civic Hall
Dawson's Corner
Pudsey
Leeds
LS28 5TA**

Dear Diane

The accounts presented for 2022/23 including bank statements, receipts, invoice copies, and a spreadsheet analysis have been reconciled and are in accord with the statement prepared for the YAMSEN AGM.

In summary the records for 2022/23 confirm:

An opening bank balance Virgin statement No 400	£26409.74
Opening balance as per Santander statement No 003/23	14523.16
Total in banks	£40932.90
Receipts in 2022/23	£31715.80
Payments in 2022/23	£24240.14
Uncleared cheques	£ 0
Income over expenditure	£7475.66
Opening balance	£33547.25
Income over expenditure	£ 7475.66
Total	£40932.91

Yours sincerely,



K.W. Morton (retired but formerly Senior Finance Officer with Leeds City Council Education service).

K. W. Morton