

YAMSEN AGM reports 2023-2024

11th June 2024

YAMSEN Christmas Concert

This year's concert was held at Pudsey Civic Hall on Thursday December 14th 2023. This was the 40th anniversary of the first YAMSEN Christmas concert.

The shape of the concert has changed over 40 years, especially since the remodelling of Leeds Town Hall and after the Covid pandemic. Our concerts have seen our musician members take over the majority of the music-making, evolved the art competition into an art celebration and digital exhibition and bring in dancing! Well-known communal songs and carols, plus lively dance music gave the audience a chance to mingle with the choir members for a truly interactive concert experience. A mince pie reception in the bar afterward gave us a chance to meet the trustees and thank all the volunteers.

The performers comprised 4 schools from the One Accord choir and about 30 members and volunteers from YAM Singers. Off the Cuff band supported the music alongside accompanists Diane and Jo. The choirs sang joyfully, and watched their leaders attentively. The Lord Mayor of Leeds, Cllr. Al Garthwaite, attended alongside two aides. They congratulated our singers, danced along and posed for photographs. She congratulated Mavis West, a YAMSEN founder, for attending this and all of the other 40 YAMSEN Christmas Concerts!

Entries for the digital art celebration were limited, but a handful of works arrived from eager artists and were projected above the singers.

As always, I would like to offer thanks to all the schools, members, day centres, carers, music leaders, trustees and volunteers for their positive ideas and help making the concert happen. An extra thanks to Allan House and Diane Paterson for campaigning against the closure of our venue, Pudsey Civic Hall, as its accessibility and size are ideal to meet the needs of our members and those who attend our Christmas concert and other events.

Joanna Winster

YAM Report

YAM Singers choir and YAM workshops have enjoyed a full year of activities, including giving and hosting concerts, playing instruments, composing, dancing, celebrating holidays and bringing in guest leaders.

YAM, or YAMSEN Adult Music, runs a choir fortnightly alternating with music workshops on termtime Friday mornings at the West Park United Reformed Church. 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. We welcome around 50-60 members to each session and have added a few new members since last year. We have also said goodbye to a few. We have welcomed Paul Siddall as our music librarian, and our Off the Cuff band keeps growing, with the addition of two members on melodica and drum.

Highlights of the year include: members taking on helping jobs at set-up and break time, brilliant break time tea & biscuit service, a well-organised bring-and-buy stall full of variety, giving our own concert in the spring at West Park United Reformed Church, a higher quality

of performance at YAM talent shows, performing at Party in the Park at Temple Newsam during Learning Disability week, Performing alongside One Accord and Topaz Jazz ensemble at King's Hall in Ilkley, hosting Skyfallers and Mrs Porter's Concert Band concerts, singing and photos with the Lord Mayor at the 40th YAMSEN Christmas concert and so much more! YAM is grateful to Aspire, which supplies core funding for our activities. Sue, Diane and Anne also apply for additional funding opportunities, including a Mencap grant for transportation to performance opportunities. Through Sue we are also active on the Aspire Friendship group on Facebook and make contributions to the Aspire Newsletter. We are thankful for our YAM members and steadfast volunteers for making our weekly Friday morning choir and workshops a wonderfully friendly place to be. We warmly invite YAMSEN members to join YAM Singers at our next public concert at King's Hall, Ilkley, on July 2nd 12:45-1:30.

Joanna Winster Mavis West Sue Siddall

Accord choirs.

The Accord choir is comprised of pupils from across schools from Leeds and Bradford. Some schools attend the regular choir rehearsals and others rehearse at school and join for the performances at Christmastime and in the summer.

Staff:

- Sophie Thiruchelvam—choir leader/ admin
- Diane Patterson- accompanist/ choir leader/ admin
- Charlotte Smith- Intern and accompanist
- Donal O'Kane—volunteer

Challenges

It is still proving a challenge to get schools to come and rehearsal regularly, with Sophie now extending the model of going into schools and then schools just attending the concert. This is less than ideal but it does mean we are increasing participation.

An issue that has been raised is that our Bradford school has slightly different term dates and also has time off for Eid, which has led them to miss a few rehearsals, so Sophie is going to send dates to them before everyone else for them to check, to try to prevent this from happening next academic year.

Work over the year

We had 3 schools attend our summer concert (which was an increase of 2 from last year) and it was a fabulous concert, full of energy and positivity. We sadly had to say goodbye to our wonderful intern Charlotte, who had been invaluable in the running of the sessions.

The Autumn attendance was very slow, with only one school attending our first two rehearsals. However, the numbers picked up and we ended up with 6 schools- 50 pupils, performing in the Christmas concert, one of which hadn't been since before Covid, which

was fantastic. Attendance at the concert has helped continue participation for the summer concert this year, as they had such good time.

The spring term attendance has been more consistent, with 3 schools trying to attend despite last minute transport issues meaning they couldn't always come. We moved to a different venue, which has proved positive but is it yet to be decided if we will stay there or head back to Meanwood.

Sophie has been carrying out singing workshops to support the choir in 2 schools, for Summer and autumn terms and then an extra one for spring term 2023. These vary in regularity- once a month, once every 3 weeks or once a fortnight. This has meant we are looking forward to having six schools at our summer 2024 concert with a possible 7th as an audience.

We changed our pricing system, so schools book a set number of places for rehearsals and they can fill them with different pupils if they so wish. It seems to have works so far, meaning we are getting more consistent numbers.

Work in progress..

We still want to have a review of how the choir, whether we try meeting weekly for half terms or keep it as once a month. We also want to see if there is interest in starting a primary age choir again too.

We also want to discuss the extension of the singing workshops in schools to continue to increase participation in the choir.

Thanks

Donal has continued to keep us running refreshments smoothly at each rehearsals, keeping Sophie updated on supplies required. He also has been brilliant at our new venue as he knows it very well, making sure we have everything we need. Diane has been accompanist, choir leader and helped with admin so wearing her many hats, as usual! The Accord choir is always a team effort with everyone contributing to running a positive session for all involved.

Sophie Thiruchelvam

Kirklees Accord Choir

This choir project was part of Kirklees Year of Music 2023 (KYOM23). It started in January 23 and continued into the summer term, ending in a concert with Musica Kirklees at their Big Sing at Dewsbury Town Hall on Tuesday 4th July. The schools taking part were Southgate, Castle Hill and Ravens Hall. Jo Worboys-Hodgson from Musica Kirklees attended the rehearsals, gaining experience working with SEND choir groups and YAMSEN continued to support "in kind" with Diane Paterson accompanying the sessions.

The funding from Creative Minds health and wellbeing, a total grant £2000, enabled the team to visit children in their schools rather than them having to travel, thus enabling more children to take part.

Wakefield Accords

This choir was meeting at Highfield School and it was proving difficult to get any children from other schools to join in so numbers were very low. In July they decided not to continue to run this choir as part of YAMSEN.

Membership

Membership is going well. We are continuing to focus on schools and organisations rather than individuals with 11 schools being paid up members at the moment. When running events we charge different rates for non-members. Hopefully this will encourage more schools to join.

B Barnes

Multisensory days - Music Down Your Way

This year we were getting back to pre-covid numbers running three days a Pudsey Civic Hall with 128 pupils and on the Wednesday a small team went into two schools: John Jamieson in the morning and Broomfield in the afternoon, reaching another 70 pupils. Out of the total of 198 children just 18 children were from outside Leeds coming from two schools in Calderdale and one in Barnsley. One member of staff was really excited to be back meeting face to face, she walked into the room exclaiming "It's been 4 years since we were last here pre-covid in 2019, we're so glad to be back".

The theme used musical activities and art to explore things the children might see and experience on their journeys from home to school: the park, a pond, a supermarket, a football ground and a factory. They journeyed between activities on an imaginary bus led by bus driver Eddie Hyndes and Kate Rossiter created a wonderful shopping arcade tunnel full of colour and lights for them to explore. Ros Huntley supplied a picture timetable which we put onto a map showing the imaginary journey. This proved popular.

Live music is an essential part of these days. This was provided by: Roddy Johnson - playing violin, guitar and vocals, Kate Badcock - saxophone, flute and Nic Shipp drum kit and keyboard.

The days were led by Diane Paterson supported by Joanna Winster, Chloe Wood, Kate Rossiter, Alex Tod, Charlotte Smith, Sue Siddall, Pat Hemingway and Aretha Suen.

We would like to thank:

- Artforms council funding through Leeds Music Education Partnership (LMEP) and Mohn Westlake for their financial support.
- ArtForms for their support in kind in the form of music staff and Richard Kippen to pack and drive van.
- Leeds Equipment store for providing hoists.
- The staff at Pudsey Civic Hall

Core activities in schools supported by LMEP funding.

This money has supported three activities this year

1. Singing workshops in schools

Sophie has continued to lead singing workshops in the Broomfield and Rodillian sites of the South SILC; Jack Clark site of the East SILC and milestone site of the West SILC. These workshops support the work Sophie leads with the Accord choir.

2. One to one piano tuition led by Jo Brooke with two pupils in the Green Meadows Academy.

3. A new communication group for children with autism led by Ros Huntley.

We began the year with 6 regular pupils the eldest of whom was in Year 6 and had some home education days.

His presence enabled some ambitious music making especially inspired by the coronation in which he enjoyed dressing up as King Charles and being crowned. The parents of the younger children all commented that because of these musical games they felt confident to take some part in Coronation festivities where they had previously felt that their children would be too overwhelmed to participate.

It was sad to say goodbye to Charlotte at the summer term. Supporting the group for the whole year she had bonded with all the families and her help was invaluable. All the parents were sorry to see her leave and wished her well in her future career.

Initially nervous about leading some of the activities and songs she grew in confidence in doing this.

In the autumn the group reverted to all rising 4 year olds. Twins who had been attendees for the longest time began anticipating activities and beginning to vocalise for one particular activity attempting to imitate some sounds. They now immediately responded to “stop” and “go” directions and began indicating “go” to continue. They also began recognising the direction “loudly “ and “quietly “ when playing percussion and began actively cooperating with putting items back in bags at the end of any songs that had items to go with it.

The third regular target child who attended in the autumn with his younger brother was often very distracted by having a big space to roam in but reportedly joined in with many of the activities at home and sang some of the words there. Loving numbers we regularly did a rocket countdown song in the run up to November 5th and indoor rockets that could be flown via a foot press proved very popular.

2 new pupils joined in this term. But one was only able to attend for a few weeks due to family commitments.

Christmas songs and musical activities proved very successful. The families were given sets of materials to use at home to link with this.

After Christmas YAMSEN took over the financial management of the group. Parents were happy to pay by BACS and found this easy to do.

A new pupil joined the group sometime after Christmas. Initially very anxious and quiet he nevertheless paid close attention to everything that was happening and told his mum he enjoyed coming.

It was noticeable in the new year that during song-games such as “roll the ball” the children were observing each other and sometimes positively interacting with each other.

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 first time since lockdown. A special feature was the song “We All Stand Together”.

Ros Huntley

Wharfedale Festival working with YAMSEN

1. Music Makers class:

We had to cancel the Music Makers class this year as no schools were able to attend.

2. **The Summer Concert** in July at the Kings Hall was very successful. Members of the YAMSEN adult choir and the children’s Accord choirs sang together. A rock band from Green Meadows led by Joanna Winster played and everyone had a great time dancing to the music of Topaz a Jazz Band from Jazz Leeds.

Diane continued to represent YAMSEN at national conferences:

- In York in October 23 Diane and Sophie led a workshop - Including All - at the Association of British Chorale Directors (ABCD) annual convention. They used ideas from the YAMSEN adult and children’s choirs and supporting material from Ros about strategies for including children with autism.
- In December representing YAMSEN on the Accessible Cultural Learning panel at the Leeds Cultural Education Conference.
- In April taking part alongside Adam Ockelford in Breaking the Singing Barrier SEND. A webinar for ISM and the Voices foundation.
- YAMSEN have sponsored Diane to do the Sounds of Intent PG Cert. An online course about making music accessible, led by Adam Ockelford of Roehampton University.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	YAMSEN AGM Accounts 23/24					
2	Activity	ref	receipts	payments	Restricted	Designated
3			2023-24	2023-24		
4	Adult Music RTR	A1RTR	£431.00	£835.00	£1,671.70	
5	Adult Music	A1	£9,994.99	£7,541.55	1066.67	
6	Books	B1	£0.00	£0.00		
7	Christmas Concert	C1	£0.00	£953.25		
8	Unspecified Donations	D1	£120.00	£0.00		
9	Fees/Insurance	F1	£0.00	£882.50		
10	Honorarium	H1	£0.00	£300.00		
11	Instrument Library	L1	£40.00			
12	LMEP	LMEP	£6,322.75	£5,806.64	1,575.86	
13	Membership	M1	£330.00			
14	Miscellaneous Gift	M2	£160.00	£138.99		
15	Miscellaneous Fraud	M2F	£159.17	£153.41		
16	Multi Sensory Day	P1	£7,836.00	£7,023.05	2,224.32	
17	ONE Accord Kirklees	O1K	£2,000.00	£2,144.00		
18	One Accord Wakefield	O1W	£0.00	£1,120.00		
19	Singalong	S1	£0.00	£0.00		
20	Training	T1	£0.00	£2,500.00		
21	Workshops	W1	£0.00	£200.00		
22	Wharfedale	W2	£0.00	£0.00		
23	Totals		£27,393.91	£29,598.39	6538.55	
24						
25						
26						
27						
28						
29						
30						

	A	B	C	D	E	F
31						
32	Total Income		£27,393.91			
33	Total Expenditure		£29,598.39			
34	Balance Income Over Expenditure		-£2,204.48			
35						
36	Bank Balances					
37	Santander Bank	Santander	£9,904.69			
38	Virgin	Virgin	£28,823.73			
39	Total in both Banks		£38,728.42			
40						
41						
42	Opening Balance		£40,932.90			
43	Income Over Expenditure		-£2,204.48			
44	Total in Banks/Closing Balance		£38,728.42			
45						
46	Restricted Funds		£6,538.55			
47	General Funds		£32,189.87			
48	Total		£38,728.42			

December 28th 2024

Diane Paterson, YAMSEN Secretary

C/o ArtForms
Pudsey Civic Hall
Dawson's Corner
Pudsey
Leeds and *other*
LS28 5TA

Dear Diane

The accounts presented 2023/2024 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 2023/24 confirm:

An opening bank balance Virgin statement	£26409.74
Opening balance as per Santander statement	£14523.16
Total in banks 01/03/23	£40932.90
Receipts in 2023/24	£27,393.91
Payments in 2023/24	£29,598.39
Uncleared cheques	£ 0
Income over expenditure	-£2,204.48
Closing balance 28 th Feb 2024	£38,728.42

Yours sincerely



K.W Morton (retired but formerly Senior

Finance Officer with Leeds City Council Education service).