



*Creating community for those living with
dementia and their carers*



Lyrics & Lunch

Version 3 May 2024

With thanks

We would like to start by thanking everyone who has allowed their image or story, or that of their family member, to be used here.

As you will read, Lyrics & Lunch has a significant impact on those who attend, and by sharing their stories, we hope to lessen isolation, and increase understanding.

Thank you also to our numerous helpers, without whom Lyrics & Lunch simply could not exist. From bakers, to singers, to the trustees, to people who come alongside our guests, to those who pray from home, and many more beside.

We thank God for each and every one of you and appreciate the time and energy you spend helping to make a community for some of our vulnerable members of society.

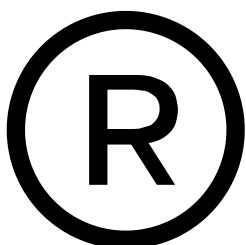
Many thanks to Steve Pendrill for his photography skills, and for giving us permission to use them.

Thank you!



Lyrics & Lunch is a Cinnamon Recommended Project
www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk

In 2016 Lyrics & Lunch won the Premier
Radio Love Britain and Ireland Award for
Work with Older People



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Welcome to Lyrics and Lunch



*Creating community for those living with
dementia and their carers*

Lyrics & Lunch offers fun, friendship, food and faith in a comfortable, safe, and relaxed environment, with lots of music and laughter. We finish our singing sessions with a short, dementia-friendly service.

Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster and Ambassador for Lyrics & Lunch writes...

“My heart sings whenever I visit Lyrics and Lunch, and the vitality, joy and impact of the group is a testimony to the dedication of the volunteers. With time to sit and talk, remember important birthdays and anniversaries, missed spouses, and given all the attention you would expect of being welcomed by extended family, Lyrics and Lunch is a joy.

“Lyrics & Lunch has all the fingerprints of the work of God’s Spirit. This innovative but simple format wakes up life where people have gone to sleep, brings joy in place of mourning, provides fun and friendship for some of our most forgotten.”



*‘A crown of beauty instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair’
(Isaiah 61.3).*

Lyrics and Lunch began in 2013 with a prayer

Jeanette Main (founder), explains more...

“I was a primary school teacher, working for the Lancashire Music Service and teaching music in schools which wanted a specialist teacher. In the Spring of 2013, as austerity began to hit school budgets hard, my schools were telling me I was an asset but one they could no longer afford. This was upsetting, and I went home and prayed a short but dangerous prayer; ‘OK God, what do you want me to do?’



Amazingly, over the next couple of weeks I seemed to be bombarded by information about how good music was for people living with dementia. I spoke to our curate about whether we could do something musical for people with dementia as a church, and he directed me to speak to Ellen, a member of the pastoral team, who had been saying the same thing. St Thomas', Lancaster is a large church and Ellen and I didn't know each other but soon became firm friends with a shared vision.

‘OK God, what do you want me to do?’

When one of my schools decided to suddenly stop having music lessons immediately I was disappointed; it was a school I particularly enjoyed working in, but I soon found it was part of God's timing. A friend rang me to say she had heard that a ‘Singing for the Brain’ group run by the Alheimers Society was

starting in the south of Lancaster, which just happened to coincide with the morning I now had free.

Ellen, Joan, Margaret and I signed up as volunteers to see how music could help those living with dementia and within two sessions I was sure this was something we could work on, so we began talking to the participants and their carers about what they would like; was there anything different we could offer to make our group even more effective?



A lady who was bringing her father along said she was concerned that he didn't eat well, despite carers going in to make food for him at home -he just wasn't interested. From this, we decided to serve a simple, nutritious lunch, to encourage and support people. Additionally, I spoke to an Occupational Therapist who advised that a meal is a fully sensory experience, and having nicely laid tables and an attractive presentation of food would encourage people to eat better. Our menu was set to be a choice of two home-made soups, freshly made sandwiches, home-made cake and fresh fruit followed by tea or coffee.



It was important to find a suitable venue for Lyrics & Lunch, and we were told good parking is important to those visiting. Although St Thomas' Church is a large venue in the city centre of Lancaster, it just didn't have the space we needed at that time, so I also contacted St Chad's, Skerton, which is a church I had attended when my children were young. The Vicar, Nicholas, was delighted to offer us their church hall as a venue for our group and several of their members were happy to be part of the team, including their lay reader, Peter Burrow and his wife Margaret, with whom I had put on musical events before.

Now we starting telling people about our group and searching out people who would like to come along. We told some of the people at the 'Singing for the Brain' group (where we were still volunteering) and they were keen to come to both groups we were about to start. I also took leaflets to some of the local doctors' surgeries but because we hadn't yet proven ourselves, some were unwilling to put out our leaflets.

We distributed leaflets to local churches advertising our new venture at St Chad's. We considered our capacity to be ten couples (person with dementia, plus a carer) and amazingly we had eight couples attending on our very first gathering! We had a wonderful time and the rapport was great. I went home so delighted and I couldn't wait to do it again!"



Sheila and Philip



A letter from their daughter, Elaine

Lyrics & Lunch meant such a lot to my Mum and Dad. They were very appreciative of all the help and support they found there.

To begin with it got them out. They were both social people and the singing meant so much to them as they had sung all their lives in various choirs and choral societies, concerts and shows. The caring and helpful nature of the team was so important too and they thoroughly enjoyed the lunch and the chance to get to know people.

The real bonus, which was so important to them, was the spiritual input. They loved singing the hymns and the short devotional meant so much to them. I know this because for a while they went to another singing group which did not have that aspect and while they enjoyed it they always felt that Lyrics & Lunch gave them a spiritual boost and that was something really special.





I will never forget a conversation Mum had with her GP. She had been attending Lyrics & Lunch for a year or so at that stage and the GP had called round to do her routine Dementia check. The GP asked Mum various questions and then commented that she seemed better than last time he saw her. Mum's reply was to tell him quite categorically that it was because of the singing. The Doctor asked "what singing is that? " and Mum simply went on to explain about Lyrics & Lunch and how it was that that was keeping her sane!

I must also add my own gratefulness to you and your Team for everything you did for Mum & Dad. They loved it! And you all certainly helped to enhance their lives tremendously. THANK YOU for following the calling to this vital work. You're helping to enhance the lives of so many people and being a wonderful witness.

Elaine

Memories from Jeanette

Sheila and Philip joined Lyrics & Lunch in its very early days, at first because of Sheila's diagnosis of dementia but in later years Philip had a diagnosis too.

They were a lovely couple who really enjoyed the singing and Philip suggested a few great songs to add to our repertoire. The picture of Sheila with the hooter is one of my favourite pictures we have taken at Lyrics & Lunch over the years. She used to have us in fits of giggles playing the hooter with perfect comedic timing in her favourite Lyrics & Lunch song 'I love to go a-wandering.'

Sheila died in 2019 and a small group of Lyrics & Lunch team sang at her funeral. Philip was living in a care home by then but Elaine brought him to Lyrics & Lunch as often as she could. I had the pleasure of playing and singing at his 90th Birthday party in early 2020 and he died a few months later. We miss them both.

George's story



George is an example of what Lyrics & Lunch can do. In his late eighties George was diagnosed with dementia, although he had probably had it for some time. His wife had died about 15 years previously and he and his elder son had lived quietly together for most of that time. George became ill and was admitted to hospital where they also diagnosed dementia. When he returned home he was given more help and although he had become very isolated and was not keen on going out (medical appointments and a weekly visit to his other son's house were the only times he left his flat) his granddaughter persuaded him to give Lyrics & Lunch a try. He never looked back.

George had a musical talent which had lain dormant for many years. As a young man he used to play keyboard in dance bands back in his native Scotland, even playing with some famous names such as The Alexander Brothers. At Lyrics & Lunch he loved the music and when Jeanette saw him conducting with a pen in perfect time she decided to get him a baton and give him a job.



So George became our conductor! He revelled in the attention, making jokes, doing funny movements where his baton became an imaginary violin bow and everyone grew to love him. If his taxi was a bit late and the group was waiting to start he would enter to a round of applause, bowing and dancing in with his rollator, playing to the galleries

George had friends again. Lyrics & Lunch became the highlight of his week and he would practice his conducting to Songs of Praise on TV in between gatherings.

In December 2017 George had his 90th birthday. He had been with us approaching 3 years and had made a great impression on everyone with his sense of humour and fun, so we had a special cake made, shaped like the accordion he used to play in his younger days and with his conductors' baton too. Our celebration of his birthday was accompanied by the presentation of a specially made picture collage of him conducting us all.



Only 3 weeks later George died. His health took a turn for the worse over Christmas and very early in the new year he died in his sleep. George's Lyrics & Lunch friends made his funeral a very special celebration. The team baked, catered and served the food, Peter Burrow preached and led the service. As a lay reader he had preached at funerals but never conducted one without a Vicar before but 'for George, I'll do it,' he said.



George's baton was woven into his coffin flowers along with a wire treble clef. The whole funeral was an outpouring of love. The final song was one of George's favourites, 'Bring me sunshine,' which was exactly what Lyrics & Lunch did for George and continues to do for many others like him.

Although we continue to miss George terribly, we are pleased that his son, Gordon, continues to come along to Lyrics & Lunch, and has now joined the team.

Richard and Winifred



Richard and Win were at our very first meeting on 24th September 2013. They became key members and at the end Win would always come for a hug goodbye and say 'Thanks for having me' and I would answer; 'We love having you!' Richard would lead a group for the rounds if we were short of leaders. He had a beautiful rich, deep voice and we loved to hear him sing.

Richard and Win met in the dance halls of Manchester and when we met them they had been married for over 60 years. They were a shining example of love and devotion through thick and thin. It was our great joy at St Thomas' summer event 'Holiday at Home' in 2014, to host a service for the renewal of their wedding vows attended by their large and very loving family. They were quite the proudest grandparents and great grandparents you could hope to meet.

Richard persevered in looking after Win with dogged determination and great love as her dementia progressed. Sadly his own health suffered and as a result of ignoring his own needs he was eventually diagnosed with inoperable cancer. I had the great privilege of visiting him and praying with him a couple of weeks before his death. Just a few days later Win had a massive stroke and they were soon reunited to dance together again in the halls of heaven.

A note from Richard and Win's daughter, Susan

"Lyrics & Lunch meant different things to Mum and Dad: Mum really enjoyed watching people enjoying themselves. Music, lyrics and poems were things she could appreciate and recall literally until the day before her stroke. We should never underestimate the power of music in our lives. For Dad, the companionship he found in the group was invaluable. The carers formed lasting friendships that were a strong source of encouragement and support.

On behalf of my family, I would like to express our gratitude for the love and care shown to our parents. We wish you every success as you grow and develop this vital outreach.

Ken



A letter from Ken's daughter-in-law, Claire

Ken really enjoys his Thursdays at Lyrics & Lunch. He lives on his own and so the fun and company is the highlight of his week. I can tell he feels part of the Lyrics & Lunch community and is treated as someone who matters. It is reassuring to us as a family that he has social contact in a group we trust, and the leaders go above and beyond to ensure he is welcome and safe. The meal is a bonus as he loves his food but is less able to cook these days.

When you have a loved one with dementia you worry that they might not cope with new situations. But I would recommend to anyone to give Lyrics & Lunch a try, it really has made a difference to my father-in-law's quality of life.

Why do you enjoy attending Lyrics & Lunch, Ken?

"Well it's the friendliness here. The people are so friendly and some of them are just like me, so they know what it's like. We can talk together and we understand each other."

Dorothy writes....

My husband has Alzheimers and he finds it uplifting coming along and meeting people with similar problems.

We both enjoy the lunch and the singing, everybody is very friendly and we often have a laugh.

It is good for us to get out together and share something we both enjoy,
Many thanks to all the volunteers.



Member's Voices

“He gets a great deal of pleasure out of Lyrics & Lunch, which gives him something to look forward to. It has made a big difference to his life and is an outlet for his life-long passion for singing”



“The home-made lunch is superb and a good singsong lifts the spirit.”

“A big thank you to all the lovely people who give up their time to make our lives happier!”

“The atmosphere is great and everyone is very friendly. The lunches are very good and we very much enjoy the singing.”



“Meeting other people with the same needs. Singing is good for the memory and the pure enjoyment of the group.”

“It is fun and such an easy way to stimulate the brain.”



“Friendship and understanding not only for people having memory problems but also their carers. Having lunch together encourages conversation where problems can be shared.”



“We will keep attending as long as we can.”



“Our friends told us how much they enjoyed singing well known songs and the support received from Jeanette, Peter and the volunteers.”



Who can we reach out to next?

Our Vision

The stories you have just read show why we do what we do. Without the Lyrics & Lunch groups, Sheila and Philip, George, Richard and Win, Ken, Dorothy and Colin would not have had the social contact, nourishing meal, stimulation and friendship when they needed it the most.



According to the Dementia Statistics Hub there are about 944,000 people in the UK currently living with dementia. This number is predicted to rise to over 1.1 million by 2030.

Through Lyrics & Lunch, we believe we have found a way to reach these people and their carers and help them to live well with dementia.

Lyrics & Lunch creates community for people who are feeling increasingly isolated. It provides an enjoyable activity in which the person with dementia and the carer participate together. Those who are struggling to eat are served a healthy meal in an atmosphere conducive to enjoying it.

“Lyrics & Lunch
offers community
and family”

Carers can share stories and ideas with people who really understand what they are going through. Faith is shared and many find great comfort in it.

Lyrics & Lunch is not expensive for churches to run, it has gained a strong reputation, winning awards and getting referrals and recommendations from health and social care professionals. Our participants tell us they look forward to coming and it makes a real difference to their lives.



Our vision is to have churches running Lyrics & Lunch in more and more areas of the UK, serving people living with dementia and their carers by showing genuine care and compassion and gently sharing the love of God.

“Although it’s a church-based group, everyone is welcome, of any faith or none, and all receive the same ongoing care and support”



We can share our expertise, train teams in each locality, provide resources such as posters, leaflets, and song books, help with paperwork and offer advice on all aspects of running a group from song choice to safeguarding, room layout to risk assessment! We have regular newsletters and an annual conference day for members of the network. In addition to this, we are always contactable for any support you need by telephone and email.

“A big thank you to all the lovely people who give up their time to make our lives happier!”



Research

We currently have a post-doctoral researcher, Megan Polden, who has been conducting research into the impact of Lyrics & Lunch on those living with dementia and their carers. Her interim research has shown the following findings:

What could prevent someone from attending Lyrics & Lunch?

1. Travel

“I think that unless people had a car I think it would be difficult for people to go to these sessions.” (carer)

In response, St Thomas Church have purchased their own wheelchair accessible vehicle to be able to transport those who would otherwise be unable to attend, to and from both our Lyrics & Lunch groups in Lancaster. This has proved invaluable for many of our guests. We facilitated one couple getting to our group one week, to be told this was the only time they had left the house for several weeks apart from medical appointments. Whilst at Lyrics & Lunch they enjoyed a wholesome meal, met up with friends, felt supported and loved, sang with smiles on their faces, and returned home feeling rested and restored.



2. Increased reliance on carers

“I am not able to get to the sessions by myself and need help from family and carers. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be able to attend. I rely on them for travel to the sessions as well. It can take a long time to get ready for the sessions, sometimes over an hour and this can make the going tiring and that is difficult.” (PwD)

At Lyrics & Lunch we appreciate this difficulty, but would point to the research that shows the carer can get a lot of support, enjoyment and help from coming along to our sessions. Some people chose to send a person with a paid carer in order to get respite, and those carers cannot believe they're being paid to have so much fun!

What encourages someone to attend Lyrics & Lunch?

3. Well-informed and good communication

“We have had written information sheets, we have had all sorts of itineraries, to remind us. It runs very well, very well that way, the administration like, you can't fault it.” (PwD)

We understand how important routine, clarity and reminders are to people living with dementia, and good communication is core to our sessions.

4. Familiar songs and engagement through instruments

“I'm happy to sing along to just anything, if I don't know it, I'll mumble through it. We have song sheets and erm follow the words easy enough, I just bumble through it.” (PwD)

“Having familiar songs that you know makes it easier to get involved.” (carer)

What are the benefits for our guests?

5. Social networks and support

“I most enjoy talking to people there and socialising with people there. Having the lunch time gives more time to talk to people.” (PwD)

“I always leave the sessions in a better mood and it is not the same as just singing on your own, having people there and having that community really does make a difference.” (Carer)

Attending Lyrics & Lunch increased social networks and provided opportunities for support from other people when needed. People felt that attending Lyrics and Lunch provided an opportunity to meet other like-minded people going through a similar situation to theirs.

6. They find it Uplifting and Enjoyable

“They (the sessions) calm me down, erm you know within 20 minutes of me being there and once we get started I'm in a different frame of mind. I go back to my school days and all sorts, memories come back.” (PwD)

“It has a positive impact on my mood and I think it does on mum's too. It cheers me up and puts me in a good mood.” (carer)

Several expressed that attending the Lyrics and Lunch sessions made them feel uplifted and improved their mood. Participants felt that the sessions were enjoyable and this had a positive impact on their day.

7. Shared Experiences

“I like going with mum, it gives us a chance to do something that we can do together that we both enjoy”(carer)

It was suggested that Lyrics and Lunch provides a shared experience and enjoyable activities for people living with dementia and their carer. Participants expressed that this shared experience leads to improvement in their relationship.

8. Something to look forward to

“I look forward to it, they (the sessions) make life more variable” (PwD)

Lyrics and Lunch provides an enjoyable activity that people can look forward to and that adds value and variability to their weeks.

Looking forward

Eleven years on from a simple prayer and a passion for bringing music to those living with dementia and their carers, Lyrics & Lunch groups can be found spread across Lancashire and further afield.

We are always looking to introduce Lyrics & Lunch into more churches and communities, to continue to serve and bring delight to many. We are already talking to a number of interested churches, and if you have been inspired to start your own Lyrics & Lunch group, we can help! If you would like to start a group but are not in a position to offer lunch, you could consider our Lyrics & Laughter model, with tea and cake instead.

Bishop Jill Duff's message to anyone thinking about setting up their own Lyrics & Lunch group:

“If you can offer lunch and some musical accompaniment, why not try this wonderful recipe which offers a taste of heaven come to earth? What if no one were beyond the reach of a Lyrics & Lunch group?”

“It's light-hearted and we have fun.”

“We enjoy the singing and the company of people who understand what it's like for us.”

How to get involved

Join a group

We always enjoy welcoming more people to our groups, and if you would like to come along, or know someone who would benefit from it, please join us -you are very welcome.

Group locations can be found at
www.lyricsandlunch.org



Pray

Lyrics & Lunch started with a simple prayer, and has continued to be built on God's strength. We appreciate prayer for everyone who attends, for the volunteers, and for the staff and trustees, for wisdom to know how best to develop the Lyrics & Lunch model and serve the communities in which we find ourselves. We also give thanks for all that has already happened, and remember members and friends who are no longer with us.

Donate

Lyrics & Lunch is a registered charity and receives no government funding. To be able to provide this vital resource, we depend on the generosity of others. Please consider if you are able to give.

Our bank details are:

Lyrics and Lunch Network NatWest Bank
sort code 01-00-61, Account number 20698607

Cheques can be made to Lyrics and Lunch Network, and sent to 5 Chad's Drive, Lancaster, LA1 2SE. If you are a taxpayer please ask for a gift aid form. Thank you!



Jeanette Main, Founder and Network Manager of Lyrics & Lunch, would once again like to thank everyone involved in our mission to enhance the lives of those living with dementia, and their carers.



Creating community for those living with dementia and their carers

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