



# *Newsletter*

*Autumn 2020*

*Yorkshire Ladies' Council of Education*

## ***Committee Meetings***

***Executive Committee Meetings*** (5 per annum) Next meeting 30 November (AGM).

***Awards Committee Meetings*** (3 per annum) Friday, 10 days prior to Executive meetings in March, June and September. Next meeting 19 March 2021.

***Projects Committee Meetings*** To be arranged.

***Social Committee Meetings*** (2-3 per annum) Currently keeping in touch by Email and phone.

Don't forget: You can visit these pages on the website:

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If any member has comments or ideas for the new website, please get in touch with [ylcesecretary@ylce.org](mailto:ylcesecretary@ylce.org)

## *Letter from our Chairman*

### *To all our members:*

A pleasure to be in touch and I do hope you are all safe and well. Things have changed considerably of course since I last wrote in April. Leeds is soon to go into a Tier 3 lockdown and we are all aware that, in many ways, things are not going well. Now, we we may have to sacrifice a lot but we can hold fast to the YLCE and to the other



groups and Associations to which many of us belong because these are worth a great deal to us - through them we have friends and contacts, opportunities to help out, opportunities to contribute ..... because, most certainly, whatever we can do to help becomes ever more urgent. The range and the breadth and the number of applications to the Awards committee noted by Gillie in her report and the desperate need for our funding which shines through makes this clear, and Anne's report, where she points out that we may well be looking at a further decline in income of as much as 50% during 2021, further underlines the urgency. A difficult job being Treasurer at the moment: thank you Anne.

When we first began to see some decline in income, we considered the obvious and knew that we had to take what steps we could. We realised that we could no longer afford to pay for administrative support so, sadly, we had to say goodbye to Nicola and we have now shared out the admin amongst members of the executive committee: specifically Gillie, Tricia, Anne and me, thus hoping to cover all bases - many thanks to all 3 (note am not thanking self!).

Certainly, increased applications and diminished resources are hardly ideal, but later in his Newsletter, the contributions from recent Awardees, who write with grace in adversity and a clear awareness of what might seem insuperable difficulties, make crystal clear to us the importance of being able to continue offering charitable contributions from the YLCE.

Let us feel fortunate that we can continue to help and also be aware that if any member has any ideas/suggestions on how to maximise our efforts and to increase our funds, please, would you get in touch. As always, we look to the future.

We continue to work from a strong base. We very much miss meeting in Forest Hill and wish everyone there well. The Executive committee continues to Zoom and warmly welcomes Carol Gleisner as Chairman of the Awards committee and warmly thanks Gillie Andrews for her final report and most sterling work hitherto. There is a vacancy on the committee, see Gillie's report.

Sadly of course, we cannot run any events at the moment and we very much miss the traditional offerings from Projects and Social; however Janet and the Social Committee have come up with a very welcome alternative by offering us various goodies - IRRESISTIBLE - see later in the Newsletter - and place your orders! As always, I appreciate the help and support from all members of the Executive and point out that Tricia always knows what should be done. We are still considering Mem and Arts and hope to be in final (final!) touch with the membership soon.

And, as always, very many heartfelt thanks to Lorraine Harding for assembling this Newsletter, for all chivvying and editing duties and for making it fit for the printer - thank you Lorraine!!

Just to end on a personal note, and not quite what I expected to be doing in lockdown, I'm about to have my second chemotherapy session (2nd of 6) in a week or so as I was diagnosed with an ovarian related cancer at the end of July. On the bright side, I have excellent hospital and consultant care and look forward to finishing the chemo next February!

My best regards and stay safe

*Gill Lydon*  
*Chairman of Executive Committee*  
0113 278 5596 07940 539 360  
[gillian\\_lydon@hotmail.com](mailto:gillian_lydon@hotmail.com)

## *Financial Note End September 2020*

We started a new financial year on 1<sup>st</sup> September and the future looks difficult. Advice from Investec Wealth and Investment is that our income from the portfolio is likely to be reduced by up to 50% in 2021. To help reduce administrative costs we are no longer receiving secretarial and book-keeping services from Nicola Lewis. It would also be very helpful for our budgeting if members who do not pay by standing order would pay their £30 fee as soon as possible. We have reduced access to the Office at Forest Hill so please send cheques (to 'YLCE') to Hon.Treasurer YLCE, Mrs A M Taylor, 1, High Ash Close, Notton, Wakefield WF4 2PF or for online payments a/c10403018 Sort Code 05-01-56 at Yorkshire Bank. Give reference 'Membership'.

Our main aim, of course, is to continue supporting compatible charities and needy students.

*Anne Taylor*  
*Hon. Treasurer*

## *Social Committee*

### **Christmas Goodies and Appeal for Support for Our Selected Charity (The Leeds Baby Bank)**

Unsurprisingly the Covid-19 restrictions mean the Social Committee has regretfully decided that the Christmas Fayre and Sandwich Lunch on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November cannot go ahead. We have sadly not been able to meet since we provided the lunch at the AGM in February.

We have discussed by e-mail and phone whether we can do anything that would maintain the committee members' commitment to supporting the objectives of YLCE and its wider membership with any proceeds going to the charity the Committee had already chosen to support (Leeds Baby Bank - website at <https://leedsbabybank.org/>) whilst restrictions continue.

Some members can offer a limited supply of the Christmas cakes and goodies normally sold at the Christmas Fayre. We know YLCE members traditionally enjoy (and purchase!) our home made un-iced and iced Christmas cakes, mince pies, preserves, chutneys and other goodies. Some Committee members can do this this year through either:

1. Continuing the one-to-one service to those to whom they supply bespoke goodies with payment being in YLCE's name. If you have such arrangement the Social Committee member may get in touch with you. If they don't or you live nearby do contact the member concerned to see if your request can be met; or

2. Through offering a limited 'by order' service for delivery or collection in early December to those who order by the end of November. The 'order' will then be confirmed if it can be met. We are sorry we cannot offer this service other than in Leeds.

Even if you do not want any of the goodies offered we hope that, following the success of YLCE's appeal to members to support Leeds Women's Aid as a single donation in the YLCE's name, you can support a similar arrangement for the Leeds Baby Bank.

Please see the e-mail order form for details of what can be ordered (and how) under option 2 and how to donate. If you need a printed copy of the order form and full details of what we are doing just give me a call on 0113 228 7934.

The Social Committee always welcomes new members – give me a ring if you are interested in joining us.



*Janet Juřica*

## *Forest Hill*

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone and particularly so for Forest Hill where the residents were mainly in their individual flats as the communal areas were closed and visitors discouraged.

The staff team provided continuous support throughout the lockdown period by providing a daily cooked lunch, delivered to each individual's flat and by organising for weekly shopping deliveries.

Formal social activities, including the Spring Tea, normally held in March and the Yorkshire Day Tea were cancelled this year and at the time of writing the usual Christmas activities look unlikely to take place.

The plans to overhaul the heating system had been put in hold whilst there were restrictions on workmen in the residents' premises but there have been some roofing repairs.

The staff have done a great job in putting in place safety and hygiene measures to protect the residents and we aim to provide them with as much a support as possible for them to continue to support the residents and each other to stay safe during the coming winter.

*Kathy Hart*

## *Awards Committee*

The Awards Committee has, of course, had a busy time since the last Newsletter with all the reviewing associated with our meetings in June and September.

As has now become the norm. ninety percent of the applications we receive are from women wishing to embark on a master's degree. It seems that we are following the US model where to get anywhere you need to go to graduate school. For our last two funding rounds in June and now more recently in September, the only non-university courses applied for led to a qualification in animal handling in one way or another. We wish we got more such requests for other courses with a more vocational bent. But what a range of academic courses! Our applicants are responding to the present needs of the world. They want to study *International Relations, International Conflict, Human Rights Law, Migration Studies*; looking to the future of the planet they're interested in gaining further knowledge of *Conservation & Environmental Law, Holocene Climates, Global Development, Conservation & International Wildlife Trade, Environmental Engineering, Nature, Social & Environmental Governance*; they are also concerned with the physical and mental health of the nation: they are applying for courses in *Public Health, Cognitive Development & Disorders, Therapeutic Play Skills, Art Psychotherapy, Music Psychotherapy, Language Pathology*. Indeed, in the last two rounds we've noticed a definite increase in applications for science-based courses: MSc's outweighing MA's. You may like to speculate on the reasons for this.

These last six or seven months have been a time of great disruption to students' lives: academically, socially and financially. But you don't need me to tell you that. When we review applications we read of women's career plans, all carefully thought through and persuasively expressed, telling us of their ambitions, their ultimate goals - as well as some of the hardships they've had to endure along the way. Then in the next section of their application form they tell us how they are going to fund the further studies, which will lead them to achieving those goals. The applications we received for June and September contained, quite strikingly, and far more often than in previous rounds, a lot of anxiety, the anxiety that they would simply not be able to save enough to afford their fees, let alone their living costs. Because of the pandemic they had lost their part-time jobs. Many of them expected to work through the summer to accumulate enough money to live on during their master's; and they would also have been expecting to find a job, say in hospitality or retail, to eke out their savings during the course itself. We also received applications from young women who would under normal circumstances have had no need to call upon our help; they would have got parental support, but promised money from the family was no longer available; father had not been self-employed for long enough to get government support, mother had been furloughed; we heard of redundancies and even bankruptcies.

Since the Spring Newsletter your Awards Committee has become very Zoom savvy. In March you'll have read that we had to rely on email and telephone reviews and discussions, but by the time June came around most of us were getting used to virtual chats with family and long-lost friends; and we were enjoying online talks and attending virtual concerts.

There's an important discussion element in the work of the Committee. Sitting round a table with coffee and biscuits to hand, we can often be persuaded to change our initial opinions. In March we had missed this element when it came to deciding whether an applicant should get a thumbs up or not. (I shall hastily add that in March we were as fair as we possibly could be.) In June and September, though, we did not have to forego the discussion: we had delightful Zoom meetings. We behaved like very attentive schoolgirls, raising our hands when we wanted to speak, not talking unless called upon by the teacher - no, sorry, by the Chair. And we each had our own biscuits and coffee beside us. (At least no one knew but each of us alone what was actually in that coffee mug.) We followed the same pattern as we had in March: Chair and Deputy Chair between us, Carol Gleisner and I sifted through the applicants, rejected the no-hopers, drew up a short list and invited Committee members to give a score of 1 to 5 to each candidate on that list. Scores were totalled and we prepared an order of merit list. Each time there were about 16 or so applications deemed 'borderline' and it was these that we discussed via Zoom in lively rather than live meetings. (An aside. I find it really fascinating: in a 'live' meeting round the table, you can't see everyone's face at the same time, but when we all appear on the same screen in serried ranks, you can watch all the facial reactions in one sweep.)

### **Some statistics:**

In June we received 129 applications. Chair and Deputy Chair rejected the no-hopers and produced a shortlist of 64. We offered a grant to 35 of them, offering a total of £10,600. In September there were just as many: 130 - from the well-organised and the over-hopeful alike. Of the 88 we put on the shortlist we offered a grant to 29, offering in total £9,000.

One of those September award recipients was our Donner Scholar, Verity Thomas, to whom we offered £600. The Donner Scholarship is supported by Ricky Donner in memory of his wife Nancy, our dedicated and diligent YLCE Chairman for many years who was also a stalwart member of the Awards Committee. Having graduated in Biological Sciences from Sussex in 2018, 23-year-old Verity is about to embark upon an MSc in Clinical & Public Health Nutrition at University College London. Since her graduation she has worked hard to save for her master's course. (The course fee is a mere £13,850.) Verity's very strong career ambition is to improve the diets and health of the public, in a way that also benefits the environment. She is dedicated to promoting a healthier and more sustainable diet to individuals, organisations and companies. Passionate about the importance of food as medicine and as disease prevention, she is fascinated by the interaction between our food choices and the environment around us. She volunteers at FoodCycle, a nationwide charity that provides meals for vulnerable members of the community, free of charge. They use surplus food from supermarkets to create healthy three-course meals every day of the week to support people who are hungry and lonely, thereby tackling at the same time the issue of food waste.

We were very impressed with Verity's determination to influence the public's attitude to health through nutrition, versed as she will be in the clinical and scientific basics of malnutrition and obesity. We know she will make a strong advocate and is a worthy recipient of the Donner.

Carol Gleisner is now Chair of the Awards Committee. The baton has been passed.

*Gillie Andrews*

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We know full well that over the last six months the coronavirus pandemic has caused unprecedented widespread disruption to student life and learning. What has it been really like, we wondered; how quickly did students manage to become accustomed to new ways of studying while dealing with a great deal of uncertainty about the future. So we thought: why not ask some of them? We invited some of our recent award winners to tell their stories.

And here they are.

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*Elizabeth is a working actor whose ambition is to continue that way by attending drama school, namely East 15 Acting School affiliated to the University of Essex. She's an A\* scholar and an accomplished musician, but it's the actor's life for her. She writes:*



Six months ago, I was rehearsing two shows, planning theatre trips, and anticipating going to study at East 15 this October. When news about coronavirus began to break it was a rehearsal joke— “so long as you’ve not been skiing in Northern Italy, I’ll stage-kiss you”. Then there were gaps in our cast as people quarantined.

Then bit-by-bit theatre groups started to take decisions to postpone shows and stop rehearsals altogether. I was still optimistic that perhaps we’d be performing again by the autumn, and certainly hadn’t considered the possibility that I might not be studying at drama school that year.

When lockdown hit, it was surreal for me, as I’m sure it was for many. My focus shifted from whether I’d completely learnt my lines for rehearsal to how could the dishwasher possibly need emptying AGAIN. It didn’t at that point seem long-term. At the start, I was spending my time writing applications for grants to help cover the costs of my study. It took until June for me to decide to defer my place at East 15.

In the end I deferred for several reasons. Firstly, because I thought it very unlikely that the course I had chosen (MA Acting) would be able to run fully, and that there was a possibility of a second lockdown that would interrupt it. Secondly, because I believed strict social distancing measures still be in place. Acting a scene touch or closeness is seldom and certainly a fight or love would be impossible to do justice to. The MA course is only a year long, and having not had the opportunity to study already, I want to do so in the most thorough way I can. I didn't fancy my chances at employment if end of year showcases were limited or impossible either. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, how could I be an actor without any live performance happening? Even if showcases were enabled, and I managed to get an agent, where would I perform? To whom?



At the time of writing this, of course some live performances have begun. But limitedly and tentatively. The industry has suffered enormously from a lack of revenue and poor government provision. It may well not be the same as we move out of this crisis, and there are certainly performers and theatres that have been forced out of work permanently.

Going forward, I think it likely that employment will be harder to find as a result of this, particularly if rehearsals and shows have to remain restricted. I find it disappointing and short-sighted how few resources have been allocated to assist the arts during the pandemic. From what I have gathered from friends, relatives, and acquaintances, people have been more reliant on entertainment and the arts during lockdown, not less. Conversation has been dominated by television programmes, live-streaming, podcasts, and people's personal (and often creative) projects.

In short, it is not a good time to be trying to go into the arts, but theatre is, to my mind, more necessary than ever. In the meantime, I continue to work part-time and am applying for other jobs in order to save for my studies. I have the prospect of some carefully managed rehearsals and can only hope that we will all be back on stage and in theatres before too long.

*Jessica-Leigh has written her contribution in the form of a letter to us. She is about to embark on the final year of a three-year part-time MSc. She'll tell you more.*

Dear all,

First and foremost, I want to start by thanking the Awards Committee at YCLE for their generous contribution to my next academic year which has enabled me to pursue my mastery studies. Presently, I am studying for my master's in Veterinary Epidemiology at the University of Edinburgh, which is a distanced learning programme, one I have found best fits with my career aspirations and interests while also complementing my living arrangements which have seen me based in Cheshire, Cambridge and Bristol.

I have had a passion for wildlife and biodiversity for as long as I can remember. No doubt my upbringing in South Africa has contributed to my career ambitions and passions, yet upon relocating to the U.K. when I was young, I became enamoured with British wildlife. I have such fond memories of the numerous trips to local nature reserves and the summers spent on the northern coast where I got my first sightings of native wildlife.



*Graduation Day December 2017*

Since then, I have completed my undergraduate degree in Zoology BSc at Nottingham Trent University and undertaken various internships and work placements from avian conservation and research at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust in Slimbridge to Chester Zoo and Johannesburg Zoo to name but a few.



*Here I'm working as the veterinary research Assistant at WWT in Slimbridge in 2019. I'm assisting with a bird catch to tag and monitor population numbers of resident black-headed gull chicks. That's a tiny chick in my gloved hand.*

My motivations to study veterinary epidemiology stem from the interests I developed whilst completing my undergraduate degree; for many years zoonotic diseases, or even any animal diseases have received little research attention, nonetheless they pose a significant conservation threat to wildlife populations and in light of the current pandemic similarly hold serious consequences for human kind.

I decided to choose to study at the University of Edinburgh for several reasons; primarily on the basis of content and flexibility of Veterinary Epidemiology MSc, the reputation of the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, the grouping of first-rate international veterinary and biomedical scientists and its standing as a world-leading research university.

How has Covid-19 impacted on my life and studies? Given the unprecedented events that have occurred over the last months, many of my peers have found themselves facing immense difficulties and challenges.

For myself, most of my lectures and the academic content of my degree take place online; such has been the case since the beginning of my master's. So, in this sense, I have been fortunate enough to experience very little disruption or change to my academic schedule; my module content for the year had been pre-planned and written by lecturers prior to the Covid-19 outbreak here in the United Kingdom.

While I have benefited in some ways, in others, I have faced adversity. Given the vast distance between my registered university, Edinburgh and myself, I rely heavily on associate universities which grant access to library facilities and resources to visiting students from other institutions; a service I have very much come to depend on. Yet, with universities and libraries shut across the country as a result of the pandemic, for the last couple of months I have struggled to source essential books I need as references for on-going assignments and I have further struggled to find suitable workspaces.

While working from home is an option for some, sadly I am one of the many that struggle with this setup. Before Covid-19, I would look to cafés and libraries within the local community as key working environments. However, when the government enforced a mandatory lockdown at the end of March, many businesses were shut and even now with their gradual reopening, the Covid-19 guidelines in place don't allow for customers to visit for longer than two hours which completely negates the whole purpose of my study and working visits.

In balance, while I have faced challenges, I have been able to rely on the support of my family, friends and associates at the University of Edinburgh. While I have always found my academic lecturers to be approachable and understanding, they have made themselves available for additional counsel and willing to extend deadlines to match the adversity and challenges faced by students over these past months.

As researchers continue their work to discover a successful vaccine and as the world becomes more capable at dealing with localised outbreaks, I hope my next academic year will resemble that of previous pre-pandemic years! For now, keep well and keep safe!

With warm regards,

Jessica-Leigh

*Ellie will speak for herself. She completed a four-year degree in Neuroscience at Edinburgh in 2019.*

My name is Ellie Campbell.

This year I was honoured to be receive an award from the Ladies Council of Education. was to contribute to the funding master's studies in Women's



selected to Yorkshire This award of my Health.

Originally from Stokesley, North Yorkshire, I completed my undergraduate degree in Neuroscience at The University of Edinburgh in 2019. My research interests concern the influence of common hormonal medications on mental health (e.g. contraception, HRT, steroid medications). Committed to a career advancing women's medicine, I am now pursuing further education focused around researching reproductive science and women's health.

Following graduation, I decided to take a year out in order to save money and improve my mental health before embarking upon the next 5 years of my graduate education. By March 2020 I had tripled my savings, been accepted onto my first-choice master's, and was in the process of deciding between the three job offers I had received. I was so excited to finally get back to studying! Research! Making a difference! Hurray!

And then along came COVID-19. Fast-forward to May: My savings? Dwindling. After leaving my restaurant job in January, in an attempt to return to science, the lockdown left me with no option but to live off my savings. Those three job offers I had received? All rescinded. But at least I had my dream master's degree to look forward to, right? Nope. Three months before I was due to move to London, UCL suspended my course entirely for 2020/2021. To be perfectly honest with you, it wasn't the best Spring ever.

All those months ago at the beginning of the pandemic, my greatest worry was finding a flat in London with negligible amounts of mould and minimal rodent infestation. In the wake of lockdown, worry for vulnerable family and friends must now compete for space in my brain with the ongoing economic free-fall, job market crash, complete career insecurity and utter decimation of my savings. Unpredictable and overwhelming is the new norm, and I've watched friends become suicidal as mental health services struggle to cope.

However, as apocalyptic as things may sometimes seem, I fully believe in silver linings for every cloud. Lockdown, whilst physically isolating, has in many ways been socially inspiring. Extended family members, whom I have met perhaps twice in my life, committed to a video-call night every single week of lockdown. As a result, it feels like my family has doubled in size. The outpouring of love and support for my isolated Grandma (from neighbours, strangers, old friends, new friends) has been astonishing. Who knew people could be so kind?

All six flats in my tenement building came together to help each other out in the form of a book swap box – I met my neighbours of three years for the very first time!

While the immense strain on our NHS may have exposed its vulnerabilities, but it's also exhibited its strengths. I have never seen NHS workers receive such respect and recognition of value than in the past few months. It's my sincerest hope that the easing of lockdown is not accompanied by an equal reduction in our appreciation of service workers.

Perhaps, however, the greatest result of this pandemic is an extremely personal one. Due to our extended unemployment, when my boyfriend's sister became critically ill we were able to provide her with around the clock care for two months. This would never have been possible if it hadn't been for lockdown.

While I worry the interruption to my studies may put me behind in terms of career progression, it has also provided me with the opportunity to work, rebuild my savings, and gain more experience. Having already been accepted onto my course, I'm in a much better position and able to apply to many more funding opportunities than I was able to this year. Most importantly however, is all the extra time I now have to spend with the people who matter. I went into this lockdown believing my passion was medicine, but I've come out of it knowing that actually, it's people.

*Izzy will also speak for herself. She graduated in Physics with Philosophy from Manchester in 2016*



I'm Izzy and I'm studying for a master's in Philosophy and Public Policy at LSE. I experienced the abrupt shock to teaching in March, and am also anticipating a strange new normal in the coming academic year.

With restrictions affecting every facet of university life, from lectures to finances, wellbeing to library books, it's surprising how well we've been able to adapt. Some students have, though, been hit harder than others, and I wonder what the longer-term impact will be on the aims of diversity and inclusion at universities.

Once COVID had hit the UK, changes on campus escalated rapidly. My lectures and seminars moved online with less than a week's notice, and a departmental trip to Chesil Beach was cancelled just two days before we were due to set off. While LSE tried to keep the campus and library open as long as possible – invaluable resources to students, particularly during the end of year assessment period – they soon had to close by law. Many of my international peers left London soon after, catching flights while they still could. Very quickly a thriving, diverse student experience became isolated and distant. There was often no chance to say goodbye to the course-mates we'd grown close to over the year, and with such an international programme, a good chance we'd never see each other again.

Luckily, we did have technology which could make a huge difference. Online teaching was really successful, with lecturers putting time and effort into learning how to use Zoom effectively and using tools like polls and 'break-out rooms' (putting a large lecture into small discussion groups) to keep it as interactive as possible. A lot of thought was put into re-designing assessments, replicating the purpose of exams while being heedful of the difficult situation we were all in, and ensuring, as far as possible, that we weren't disadvantaged.

I do wonder whether this had an unequal impact on some students, though. One of my classmates was hard of hearing, and relied a lot on lip-reading: I wondered how he was affected by the lagging video and unclear audio of online calls.

Quiet study space was another issue: how were students in smaller, noisier accommodation faring? I live with my partner in a small, two-room flat: reading dense philosophy texts while he was on work conference calls took some navigating!

Support from the university did successfully move online as well, though. The library secured access to more e-books, the careers service ran virtual events, and a wealth of online content was created to support students with revision tips and wellbeing advice. Financial assistance was provided by LSE specifically to help with the impact of coronavirus, something that was much needed after many students were suddenly unable to earn money through part-time work. This, too, didn't work for everyone though, being aimed only at people in financial need at the time.

For me, I had plenty of savings in the bank – only they were ear-marked for paying my tuition fees! I had been relying on working over the summer to cover my expenses for the following year, but many internships cancelled their recruitment, and the few jobs that were available had hundreds of applicants. I was lucky enough to secure help from YLCE and a few other organisations, but this charitable support is limited, and there are many who aren't eligible or even aware of it.

Extracurricular activities were also something that was hit quite hard. The sports, social events and wellbeing activities that had been part of daily life at university were suddenly absent. It's striking how important these are to keep people healthy and sane, particularly during the stress of assessment periods – add a global pandemic on top and it was definitely something that was sorely missed. Again I wonder about the students who didn't have access to outside space, or even the room to exercise inside.

One big plus was the LSE public lectures, which were quickly up-and-running online. Always full of students, it was great to have this aspect of the LSE community continue, and provide some sort of ‘date in the diary’ to break up the week.

Happily, things have improved, and next academic year is looking more like normal. While lectures will still be held online, seminars will be in-person as much as possible and campus will be open. This does require smaller class sizes, and some rooms in our already overcrowded campus are too small to be socially distanced in.

This means some courses won’t be running, and some lessons will be scheduled outside of normal hours. Personally, I think the sacrifice is worth it to get back some of the sense of community a physical campus provides. I hope that universities will identify and address the different challenges to diversity and inclusion presented by this new way of being, engaging students and staff who are for example disabled, carers, or from lower-income families. I also hope that the government carefully balances the complex impacts on wellbeing with the more overt COVID risks when considering restrictions over the coming years.

***Charli** (she uses that abbreviation) graduated from Edinburgh with a degree in Biological Sciences in 2012. Always fascinated by marine mammals, she then spent time and money gaining experience working with them around the world, latterly on a killer whale research boat in Canada. She is now at the end of the first year of her MSc by Research into the Psychology of Animal Behaviour. Her research focuses on understanding ‘the causes and consequences of patterns of aggression within the Southern Resident population of killer whales who inhabit the waters of the Pacific Northwest. Numbering just 72 individuals, this population of killer whales are now considered ‘critically endangered.’*

What a funny old year it has been so far. Many of us should be feeling relaxed after a long summer socialising with friends, partaking in leisure activities, or just enjoying hugging loved ones. I myself should just



be returning from a 3-month trip to the Pacific Northwest to carry out essential fieldwork for my own and other students' research. Our team should be retelling all the incredible encounters we had with the Southern Resident killer whales, many long days spent on the water tracing their movements and recording their fascinating behaviours that will prove vital to our understanding of their lives. I should have attended and presented at conferences, had weekly meetings with my animal behaviour group at University, and celebrated in person with peers as they attained their doctorates.

Instead, stilted meetings have been held over Zoom, pre-recorded conferences have been attended, and fieldwork has been postponed until, well, who knows for now. Conversations with colleagues have been lost, and the pressure of having to continue work at a rapid pace from home has been apparent amongst my peers. These changes have limited a lot of progression in vital scientific research; deadlines have had to be extended which means that students are likely to have to spend more time and money to get their work finished. I no longer have the job that was helping to pay my way through my degree, due to Covid, and it seems that I will struggle to find one in the next few months, but I will not be deterred.

I will adapt, just as others have, and will do what I need to in order finish my research and continue with my career. And despite the last 6 months being incredibly strange, I have felt incredibly well supported by the University, its staff and my peers.

I am not sure what the next 6 months will bring but I have been impressed by the resilience, ingenuity and understanding of the scientific community in response to the ever changing conditions and how the thirst for knowledge continues, regardless.

I will adapt, just as others have, and will do what I need to in order finish my research and continue with my career. And despite the last 6 months being incredibly strange, I have felt incredibly well supported by the University, its staff and my peers. I am not sure what the next 6 months will bring but I have been impressed by the resilience, ingenuity and understanding of the scientific community in response to the ever changing conditions and how the thirst for knowledge continues, regardless.

Now here's **Anna**, addressing you all directly.

Hello YLCE readers.



I am Anna Beresford, a 22 year old conductor, cellist and music teacher from Skipton in North Yorkshire. I am delighted to have received a YLCE grant this year: I am beginning a MMus in Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) in September 2020. I'd like to tell you how the pandemic has affected my life.

Let's start in February. I lived and worked in Manchester with 3 private cello students, 6 classes of children, 19 instrumental pupils, 2 choirs, 1 opera company, and 1 orchestra on a weekly basis.

My groups were working towards performances at the end of March and I was looking forward to driving home in the daylight as summer approached. In early March, I washed my hands and went about my days, only to watch the news on 23rd and have a metaphorical big red pause button pressed on my life.

Over the next few months, I had to learn to live professionally and personally on a screen. My students would appear at my house over Skype or Zoom, I recorded choir parts for YouTube and Dropbox, and my wifi signal was the least cooperative colleague I could have asked for. However, I was bowled over by the resilience and willingness of many to carry on making music from home. One of my ladies' choirs, for example, flourished by creating three 'virtual performances' which we rehearsed over Zoom and each singer recorded their own parts at home.

Financially, it was frustrating to find that what little self-employed support was available from the government would only apply to those who had been trading for a couple of years. Having been out of university for less than a year, I was quite literally on my own. With venues and arts groups surviving by a thread, I was unsure whether the industry would even exist once it had been malnourished for 4 months of lockdown. Many of my musician friends resorted to finding work as key workers, making and selling masks over the internet or moving out of their now too expensive living arrangements.

In the back of my mind I wondered whether it would be wise to continue with Plan A to start my Master's degree in September. I had so many questions at the start of the lockdown which simply could not be answered. I have since been reassured by the RNCM that the course will run with some modules online.

Writing this in late August, the current conducting students have had a live session and professional orchestras are starting to meet again. Though the building will not open to the public until 2021, the college will have a face covering policy and online ordering service for the café.

To summarise, I've been okay. I hope there is not another episode like this as it has been almost impossible to motivate a career which is so reliant on human interaction. Oh, I've also missed going home and hugging my family.

*Saxophonist **Hannah** graduated in Music from Royal Holloway in 2014, then worked as a freelance saxophonist and music tutor before deciding to take a Master's in Music Therapy at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She told us that going into the course she had a real interest in music and memory. She had worked at a dementia suite in a care home where she sang and played old wartime songs and found it incredible to see how residents with limited speech could then happily sing along. She now tells you more about the course and how she has fared in the past six months.*

What's Music Therapy? It can be defined as non-verbal psychological intervention that can help support people across all ages in their social, emotional, physical and cognitive needs through the means of music. We music therapists use a range of musical interventions including improvised music, pre-composed music, singing, electronic music or even listening to music. It's amazing how powerful music can be and how much it can really help.

My week included two days of clinical placements at a Mental Health hospital working with adults and older adults on the inpatient wards.

Here, I worked with both individual clients and groups with a range of mental illness including dementia, using a variety of musical interventions and learning new songs from patients of different cultural backgrounds.

In addition to this, we had one day of lectures and workshops, and for the rest of the week I would work as a self-employed instrumental teacher. Days were long and busy, but I enjoyed every second of it knowing the hard work would pay off, allowing me to pursue a career I am truly passionate about.

When Covid-19 hit, my personal circumstances changed very quickly. I found myself having to move out of London to return to my family home in Wales, thus having to leave my final placement early and say my goodbyes. Though my clinical work ended abruptly, supporting studies for the course shifted online, I had slightly more time to continue my research and our small cohort continued to meet virtually once a week for the rest of the term.

After trial and error, a few lost internet connections and a gallon of tea later, both the tutors and tutees found a rhythm that worked. We found creative ways of making music together, we spoke of the struggles that Covid-19 brought with it but most importantly, we continued to support each other as much as possible throughout this unexpected and uncertain time. Studying a therapy-based course means you learn a lot about yourself and the patterns of relationships that have made you the person you are today. You also learn a lot about your peers, how they manage the course and the impact they have on your life. I can honestly say that without this special group of people, getting through the course during Covid-19 would have been much harder without them!

One of the most rewarding parts of this year was completing my Master's research: An exploration into the approaches and techniques used in music therapy for mothers with postpartum psychosis or depression and their babies in a mother-baby unit. This is an extremely new area of research with only one Mother-Baby unit in the UK currently offering music therapy. It is an area of work I hope to gain more experience in my career as a music therapist and I hope to expand on this research in the future.

At the beginning of September, I was able to return to London and meet with the tutors and some of my year group to celebrate our degree. The course leader arranged for us to play together (at a safe distance!), as well as offer the opportunity to present our research projects to aspiring music therapists. Though this day was full of music and laughter, it also brought a sense of closure to studying in these crazy circumstances.

I'm proud to say that I am now a fully qualified, HCPC registered Music Therapist and am incredibly grateful for the support grant from YLCE over the course of my studies.

## *The Awards Committee – Vacancy*

There is a vacancy on the Awards Committee.

The Trustees of YLCE invite members of the Council to apply to fill this vacancy. If there are more than 2 candidates the final choice will lie with the Awards Committee.

Are *you* interested?

Do you *know* a YLCE member whom you think might be interested? Give her a nudge.

The Committee consists of 9 members and meets 3 times a year: in mid-March, mid-June and mid-September. Members make themselves available for all 3 meetings if possible, and the meetings usually take place in the Chairman's home. They begin at 10am and are over by 3, at the latest. However this year has resulted in two meetings taking place by Zoom conferencing.

Applications for awards are made on-line so a potential new member needs to be used to reading material on screen. At least 10 days before the meeting, members receive a list of suitable applications which they then access via the website in order to consider the merits of each application before the meeting. As you know YLCE offers grants to well-motivated, talented women who are keen to pursue their studies but cannot do so without financial support towards their course fees. There are usually between 70 and 80 applications under consideration at each meeting, and we discuss which of the applicants should receive an award. The meetings are enjoyable, satisfying and rewarding.

Current members of the Awards Committee have career experience in many fields, for example, education, business, academic administration and music. It would be helpful for a new member to have some knowledge of the British education and qualification structure – but by no means essential: such knowledge can be acquired. All members have an interest in supporting women to qualify for a worthwhile career and to fulfil their personal goals.

### ***Interested?***

If you have any questions or would like more details of what's involved, contact Carol Gleisner, Chair of the Awards Committee, at [cgleisner@ylce.org](mailto:cgleisner@ylce.org) or 01132265752

We will ask you to complete a pro forma available as an email attachment, where you can tell us in a short personal statement how you can contribute to the work of the Committee.

Your completed pro forma should be sent to [info@ylce.org](mailto:info@ylce.org) by Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020

It will then be forwarded to YLCE Executive Chairman, Gill Lydon for review before being passed to the Awards Committee Chair.

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