



# Youth Folk Opportunities around England 2023



Directory collated and produced by the English Folk Dance and Song Society.

This directory is produced as part of the English Folk Dance and Song Society's National Youth Folk Ensemble programme, which aims to promote, develop and link youth folk music activities across England.

There are lots of ways to get involved in folk music through a wide range of organisations in England. Here we share a selection of regional and national opportunities for young people who play or are interested in exploring folk and traditional music. These include folk bands, summer schools, competitions, courses, bursaries, and creative learning projects.

If you would like to add to this directory in the future, or if you're interested in finding out more about youth folk music, please contact [ensemble@efdss.org](mailto:ensemble@efdss.org)

You can download a PDF of this directory from [efdss.org/youth-folk-opportunities](https://efdss.org/youth-folk-opportunities)

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The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) has compiled these listings in good faith. However it cannot guarantee the accuracy of any information listed here, or the quality and safety of the activities. Please contact individual organisations for information about their programmes and safeguarding policies.

## **At the English Folk Dance and Song Society, we champion the folk arts at the heart of England's rich and diverse cultural landscape.**

We deliver programmes of learning and participation and artists development:

- through our arts venue, Cecil Sharp House
- through our library and archive, the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library
- and at a range of venues across England, and sometimes beyond.

We frequently work in partnership with arts, education and heritage organisations.

Cover photo of National Youth Folk Ensemble at Purbeck Folk Festival by Neil King, Fatea.

The National Youth Folk Ensemble is supported by Arts Council England



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

These opportunities are open to people living all over England.

## Alan Surtees Trust

The Alan Surtees Trust is a grant giving organisation that supports performers whose work is rooted in, or influenced by, traditional music and arts. It awards funding annually of up to £2,000 per applicant to UK based musicians, singers or dancers aged 16-30.

[alansurteestrust.org.uk](http://alansurteestrust.org.uk)



## Burwell Bash Summer School

(7th to 11th August 2023)

An intense yet laid back course, designed for intermediate and advanced players of all ages, offering instrumental, ensemble and performance workshops.

Tutors: Brian Finnegan & Katherine Mann (flute/whistle), Ed Boyd (guitar), Andy Cutting (melodeon), Tola Custy & Jock Tyldesley (fiddle), Ernesto Calderon (ensemble skills).

Two bursaries available for 14-25 year olds.

[BurwellBash.info](http://BurwellBash.info)

[contact@BurwellBash.info](mailto:contact@BurwellBash.info)



## The Young Folk Club

A vibrant online events series run for young people, by young people.

Monthly events are aimed at folk enthusiasts aged 14-21. They give young people the opportunity to share and experience folk music in a friendly, social environment, and the chance to meet professionals on the folk scene



[efdss.org/the-young-folk-club](http://efdss.org/the-young-folk-club)

## Cambridge Folk Festival: The Hub Band

The Hub is a music-making area for young people, comprised of a series of workshops and sessions throughout Cambridge Folk Festival. Aimed at 14-18 year olds who can apply to win a place prior to the Festival or sign up on site. The project culminates in a performance in the Club Tent on Sunday.

[cambridgelive.org.uk/folk-festival](http://cambridgelive.org.uk/folk-festival)



## Folkworks Summer Schools

Sage Gateshead's Folkworks Summer Schools offer an opportunity for anyone with an interest in folk music to work with likeminded people to create new music together.

[sagegateshead.com](http://sagegateshead.com)



## National Youth Folk Ensemble

Bringing together talented 14-18 year old musicians from across England to create new arrangements of folk music, participate in residential courses, perform at arts venues and festivals, and get expert guidance from some of the biggest names in folk. Bursaries are available for fees and travel costs.

[efdss.org/youthfolk](http://efdss.org/youthfolk)





## National Youth Folk Ensemble

### Open Days

Creative folk music workshops across England in May led by the National Youth Folk Ensemble team. You will join a band for the day, play by ear, develop your creativity, collaborate with other young musicians and find out about the Ensemble. All instruments welcome. For 12-18 year olds. Free but booking required.

[efdss.org/youthfolk](http://efdss.org/youthfolk)



### New Roots

New Roots is an event for young musicians under the age of 25. There are two age groups, under 18 and 18-25. Musicians and singers selected to play at the final will get feedback from the judges on their playing, enjoy meeting other young musicians and win performance opportunities. To enter, use the instructions on the web site to send a completed entry form and 15 minutes of your music by 31 January 2023.

[new-roots.org.uk](http://new-roots.org.uk)



## NYFTE — The National Youth Folklore Troupe of England

NYFTE ('nifty') is a dance, music and song performance group for 10-18 year olds, with residential training (February and April) working towards high quality performances at concerts/festivals throughout the year. Members gain experience of the full range of English folk traditions alongside long-lasting friendships, and a wealth of performance and leadership skills.

[nyfte.org.uk](http://nyfte.org.uk)



## Shooting Roots

Join Shooting Roots for workshops in the folk arts! Shooting Roots runs band, song, theatre, craft, and dance workshops for 12-17 year-olds at folk festivals throughout the summer. We are open to all abilities, so simply bring yourselves and plenty of enthusiasm!

[shootingroots.org](http://shootingroots.org)



(photo: Phil Sofer)

## Sidmouth Young Performer's Showcase

The Young Performer's Showcase (up to 25 years of age) takes place on The Garden Stage, in Blackmore Gardens on a daily basis during Sidmouth Folk Festival. Performers apply and places are awarded to ensure that a balanced programme of music, song, dance etc. is presented throughout the week.

[sidmouthfolkfestival.co.uk/young-performers-showcase](http://sidmouthfolkfestival.co.uk/young-performers-showcase)

Contact: [bev.langton@talk21.com](mailto:bev.langton@talk21.com)



## Young Halsway

Folk Residential Opportunities for young people at Halsway Manor, National Centre for Folk Arts. Intensive but fun residential courses for young singers and musicians to discover and enjoy folk! Led by young professional folk artists with dedicated pastoral support.

Junior: Ages 8-12. A fun introduction to folk traditions.

Intro: Ages 12-16. No prior folk experience necessary.

Intermediate: For ages 13 – 18 with some experience of folk, leading to performances at Sidmouth Folk Week.

Advanced: Ages 16 – 25. For competent musicians and singers.

[halswaymanor.org.uk/projects/younghalsway](http://halswaymanor.org.uk/projects/younghalsway)



## Centre For Young Musicians Folk Ensemble

Centre for Young Musicians (CYM) at Morley College in South London runs two folk ensembles and a folk choir for young people as part of their Saturday music classes. You get to learn music by ear and play with other young people at your level.

[cym.org.uk/what-can-i-do/cym-folk-ensembles](http://cym.org.uk/what-can-i-do/cym-folk-ensembles)



## Folk Unlimited

Creative, inclusive, multi-sensory music-making sessions for disabled young people aged 12-30, their friends, parents and carers. Led by folk artists Emmie Ward and Nick Goode at Cecil Sharp House. You do not need any experience of playing an instrument or folk music to take part in Folk Unlimited. Love music? We want you to join us!

[efdss.org/folkunlimited](http://efdss.org/folkunlimited)



## Get Your Folk On! (21–24 August 2023)

The English Folk Dance and Song Society's holiday courses welcome young people to Cecil Sharp House, at the heart of English folk. We explore folk music, dance and song from Britain and beyond in practical, inclusive events.

No previous experience of folk music is required.

Play music by ear; explore harmonies, riffs, chord sequences and folk techniques; create arrangements in small and big bands; sing and explore the history and culture of folk songs; try new instruments or dance forms and gain performance skills with final sharing events. Courses are friendly, flexible and responsive to all young people's needs and abilities. Led by a team of skilled and engaging folk educators.

For 10–16 year olds.

[efdss.org/learning/young-people/holiday-courses](http://efdss.org/learning/young-people/holiday-courses)



## London Youth Folk Ensemble

A group of committed young musicians from London and the South with a passion for playing and performing folk music. Meeting regularly at Cecil Sharp House, LYFE works with professional folk musicians to create and perform folk music from Britain and beyond.

LYFE is run by the English Folk Dance and Song Society and co-led by Camilo Menjura and Alexandra Patterson.

For young people aged 11 to 19 years old (up to 24 years old for D/deaf and disabled young people).

[efdss.org/lyfe](http://efdss.org/lyfe)

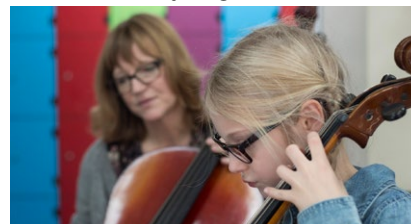


## Young Music Makers

YMM is family music centre, with ensembles catering to ages 4-94, across a range of genres, including folk styles with Advanced Guitar Ensemble, Choir 3, Cello Ensemble, Senior Strings, Recorder 2 and Recorder Ensemble.

[youngmusicmakers.co.uk](http://youngmusicmakers.co.uk)

Contact: [admin@youngmusicmakers.co.uk](mailto:admin@youngmusicmakers.co.uk)



## Folkestra

Auditioned, 13 – 19 year olds, based at Sage Gateshead

Folkestra is a vibrant group of young folk musicians, playing original music and new arrangements. Since 2020 they have again been working with Folkestra's founder, the renowned performer and composer Kathryn Tickell. Folkestra rehearse approximately once every two weeks on Sunday afternoons during term time at Sage Gateshead and the band enjoys performing in various concerts and festivals throughout the year, and working with a range of professional guest musicians.

[sagegateshead.com/get-involved/make-music/ymmp/youth-ensembles/folkestra-2/](https://sagegateshead.com/get-involved/make-music/ymmp/youth-ensembles/folkestra-2/)



## Music at the Heart of Teesdale (M@HoT)

Established by Blaize in 2011, M@HoT aims to revive the folk music, song and dance traditions of SW Durham. M@HoT have two youth folk bands for musicians aged 8–18, who meet weekly after school during term-time; Cream Tees (based in Barnard Castle) & Wear'd Aliens (based in Wolsingham).

[mathot.co.uk](https://mathot.co.uk)

Contact: [info@mathot.co.uk](mailto:info@mathot.co.uk)

## BA Hons: Folk and Traditional Music at Newcastle University

Our degree programme focuses on the traditional music of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, with national and international artists tutoring. Performance and group playing is at the heart, but you'll also study the social and cultural context of traditional and folk music, and how music helps construct identity and culture.

[ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/w344](https://ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/w344)



## Music Partnership North

### The Northumbrian Ranters

The Northumbrian Ranters is made up of talented young traditional musicians, playing a wide variety of instruments, from across the North East. Their aim is to promote and raise the profile of traditional music both in the region and further afield. Full details are on our website.

### Young Pipers Group

Morpeth Bagpipe Museum is the setting for our young Northumbrian pipers group which brings young pipers from across the region together for a series of workshops.

The aim of the group is to encourage players, no matter what level of playing, to share enthusiasm and skills in an informal friendly setting.

[musicpartnershipnorth.co.uk/site](https://musicpartnershipnorth.co.uk/site)

Contact: [Fiona.Johnstone@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Fiona.Johnstone@northumberland.gov.uk)



## Tyneside Fiddle Alliance

Tyneside Fiddle Alliance is a community group of fiddlers who play traditional music from North East England and beyond. We are mainly adults, but all ages are welcome (responsible adult required for U17s). We meet on 1st and 3rd Thursdays, 6.30-8.30 pm in St Mary's Heritage Centre, Gateshead. No commitment required. Weekly drop-in fee (U17s free).

[tynesidefiddlealliance.org.uk](https://tynesidefiddlealliance.org.uk)





## Oakenhoof

Oakenhoof is a voluntary folk arts organisation based in Littleborough. We are an all-age, open folk arts group with an emphasis on youth. Our activities include folk dance, music and song, mostly from the North of England. Join us Tuesday evenings at the Con Club in Littleborough.

[facebook.com/Oakenhoof](https://facebook.com/Oakenhoof)

Contact: [paul@cloggin.co.uk](mailto:paul@cloggin.co.uk)



## One Education Music

One Education Music provides the opportunity for young people to join different genres of folk music groups at our Centres throughout Manchester, including Russian Music Centre, Irish Music Centre, Didsbury Music Centre Ceilidh Band and Blackley Music Centre Ceilidh Band.

[oneeducation.co.uk/teaching-and-learning/music](https://oneeducation.co.uk/teaching-and-learning/music)

## That's all Folk!

A fun and welcoming group of young folk musicians from Rochdale who enjoy exploring a range of folk styles. That's all Folk is aimed at musicians aged 11-18 who can already play to a reasonable standard. Little Folk is for our younger musicians, aged up to 11 years. We rehearse every Thursday evening (term time) at Rochdale Music Service, 7-11 The Butts, Rochdale, OL16 1XT.

[rochdale.gov.uk/rochdale-music-service](https://rochdale.gov.uk/rochdale-music-service)

Contact: [cliff.woodworth@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:cliff.woodworth@rochdale.gov.uk)



## Lancashire Youth Folk Group

Based in Preston, we welcome all young musicians in the North West (any instrument and voice type) interested in exploring music from across Lancashire and the UK. We also create new work and take part in collaborations. We recommend you have reached at least an intermediate level on your instrument/voice, but previous folk experience is not essential and nor is the ability to read notation.

[lancshiremusichub.co.uk/site/make-music/lancashire-youth-folk-group/](https://lancshiremusichub.co.uk/site/make-music/lancashire-youth-folk-group/)

Contact: [cath.sewell@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cath.sewell@lancashire.gov.uk)



## FolkActive Youth Ensemble

A group for young people aimed at intermediate (grade 3+) instrumental players. Tunes are learned by ear and then used to explore the stylistic details in playing folk music as well as spontaneous use of harmony and variation, in both small and large groups.

Sessions are once a month on a Sunday in Southampton.

[folkactive.org.uk/activities/youth-ensemble](http://folkactive.org.uk/activities/youth-ensemble)

Contact: [youth@folkactive.org.uk](mailto:youth@folkactive.org.uk)



## Young Miscellany Folk Dance Group

Harpden, Hertfordshire, AL5 2LX

We provide a safe and nurturing environment for children to learn and perform English Folk Dance. Spanning a range of styles including Border, Cotswold and Northwest Morris, Clog, Rapper and Maypole dancing.

We practice in Hertfordshire and perform locally and nationally.

Dancers and musicians aged 6-18 always welcome.

[youngmiscellany.co.uk](http://youngmiscellany.co.uk)



## FolkEast Youth Moot

Festival mid-August (2023 dates 17-20 August)

FolkEast is a gathering of like-minded folk each August in East Suffolk. Through sessions, workshops, performances or just hanging out, Youth Moot provides the opportunity for festivalgoers aged 11-17 to personalise their FolkEast experience. An engagement programme launching in 2023 will bring workshops to schools and youth groups in Suffolk.

[folkeast.co.uk/young-folk-moot](http://folkeast.co.uk/young-folk-moot)

Contact: [finn@folkeast.co.uk](mailto:finn@folkeast.co.uk)





## Bath Youth Folk Band

Bath Youth Folk Band, directed by fiddler Rachel Cross, is a multi talented group of musicians, aged 8-18, who perform, compose and arrange new and traditional folk music. A sociable, friendly group who just love playing together. The band (approx grade 5-8) performs at festivals, events and gigs throughout the year. Our junior section caters for students (grade 1- 4) who want to develop their skills.

[facebook.com/bathyouthfolkband](https://facebook.com/bathyouthfolkband)

Contact: [rachelplayspiano@gmail.com](mailto:rachelplayspiano@gmail.com)



## Guildhall Young Artists Taunton

The GYAT Folk Group is for 12-18 year old instrumentalists who want to have fun playing folk music together. Guildhall Young Artists Taunton is a fantastic Saturday music school in the South West offering great opportunities to its students, with top quality music tutors with dedication and drive.

[gyataunton.org.uk](https://gyataunton.org.uk)

## Devon Youth Folk Ensemble

Led by professional folk musicians Jon Dyer & Sarah Owen for Wren Music. Monthly Sunday rehearsals in Exeter with short online rehearsal the week before. Summer residential and gigs. Singers do not require any previous experience. Instrumentalists must have good knowledge of, and confidence playing, their instrument but there are no formal grades required.

[wrenmusic.co.uk/what-we-do/devon-youth-folk-ensemble](https://wrenmusic.co.uk/what-we-do/devon-youth-folk-ensemble)



## Rodborough Folk Orchestra

RoffO is a community orchestra which includes players of all ages and abilities who are inspired by our rich traditional musical heritage. The style is 'chamber music meets folk' with parts arranged for tune, harmony, continuo, alto, bass, Eb and Bb instruments.

[roffo.co.uk](https://roffo.co.uk)



## Folk Factory

This after school club explores folk music, tunes and songs in a fun and friendly way. Throughout the year guest workshop leaders will join us and children will have the opportunity to learn from a variety of exciting experts. The Folk Factory Juniors is for 7-11 year olds, and Folk Factory Youth is for 11-18 year olds. Any instrument. Any standard. Limited spaces available, no audition required!

Mondays: Newfield Secondary School, after-school Folk Factory, 2:45-3:30. 11+. School attendees only.

Tuesdays: Carfield Primary School, lunch-time Folk Factory, 12:15-1pm. 6+. School attendees only.

Wednesdays: Folk Factory juniors, 5-6pm, Dungworth Village Hall, Main Rd, Dungworth, Sheffield S6 6HF, 6+

Folk Factory Youths, 6:15-7:15pm, Dungworth village hall, 11+

Folk Factory adults, 7:30-8:30pm, Dungworth village hall, 18+

All are open to any instrument, any ability and run throughout the school term.

[soundpost.org.uk/events/folk-factory-dungworth-youth-group-dungworth-village-hall](https://soundpost.org.uk/events/folk-factory-dungworth-youth-group-dungworth-village-hall)



## Roots Alive

Roots Alive is open to musicians 11 - 18 who want to have fun learning, arranging and performing folk and traditional music from the British Isles and further afield. We play mainly from ear or memory and enjoy playing concerts and ceilidhs in the local area. We meet on Friday evenings in Leeds.

[bit.ly/RootsAlive](https://bit.ly/RootsAlive)

Contact: 0113 378 2850 / [educ.artforms@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:educ.artforms@leeds.gov.uk)

## York Folkestra

**Junior Folkestra** runs on a Wednesday evening during term time in York. Anybody with a passion for folk music is invited to come along with their instrument (even if they are a complete beginner) to join in with some tunes, simple harmony parts and foot-stomping good fun!

**Senior Folkestra** runs on a Saturday morning during term time in York. This ensemble is for more advanced folk musicians and provides opportunities for players to get involved in creating harmonies and arrangements. Senior Folkestra gigs across York and performs whilst on residential trips in the UK and abroad.

[yorkartsed.org.uk](https://yorkartsed.org.uk)

Contact: [support@yorkartseducation.org.uk](mailto:support@yorkartseducation.org.uk)



## Folk, Blues and Roots degree at Leeds Conservatoire

Develop your skills as a professional musician with our global approach to folk and traditional music, whatever your instrument. An immersive experience with one-to-one specialist, ensemble and contextual studies tuition from our award winning faculty, including Jim Moray, Bryony Griffith, Sam Carter, Mat Walklate and Archie Churchill-Moss.

[leedsconservatoire.ac.uk/folk](https://leedsconservatoire.ac.uk/folk)

