



**Y's RETIRED OF THE UK**  
Affiliated to the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees



**AUGUST 2014**

[www.yretired.co.uk](http://www.yretired.co.uk)

**GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT**



**Dear friends and  
colleagues  
greetings**

Uppermost in my mind at present is the fact that as I write the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees (WFYR) is meeting at the YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, Colorado, USA. On your behalf I have sent a letter of greetings wishing those attending "Sincere greetings and best wishes for a successful event".

Our representative is Rev John Knox with Patricia and also attending from the Y's Retired of the UK, John & Margery Naylor together with Jim Thomson. You will recall we raised by appeal some £2,385 toward \$40,000 world-wide to enable colleagues who would otherwise have been unable to attend to have this life enhancing experience.

I am pleased to share that the Cambridge Reunion attendance increased from 6 to 16 and again proved a most enjoyable occasion. In attendance: Jim Lamb, Reg Wake, Sam & Maureen Johnston, David & Wendy Miller, Tony & Jenny Miles, Ron & Janet Ingamells, Ray Allen, Roger & Elaine Hunt, Louis Lewis together with John & Barbara Drake. The Reunion groups in South West England and Scottish colleagues meetings have been recorded elsewhere. Each speaks well of a healthy strand of the Y's Retired of the UK social activities.

Do you agree!? What do we agree!? Yes of course the excellent broadcast in the recent BBC Country-file programme which went out on 23<sup>rd</sup> May and repeated 7<sup>th</sup> June 2014 of the British Boys for British Farms Scheme (BBBF). This was a very well produced programme giving much credit to the Scheme which commenced in 1932 and closed in the 1960s offering training in farming for some 25,000 boys – today we might have said young men!

It was indeed a highlight of initiative by the YMCA not least before, during and after the second world-war. Coincidentally I attended the funeral on 23<sup>rd</sup> May of one of those 'boys' John Smith who trained at the Ham Green Centre in 1949 and was pleased to hear the Minister emphasise the lasting

impression left with John on his life of the YMCA BBBF training scheme.

Of significance was the singing of the hymn "We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land"!

I take this opportunity of thanking Stephen Milner and pay tribute to him for his ongoing interest in maintaining public awareness of the BBBF Scheme.

You may wish to be aware that Rupert George (Indian YMCA Retirees and Y's Retired of the UK Committee) was sent to North Cadbury Court during his training for the YMCA whilst appointed to work with Frank Brown in Tirupattur, India!

It has been a privilege to share communication among others with members Eddie Brady (Lancaster), Barbara Peebles (Newcastle), Joe Renshaw (Special Services), Des Wilcox (Plymouth).

Tempus fugit!

Warm regards,

**Jim Lamb**

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## BBBF Reunion on Tuesday 13 May 2014 at North Cadbury Court

We had a very enjoyable day thanks to Archie and Janet Montgomery, the owners of North Cadbury Court, and their staff.

28 BBBF boys, 6 BBBF staff, 2 lecturers, 7 farmers attended, plus 25 wives/partners. Two daughters of Stanley Charlesworth, Barbara and Margaret, also attended.



Ruth Davies, the Director of Countryfile, has informed me that the **Countryfile programme** will be shown on BBC 1 on **Sunday 15 June 2014**.

Ruth Davies has been made aware of current YMCA Horticulture and rural activities and has been in contact with Suzi Browne.



Photo shows Adam Henson, David Berkley (Warden and Instructor at North Cadbury Court 1958 - 61), Stephen Milner, Archie Montgomery (owner of North Cadbury Court)

Adam Henson and his Farm Team of Countryfile when filming took place at the Montgomery's farms, including the 'Cheddaring' process of the famous Montgomery Cheese, as well as interviewing various BBBF boys and staff. Countryfile and other media interviewed various people.

Blackmore Vale Magazine and the Western Gazette published articles. I understand TV Times may be publishing an article prior to the Countryfile programme.

**Kind regards - Stephen Milner**



To all Y's Retired and those with YMCA connections. On 6th June 1844 George Williams founded the YMCA. Today, as we commemorated the DD landings, let us and many others around the world, remember with great affection the birth of the most fantastic, energetic, world-wide Christian youth movement, that we were privileged and proud to have been part of and serve.

170 candles I couldn't do but triangular bunting will surely suffice -

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE YMCA**  
and all who served in her.

Dear David.  
What a wonderful man you are to send such a message. Perhaps we did not need reminding but your method raised a smile as well as many personal memories of careers and friends present and in the past. Well done !!!

I am in the USA on holiday prior to attending my seventh World Council. Actually only five as a delegate, I was a only a visitor at the other two but prefer to boast a little.

You mentioned D Day. I wonder where the more ancient of our retirees were that day. I was at the Indian Army Training School in Bangalore and, in the middle of a lecture on how safe it was to handle plastic explosive, we were interrupted with the news that the landing had taken place. Looking back, I think that we were all so focussed by months of training for a different kind of war that our reaction was strangely muted. Extraordinary when you think how world changing was D Day and all that followed in human history.

Again, well done - **Jim (Thomson)**

Dear David,  
Thank you for sending me the Birthday wishes of the YMCA Movement. If it had not been for it I would not have met Walter and the experience of working for the BBBF branch and the many places Walter served at - so long may it continue.

Kind regards, - **Jean Saunders**

Dear David  
Thanks - I'm off now to a 170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration by YMCA Edinburgh in the Mary of Guise barge in Leith docks - better go!  
**John (Knox)**

Thank you for the timely reminder David. I had posted something on Facebook informing people that it was the YMCA's 170th Birthday. - **Ray (Allen)**

David,  
Thanks for a word in season! - Warm regards, **Jim (Lamb)**

Thanks David for this reminder ---wonderful to think that George William's initiative is still so fruitful  
Best wishes **Derek (Sheppard)**

## Member's correspondence

Dear David,  
"Many "Y"s Retired members will remember the visits by Dr. William Barclay to Skegness. When visiting London Dr. Barclay stayed at London Central YMCA, and by way of thanks for hospitality received dedicated one of his books to "HES" Harry Smith ( General Secretary) and "HGS" Harry Stevenson. (Asst. General Secretary).

After many years of searching I eventually obtained a copy of the book entitled "Flesh and Spirit" an examination of Galatians 5. v.19-23.

The dedication reads:  
"To my friends HES and HGS who daily obey the apostolic command to practise hospitality and who welcomed me when I was a stranger"

Having had the great privilege of working with "HGS" at Romford, I shall treasure this book, which recognises two great servants of the YMCA!"

**Paul Harper**

Greetings,

I have been told of the meeting which you are having on June 14th which will be attended by, among others, Rupert, Chandu and John Newton.

I am sorry that I cannot be there to meet these old friends but I am on holiday in the USA prior to attending the Council meeting at Estes Park at the end of June. Please give my apologies.

However, I thought that John in particular would be interested in looking at the attached photograph. It was taken in the late 1960s in the River States of Nigeria and shows John with his back to the camera trying to (successfully) impress a group of YMCA folk that this would be an excellent spot to build a YMCA Community centre.



We planted a palm tree on one occasion to mark something or other and John managed to flatten the tree with the land rover on our departure. We did not stay to apologise.

The hotel at Port Harcourt was also memorable. There was no water or electricity but I was assured that the bath water which I could see dimly by candle light had only been used once previously. We shaved the following morning in melted ice cubes which remained in the glasses from the previous evening.

These were good days, Thank you John.

**Jim Thomson**

Dear friends

I had the opportunity to return a call from **Joe Renshaw** (01704 228115) now at the spritely age of 95. Joe was keen to share his early days involvement of the WW2 clearly remembering exactly where he was on the night of the London Blitz. He recalls that he and a colleague were sent to the London Docks somewhere near Pastow, to serve and give support to civilians who had been bombed out of their homes.

This they successfully did from the shelter of their YMCA Tea Van supplying tea, cigarettes and biscuits to those in need, both civilians and service personnel. Part of Joe's story was highlighted on the BBC2 broadcast on Thursday 22 May at 7.30am. Joe was frustrated that the BBC had edited out his reference to the YMCA Tea Vans and the work the YMCA staff undertook bringing some immediate relief in those dark days. He recalls his duties supplying tea vans which were sited all over London and the South East.

**(I really enjoyed the chat - David (Editor))**

Dear David,

Wow Joe Renshaw - I did watch the programme but did not recognise who it was!! I remember Walter standing in for him once when he was on leave in either 1950/51 just before we got married and I believe it might have been Watford YM but not sure - it was a long time ago anyway! I wonder how he was chosen for that programme but he was very good and very articulate!!

Regards,

**Jean Saunders**

A welcomed letter from Amy, widow of Bill Collier, included with her membership payment. She much appreciates the Newsletter and can still put faces to some of the names mentioned. She speaks warmly of attendance at a conference in Southern France in company with Betty Mawby but it was so cold that extra woollies were called for. Amy and Bill attended several of the earlier annual reunions, which she still remembers with pleasure.

PS Amy adds; "Please tell those concerned with sending out the Newsletter that it was my husband who had the MBE. NOT me!!"

Dear David,

Good to have a reminder of another D Day and to give thanks for all that it started and has come to mean so much for so many folk world wide. A splendid example of "*From little acorns, mighty oak trees grow!*" ?

**Clyde Binfield's** book title "*That dear man George Williams*" seems apt? God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform! Cause for thanksgiving indeed! Renewed thanks for reminder. Warmest regards. **Reg (Wake)**

Dear David

I have only recently discovered my late grandfather, Sydney Killick Morley, was heavily involved with the YMCA prior to his sudden death in 1926. His funeral in Bristol was attended by Sir Arthur Yapp who I understand was National YMCA Secretary and other high-ranking office-bearers.

Would appreciate if you could advise whom I should contact to get further historical details of my grandfather's involvement with your organisation.

Regards - Colin Morley - Sydney Australia

[cmorls@hotmail.com](mailto:cmorls@hotmail.com)

I have put Colin in touch with YMCA England. (Editor)

Dear All,

How great a pleasure it was to have such a good group of Y's Retired of the UK attend the Lunch. We increased from 8 to 16 in three meetings!

As you are aware I had to leave a little early in order to attend the funeral of John Smith who in 1949 became one of the YMCA British Boys for British Farms trainees at Ham Green. It was a well filled church and I am pleased to say reference was made to this period in John's life. The Rev Dr who conducted the service made a bee-line for me after the service with the comment, "was it good to hear about one of your LAND BOYS?!"

Jim writes to attendees - "If do not hear from you to the contrary I will include you on the address list for 2015 together with some four apologies we received this time, David Bedford, Richard and June Long, Rupert George.

During the next twelve months you may wish to share with other YMCA Retirees regarding the Cambridge Group of Retirees and so gain their interest in joining such a worthy 'gathering!' Just ask them to ring me!" (01223 440228).

"I much enjoyed your company and express thanks again to Sam and Maureen Johnston for arranging once again for us to meet at the Girton Golf Club which has proved an excellent venue for our kind of meeting."

Keep well and in good spirits one and all! - Jim



left to right; Ray Allen, Louis Lewis, Barbara Drake, John Drake, Ron Ingamells, Janet Ingamells, Reg Wake, Elaine Hunt, Tony Miles, Maureen Johnston, Jenny Miles, Wendy Miller, David Miller, Roger Hunt, Sam Johnston.

Hi Very good - Impressed with the 170<sup>th</sup> birthday reminder. Did you know Bob Roberts drove a YMCA Tea Van in France days after the D Day landings? Sam (Johnston)

Dear David,  
Thank you for reminding me of the birthday of YMCA. I rejoice in having served in this organisation for forty two years. I am sorry I am unable to be involved in the YMCA activities any longer.  
With regards

**Egbert (Samraj)**

Hi David,

Thanks for the YM's 170th Birthday Bunting "Card". The 6th June is one of our Grand daughters Birthdays too, so we have 3 reasons for celebrating.

I was with Geoff Havers yesterday at the opening of Reading YMCA's third incarnation of Padworth Log Cabin, their woodland re-treat, first used in the late 1940's in Con's field. He was the YM Regional Secretary at that time and young men (and women!) used what appears to have been an old wooden shed on wheels for weekend retreats.

That was burnt down in the 60's. A new Cabin was rebuilt by volunteers and opened in 1972, which was burnt down in 2012. The latest very modern version which has two 8 person bunk rooms, was built by Y Build a Reading YMCA Social Enterprise Company offering young people apprenticeship experiences.

Hope this finds you and Sue well and sunning yourselves in sunny Cornwall.

**Vic (Hills)**

Dear David

In 1962, I was selected by the National Council of YMCAs of India to undergo Fellowship Training with the British YMCAs. Since I was working with Frank Brown at Tirupattur in the Boy's Division, the emphasis of my training was to observe and experience work among boys. My first placement was at North Cadbury!

It took a while for me to understand and appreciate the significance of BBBF as it was totally different from what I was used to. By the time I completed my period there, I was able to grasp the value of the programme. Viewing the documentary brought back old happy memories! It is possible that some of the boys who were there are now leading farmers.

**Kind regards - Rupert (George)**

#### **GEOFF ROCKLEY - DECEASED**

Many colleagues including myself, will remember Geoff Rockley who was a life long President of Nottingham YMCA. His involvement with the YMCA started as a sixteen year old member attracted by table tennis and billiards. Geoff rose through the lay ranks and became chairman of the Association for many years

Geoff gave much commitment to the YMCA and was always very supportive taking a keen interest locally, regionally and nationally. His other great loves were Nottingham Forest Football Club and Chung's Vietnamese Restaurant at Mapperley which he regularly frequented. He left behind his wife Liz and his boys. Geoff passed away on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014 at the age of 81.

#### **THINE BE THE GLORY**

Writer Edmund Budry was a Swiss pastor at Vesey. This hymn was written for and appeared in the 1904 Lausanne YMCA hymnbook. Its translator was the editor of **The Red Triangle**, a publication associated with the British YMCA.

The hymn achieved considerable prominence by being sung at the 1928 Jerusalem Conference. It speaks convincingly of the fact that Jesus did rise from the dead. It concludes by associating that the death and resurrection with our own hope of after-life.

**(thanks to Arthur Bennett for this important snippet of YMCA history)**

## Suffragette Jessie Millar Wilson spent years fighting for the rights of women – but in 1915 she decided the plight of fighting men was far more urgent



Honour: Aunt J Jessie Wilson

Suffragette Jessie Millar Wilson spent years fighting for the rights of women – but in 1915 she decided the plight of fighting men was far more urgent.

The First World War was moving into its second murderous, mud-clogged year and gardener Jessie, 43, didn't hesitate to sign up as a YMCA volunteer to offer tea and sympathy to frontline troops, reports the Sunday People.

The privately educated daughter of a prosperous wool trader was one of 34,000 British women who went to France to ease the misery endured by our brave -tommies in the trenches.

There were also 4,000 male volunteers – and together they make up an army of 38,000 forgotten heroes and heroines of the First World War.

When Jessie arrived in France she wrote in her diary: "I said I could stay for four months, or possibly six.

"But it was longer than most -people could promise and at that time it seemed longer than the war could possibly last."

In fact the six months – at her own expense – became six years. She started out in a canteen near Le Havre on the Channel coast and ended up in 1918 running a YMCA "hut" in a Paris hotel.

Bradford-born Jessie, who did not return to Blighty till 1921, remembered a tide of "sad, homesick men" pouring through her hut where they were given tea, games to play and kind words.

Grateful soldiers called her Aunt J and many kept in touch with her till she died aged 80 in Harrogate in 1952.

By then she had won the MBE for her war work and the YMCA's top accolade, the Gold Order of the Red Triangle – named after the charity's symbol.



Recruitment: YMCA posters

YMCA England chief Denise Hatton said: "Volunteers understood the comfort a hot cup of tea or a letter from a loved one could give someone far from home and facing the horrors of war." The association ran 4,000 canteens in France and even staffed the trains taking soldiers to the front. YMCA workers won 319 medals -during the war. But 286 helpers were wounded and eight killed.

The public -donated nearly £3million to fund their work – that's £200million in today's money, more than twice as much as Comic Relief raised last year. As well as providing cuppas and cake YMCA volunteers helped in the writing of 200million letters home.

Wartime YMCA boss Sir Arthur Yapp recalled a soldier begging a volunteer to retrieve two letters sent for posting, -telling her: "One was to my mother and the other to my sweetheart – and I've put them in the wrong envelopes." But it was too late. Sir Arthur said: "One wonders what happened." The YMCA also organised football games, lectures and concerts. They cared for families who came to say goodbye to fatally wounded men. And it was a YMCA worker who began the tradition of poppy-wearing as a -symbol of remembrance. Old inventories reveal the organisations's huge contribution to morale.

From December 1914 to May 1918 its supplies to France included 50,500 tons of food, cigarettes and hot drinks, 875 gramophones, 8,386 records, 322 pianos and organs, 572 billiard and bagatelle tables, 10,000 draught sets, 3,140 -boxes of dominoes, 1,335 chess sets, 4,263 footballs and 657 cricket sets – plus 4,992 balls and 1,540 replacement bats.

(thanks to Arthur Bennett for forwarding this article from the Sunday People)