



Y's RETIRED OF THE UK

Affiliated to the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees



JULY 2016

www.yretired.co.uk

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear friends and colleagues greetings

I am writing these words following Easter into Pentecost. This is an appropriate time to reflect on the foundations of the YMCA Movement which gave all retirees from YMCA service irrespective of their present beliefs an understanding of their personal faith indeed it might be said a reason for their 'service above self'!

The YMCA Motto "That they all may be one" *...that the world may believe*" (John 17 v. 21) was adopted in 1855 at the first International Conference held in Paris – the Paris Basis, this was the basis on which National YMCA's were affiliated to the World Alliance of YMCAs. This led to many Local YMCAs including in their 'constitutions' two kinds of membership Associate and Full, the latter being those who would have voting powers and election to the respective Boards of Management.

I referred in the last issue of our Newsletter to the statement, we (the YMCA) welcome into our membership people of all Faiths and of none and referred to whether in the present climate of Inter-Faith relationships this might also apply to 'leadership'. Though there was a small response it was not without significance!

Apparently for many years a major National YMCA Board had supported such action though mainly persons of the Jewish Faith with the necessary skills. Reference was made to the fact many if not most local YMCAs employed ancillary staff irrespective of the Faith they followed. Others added that such was the leadership in physical education activities. Many of you will recall the 'Constitutions' of many local YMCAs included two kinds of membership Associate and Full, the latter being 'committed Christians', having voting rights and election on to the Boards of Management. Have 'readers' anything to add? To your knowledge has the YMCA changed for the better?

Bursting in my head at present are Bob Dylan's words to his first 'hit', "The times they are a'changing!" The words appropriate, the whole world is rapidly changing...writers and critics ... senators and congressmen ... mothers and fathers ... *here might be added RETIREES - let it be known your world is rapidly changing!!!!*

It will please Clyde Binfield to share that for reference purposes I took from my bookshelf a copy of his excellent book "George Williams and the YMCA" and here state that in finding the information I was once again captivated not least by the

Victorian setting in the 1880/90s of the development of the YMCA. The place of Christianity in Society was paramount in the development of the YMCA through George Williams and his friends.

A lovely story I share from Clyde's book was a recollection of Matthew Hodder shortly before his death. He was enumerating the grand YMCA buildings in cities like Chicago, Melbourne, Sydney, Toronto, Montreal, but the finest of all were those in Philadelphia, which he and Williams had visited in 1876.

"I well remember that when Sir George Williams and I were staying in that city 30 years ago, he had a very disturbed night owing to the sound of hammering in the immediate neighbourhood. Next morning I told him the noise was caused by workmen who were building the new YMCA premises, the next night he slept like a top"!

The world has changed. The YMCA has changed. Retired colleagues, have we changed? Of one thing I am certain, attendance at the annual Reunions convinces me that the unity of spirit experienced is second to none but memories of the names of colleagues is dire!

CAMBRIDGE - Y's RETIRED RE-UNION

There are only 2 or 3 places left for the Cambridge Reunion Lunch on the 6th July 12 noon for 12:30pm – first come first served!

Warm regards,

Jim (Lamb)

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Member's correspondence

Hi Jim

Thank you for your letter and your kind words which are very much appreciated.

After working for the YMCA for just shy of 21 years, I decided to stop work (at the tender age of 53!) but not yet ready for "retirement" and I will consider myself a lady of leisure until such time as I may get bored and look to volunteer at a charity close to home.

I have enjoyed my time at the YMCA and meeting a variety of interesting people and my colleagues in YMCA England who I shall miss. I have always tried to make the journey easier for those members heading into retirement and hopefully I have succeeded in most cases.

I may yet just become a member of Y's retired as I note that it is open to those that have left the YMCA after seven years.

Again thank you for your kind words.
Kind regards - Isobel (Kaye)

Dear David

How very sad I felt when I received my copy of Y's Retired. I was Secretary to both these lovely people at National Council in the 1980s and I want to add my thoughts to the many you have printed today.

Alex took over General Services from my dear old boss Ron Harkness, with a very different style of leadership but equally a pleasure to work for. Alex came from a commercial background and underlying his very sharp business mind was his deep faith. He was a pleasure to work for and together with dear Roy Weaver we made quite a team.

I also worked for Sam as Deputy National Secretary. He was always up to something which turned out to be very amusing and funny but here again underlying this his faith and capabilities always shone through. The world will be a sadder place without them. They were very happy years for me at National Council.

My condolences to both their families who will miss Alex and Sam deeply.

Barbara (MacDonald)

**God of wholeness, God of Grace,
to you we bring our thanks and praise.**

**To a world that searches
you are a lamp that shines,
to a world that is hungry
you are food that sustains,
to a world that suffers
you are hope of release,
to a world that's broken
you are one who restores,
to a world full of hate
you are love that forgives,
to a world that denies
you are truth that endures.**

**To you we bring our thanks and praise,
God of wholeness, God of Grace.**

©John Birch

Dear David,

I am contacting you to advise you of a change of address for one of your members, Mrs. Kathleen Akrill, latterly of 28 The Willows, Collier Way, Merrow, Guildford, GU4 7XE. She recently moved from there into a residential care home and her address is:

Mrs. K. Akrill
6 Beech
Stanecroft
Spook Hill
North Holmwood
Nr. Dorking
RH5 4EG

Kathleen is now aged 90 - she enjoys reading the Newsletter and, although increasingly she does not know the names of many people mentioned, it does bring back happy memories of her working as Appeals Secretary at the Grimsby YMCA from 1965 to 1974 and as Warden of the Trainees' Hostel at the RHS Wisley Gardens in Surrey from 1974 to 1985.

Kind regards - Pamela Gelder



David

I was looking on the Internet for YMCA Badges. E-Bay has a very wide interesting selection with different prices. It's worth looking at and mentioning in the next Y's Retired Newsletter.

Stephen (Milner)

Hello everyone

Just to let you all know that I have booked Treloyhan Manor for

**week beginning 27 March 2017 and for
week beginning 16 April for 2018.**

Hope these dates are acceptable.

The cost for 2017 will be £214.00 per person for en-suite and £184.00 for standard room per person. As usual deposits please of £40 per person to us by 20 October and balance by 20 February 2017.

We have received a postcard of Polkerris from Doris Robins which said "To Mr and Mrs D Libby and friends" This is just to thank you for the kind donation for our Church. We are very grateful to you all and were very pleased to know you enjoyed your visit. So, on behalf of Tregaminion again our most grateful thanks. Best wishes from Doris."

Looking forward to next year and our time together

Margaret & David (Libby)



From left to right - Margaret Libby, Ray Allan, Stephen Milner, Tom Libby, Val Libby, David Buckingham, Mervyn Moorhead, Paul Harper, Margaret, David Libby, Ivor Cresswell, Des Willcox, Margaret Skinner, John Skinner, Rev Ian Haille, Margaret Haille, David Smith, Hanna Milner, Pearl Willcox, Gill Buckingham, Liz Harper, Beryl Moorhead, Marv Jarman, Sue Smith

During the week when our monarch celebrated her ninetieth birthday, the South West 'Y' retirees retreated to Treloyhan Manor in St Ives. A beautiful season of the year, the grounds were full of lush verbiage, blossoms and birdsong!

It was well worth the effort of scaling three flights of stairs to our attic bedroom with the most amazing view of an azure sea. This bedroom afforded the luxury of a quiet, safe space in which to read and meditate which for most of us would fulfil a great need.

One of the books awaiting my attention was 'The Fight,' by the late Dr John White formerly Vineyard fellowship and global missionary. I will quote one passage which may act as a taster for those wanting spiritual refreshment. He had undergone quite a wilderness journey prior to writing these words!

'In the darkest periods of my life, when everything seemed hopeless, I would struggle in the dawns of many far away countries to grasp the basic truths of scripture passages. I looked for no immediate answers to my problems, only did I sense intuitively that I was drinking draughts that gave LIFE to my soul!

Slowly, as I grappled with textual and theological problems a strength grew deep within me. Foundations cemented themselves, to an otherworldly rock, beyond the reach of time and space, and I became strong and more ALIVE. If I could write poetry about it I would. If I could sing through paper, I would flood your soul with the glorious melodies, and express what I have found. I cannot exaggerate for there are no expressions majestic enough to tell of the glory I have seen, or the wonder of finding that I, a middle aged neurotic unstable man, have my feet planted firmly in eternity. I breathe the air of heaven!

'Wow! How inspirational is that!

As well as the opportunity of a read uninterrupted by domestic duties, one morning our eyes were glued to the Television, the Queen's ninetieth celebrations! She and Sir David Attenborough, described as 'National treasures' by Prince William, both now nonagenarians.

The opportunity for leisurely walks into St Ives, or further afield were taken advantage of.

The highlight of the week was a bus trip into Rashleigh terrain, a treat indeed!. En route to the Rashleigh Inn we partook of the delights of the 'Yummy Crummy Cafe' for coffee, and the Rashleigh Inn had the most spectacular view overlooking the majestic ocean ,where we partook welcome sustenance on our way to Fowey, (Daphne Du Maurier and Sir Arthur Quiller Couch territory!) I was trying to remember the name of the Saint the Parish church was dedicated to .I think it was St Finbar another of those Celtic Irish missionaries and mystics, who probably crossed the ocean in a coracle, like St Patrick of old!

En route however we had a delightful 'stop over 'at the Rashleigh place of worship and were hospitably welcomed by the custodian. The walls had the twelve commandments inscribed as well as memorials to Rashleighs of yesteryear, and it immediately took me back to my childhood where the Sunday school teacher tried to instil the ten commandments into our youthful craniums. It took another thirty years to learn about the third member of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit! by which time adulthood had been arrived at! And we have been learning ever since. So to our own trinity! as our bodies were fed, our souls watered, and thirdly our minds exercised! Typical YMCA tradition, come to think of it.

All too soon, it was 'quiz night' put together by quizmaster Liz. **Carried forward on next page.....**

Beryl's report continued.....

On Wednesday evening we heard from Dr Andrew Dye (friend of David and Margaret Libby) once a member of Central Hall, who shared with us his experiences of being a Missionary Teacher in Granada, South Caribbean District. Andrew had returned to the UK in November 2015 and spoke to us of his work with young people living in very difficult situations.

Andrew brought with him various artefacts and visual aids and all very much enjoyed his informative and interesting talk, learning about life in that culture and their self expression through bongo drums and huge kettle drums. From fighting to dancing, life was certainly very colourful.

Film night - Margaret endeavoured to make as cosy as ever, with the provision of Popcorn and Payne's Poppets, or maybe it was Maltesers.

The film appropriately chosen was 'The Lady in the Van' and we settled to watch the irrepressible, indomitable Maggie Smith, portray an elderly misfit who managed to manoeuvre a permanent parking lot in the driveway of play write Alan Bennett, who dialogues repeatedly with his alter ego, who hasn't the heart to get shot of her until a temporary stay in hospital provided the opportunity. It proved she was 'on the run from a crime which she hadn't committed' and was being successfully blackmailed by a bent cop who prayed on her vulnerability.

He finally meets his 'comeuppance'. If 'comeuppance' is the right word, so does she, in rather a spectacular way. The finale sees her translated up to 'Glory' arm in arm with the young motorcyclist whose death had been his own mistake and not hers.

A recap of her life showed a young woman of exceptional talent, and one can only hope those talents were realised and her full potential arrived at in the next world, if not in this!

Stephen Milner shared that he still had copies available of the book 'British Boys for British Farms'. At his own personal cost, Stephen has had some more printed priced at £10 a copy. Contact him on 01305266197 Or stephenmilner222@btinternet.com

Well, what a stimulating week that proved to be and no mistake!

A communion service was led by the Rev Ian Haille assisted by Paul Harper, prior to departure and we held in remembrance departed friends, and sang Sam Johnson's favourite hymn, The Old Rugged Cross and the YMCA battle Cry, 'Thine be the Glory Risen conquering Son'.

Thus reminded of Our Lord's triumph over death and His Resurrection, we exchanged farewells in the hope of seeing each other next year, for which Margaret has already negotiated the date - which is

**week beginning 27 March 2017 and for
week beginning 16 April for 2018.**

Beryl (Moorehead)

The Soul in the Machine'



George Williams..... On stage!

Yes it's true! The life of George Williams and the founding of the YMCA is now a stage play, 'The Soul in the Machine' has been commissioned by YMCA England and written and produced by the Christian Saltmine Trust Theatre Company and is hopefully coming to a venue near you!

With a simple set and costumes, an energetic young cast take the audience with verve and pace from George's early days on Ashway Farm in Dulverton through to his apprenticeship in Bridgwater and on to Hitchcock and Rogers in St Paul's church yard and the establishment of the movement and its development across the world.

For those of us whose image of GW is that of the patrician figure staring out in later life from the portrait in the lobby of London Central YMCA, it is inspiring and refreshing to be reminded just how dynamic and daring he must have been to achieve all that he did in the establishment of the movement. Despite the views of his employer, George was a keen supporter and agitator of the Early Closing Day movement.

The play makes the evangelical motivation of George and the original eleven very clear. Within the story line an emphasis is made of how the impact of the death by rheumatic fever of a fellow worker known as 'Poor Morse' made the urgency of saving souls ever more pressing.

The relationship between Edward Valentine and George Williams and their desire to fulfil their Christian calling is a thread throughout the narrative. (No drapery pun intended!) We are introduced to Miss Hitchcock, later to become Mrs Williams and see the impact of George's travels and the Great Exhibition of 1851 on the movement's growth at home and abroad, up to the establishment of the World Alliance in Paris in 1855. Never had I imagined ever hearing the words of the Paris Basis being recited in a play!

Along with the theme of the importance of evangelical mission and personal dedication, the play expresses a strong belief in the dangers of industrialisation and the dehumanising effect on the spiritual, mental and physical well being of all generations.

In talking with the cast and others afterwards it was clear how inspired they had been during the development of the play by George Williams and the YMCA and its achievements and how this remains relevant today.

This is not just a play for YMCA aficionados, it has an important message to proclaim about the value of human beings in the eyes of God. George is quoted as saying '**We are more than bodies to be fed to a machine. We are made for more than work. We have souls, we have spirits and somewhere in the dead city there must be a place for these things'**

Perhaps you could be instrumental in staging a performance near you! - www.saltminetrust.org.uk

Graham (Clarke)

INFORMATION SHARED FROM THE JAPANESE FELLOWSHIP OF Y's RETIRED

As of today we have 124 registered members in JFYR. Most of them were former professional secretaries exclusively. In the last meeting in November 2015, we reviewed the MOU of JFYR and decided to include retired staff members of YMCA inclusive to the non professional categories. We will meet once in east Japan and the next year in west Japan.

This year we will meet in Kyoto on November 14-15. In each meeting, we will invite a special guest speaker on some issues of general interest to the members. This year we will invite a speaker from the National Organization on Dementia and the Families. In Japan, people over 65 years old have increased to 26% and in the next 10 years when the baby boomer generation reaches 75 and older, the welfare and medical system will not function as it has in the past. This will become a serious matter for all the retirees in Japan.

In the middle of April, there were two large scale earthquakes in Kumamoto Prefecture in Kyushu (southern) island in Japan. The disaster caused huge damage to many houses. Thereafter many small and middle scale aftershocks have hit them over 1300 times (daily about 10 or more even today).

Many people live in evacuation centers (two YMCA buildings have been used as evacuation centers for 1200 people) and many others sleep in cars at night. The YMCA itself has also recorded damage in some buildings and it has been very difficult to operate itself in the last two months. The JFYR has decided to raise some funds to help the YMCA, and also some retired members have been actively helping the evacuation centers.

Kohei - JFYR

Jim Lamb writes:-

Attached please find photos I took at the Auckland Museum a few days before Anzac Day (Their Remembrance Day). The flag has the signatures and comments of New Zealand soldiers during the war.

It may be of interest that there is a similar one in the British Museum from the British angle.



RE-UNION FOR Y's RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH OF UK

I am writing to give you notice of our next re-union event to be held in **Bournemouth on Wednesday June 29th**. The Mayor and Mayoress will be delighted to welcome you for a tour of the Russell Cotes Museum and Art Gallery and former home of Merton Russell-Cotes and his wife Annie. The historic house is full of interesting and precious memorabilia from their many travels.

You can view the website here: <http://russellcotes.com>

The tour will commence at noon so I would plan arrival for around 11 or 11.30am. There is a nice coffee bar to purchase a drink and rest after your journey. There is normally an entry charge but this will be waived given your VIP status. After our tour we will have a short walk to the Miramar Hotel where we can enjoy a leisurely lunch around and wonderful sea views. I am still negotiating with the hotel and will forward a menu shortly. The lunch should commence around 1pm.

Tolkien was a regular visitor to the hotel so lots of interesting history there as well as good food.

<http://miramar-bournemouth.com>

I need to give numbers to both the Museum and Art Gallery and Hotel and for that reason I would appreciate an early response confirming your attendance or otherwise.

I look forward to welcoming you to the seaside and to hearing from you shortly. Very best wishes

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