



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



JANUARY 2016

www.yretired.co.uk

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Dear friends and
colleagues
greetings**

First you would wish me to share that a small response was received as a result of my last letter regarding anyone having knowledge of YMCAs Internationally, Nationally or Local being involved in a spirit of service in the current tragedy among humankind in the mass movement of populations fleeing their homes for a better life free of wars and rumours of wars.

I received references to Barnsley YMCA and the normal procedure of ongoing YMCA World Service from Geneva. Suffice it to say I still have faith to believe that somewhere THE YMCA is rising to the occasion and also recognise that the distribution of our Newsletter quite naturally is limited to members and friends together with the WFYR Newsletter Bridges where extracts are made by way of circulation.

On the question of, 'If music be the food of love what is vinyl?' I received a little response if not humour from one member whose son had entrusted to his Dad his collection of LP vinyl records with the words, "Don't lose them for they will be worth a fortune!

Other members still play their vinyl records on a regular basis, one reminding himself the he and his wife whilst working in isolation in some African country played them regularly as there was nothing else to do in the evenings!!

Advent, Christmas and New Year celebrations contain possibly the highlight of any year for many of us. Alas however we are constantly reminded through the media that the season of goodwill is anything but for many continue daily to struggle with immense problems in seeking food and shelter for their families living in poverty.

Publically stated recently in the media was the words of an Archbishop who at times found difficulty with his faith in God. By nature of the purpose of our Newsletter all readers are retired the majority having experienced between 60 to 100 Christmases with varied memories of Christmas Past – of family reunions and exchanging of gifts the financial value of which if so used would feed millions of destitute people for many years!

I am reminded that as a student preaching in the college chapel one Sunday morning using in my sermon an illustration on poverty I purloined from the Rev Dr Donald Soper when speaking on Tower Hill. On the Monday morning I was called to the Principal's office to hear the words of the Principal resound in my ears "Lamb are you a devotee of Soper?!

That he remembered the illustration due to the name Soper (who he was not particularly fond of) and not my hard working preparation that people were starving to death was a little unnerving.

In relation to the above paragraph I will close with another illustration appropriate to Christmas. Many of you will recall a fine poem written by R.P. Weston and Bert Lee in 1940 called Braun Boots about Aunt Hannah's Funeral Day! It tells a story over 12 verses long about cousin Jim and 'What d'yer think 'e wore? I paraphrase!

*Why, brahn boots! I ask yer - brahn boots!
Fancy comin' to a funeral in brahn boots!
While all the rest
Wore decent black, and mourning suits
And he turns up in his brahn boots*

Jim is then chastised unmercifully for wearing brown boots. The moral to the song is of course summed up –

*In the graveyard we left Jim;
None of us said much to him
Yus, we all give 'im the bird,
Then by accident we 'eard*

*'E'd given 'is black boots to Jim Small,
A bloke wot 'ad no boots at all.
So p'raps Aunt Hannah doesn't mind;
She did like people who was good and kind.*

Hope you caught the Christmas Spirit from the above!!
A very happy and blessed Christmas to you all and let us pray for a peaceful New Year.

Jim

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Member's correspondence

You (and Sue) have done it again! Another splendid edition of news and views albeit tinged with sadness at the passing of long time friends but always with thankfulness for having known them and in many cases, served with them and having their own lives influenced by them. Others reveal the circumstances of their first exposure to YMCA, and ultimately to their decision to enter its full time service. While I have long recognised the fact, I still see significance in the number of folk who took this step via programmes such as Community Services's BBBF and General Services Industrial Hostels many going on to significant main stream placements in the wider Movement. As Kipling has it "The Glory of the Garden occupieth all who come" – and thanks be for all of them! With renewed thanks and every good wish. Reg.

Hello David

Neil Sjoberg here, writing on holiday in Scotland. We popped into Bonskeid house yesterday near Pitlochry. No longer YMCA but still haunting memories and a lovely place. We returned for holidays with the housekeeper B&B (Mrs McClaine) for many years.

ANNE THOMSON

Anne first joined YMCA as matron at Fairthorne Manor under Ron Harkness in about 1974. Apart from her attractive charisma she was a lovely and talented staff member.

In those days, French youngsters in particular used to come to Fairthorne to take advantage of the NHS. The queues at "sickbay" in the morning were huge and she had to process them for dentist, doctor and hospital (all unpaid for of course!)

She was always classily dressed and immaculate-very practical. Very energetic either unblocking a drain or decorating a room; never got anything on her hands or clothes. What a talent that is!

She also loved art and craft and established a kiln and pottery at Fairthorne.

She was good example of how unimportant money is if you have ingenuity. Once a coach arrived with shattered window. She stored the glass pieces and used them for glass sculpture with the campers through the kiln for months. She also helped me make up all the Golf Course furniture from bean cans and bamboo canes.

No one ever realised they were not expensive! Anne lived in Germany in the second world war as a little girl and I remember here telling me her house was next to a missile launching site-no one was aware in the village what went on there till the war was long over.

Sadly I lost touch with Anne after we went to Gaza. I believe she went to serve as matron with the YMCA supporting British Forces on the Rhine. She was a good friend.

I would be very grateful if you could pass on my email address to Tricia her daughter. Gaye and I would love to meet her again.

Neil Sjoberg

(Ed - Email addresses exchanged)



One of the first YMCA "Food Bank" Trucks servicing the troops in France a centenary ago in 1915. Serviced by The Forgotten Angels" of the YMCA Women's Auxiliary.



History in the making found on Facebook
- The YMCA receives the Olympic Cup in 1929

SOUTH WEST Y's RETIRED WEEK
Just to remind you that deposits of £40
per person are now due for our time at
Trelohan Manor next April - balance
due February 2016

Dates are 18 - 22 April 2016

Prices are £210, half board en-suite
or £180 half board, standard with a wash
basin and with a mid week day out.

Please let Margaret know (Tel 01752
773040) your preference when booking.

Cheques please to Margaret Libby, 1 Lyndrick
Road Hartley Plymouth PL3 5TA or if you prefer
to do a bank transfer let Margaret know and
she will give you the bank details.

CORRESPONDENCE

Can I please add my thoughts of Gordon Wickens to whom I was secretary during 1980s. I knew Gordon to be a very kind and considerate person.

As some of the Y professional staff have said he was dedicated to the YMCA in a quiet and caring way, while at the same time being extremely conscientious and meticulous in the work as legal advisor to the National Council.

He just went very quietly about each day, giving time to me on personal matters when I needed them and was also sought out by other National Council staff when they needed a few quiet minutes for thoughtful advice. I remember him with much affection.

Barbara MacDonald (Support Staff)

YMCA 'Unearthed'

"Time Team" of TV's "Yesterday" programme recently concentrated their archaeological research at Belton Park, nearby Grantham in Lincolnshire, the site of a large encampment set up in 1916 to accommodate the then newly formed Machine Gun Corps.

Armed with hi-tech deep radar, JCB's and the like, they surveyed a large area of apparently virgin parkland and established a pattern of hutments and utilities but little to authenticate previous usage – until about a meter deep, there emerged a pottery shard clearly emblazoned with the iconic YMCA Red Triangle.

They knew they were on the right track! A member of the team was able to enlighten others that the YMCA hut had been central to almost all military encampments at home and abroad in war time, providing respite and refreshment, most commonly staffed by volunteer ladies projecting a 'motherly' influence for (mostly) young recruits.

The YMCA 'Jaw Breaker' mugs, used in YMCA hutments and mobile tea cars were well known, welcomed and appreciated by countless service men and women and by civilians in war torn areas. YMCA history of caring service goes deep!

Reg Wake



Dear Friends
Greetings from the World YMCA .

As you may be aware the World YMCA in partnership with Japan Peace Boat is organising Peace Voyage to strengthen leadership for youth empowerment and peace building and to mobilise resources for supporting the change agent project of the World YMCA .

I am happy to share with you that together with APAY , YMCA Japan, YMCA Korea and Y's Men International Asia Area we are organising the 4th Peace Boat Voyage during 31 March to 8th April 2016 . The highlight of this voyage is the **FORUM ON GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP** and the get-together of YMCA families in the peace boat . A brochure of the programme is attached for your reference.

Besides strengthening leadership in the area of Global Citizenship , this voyage is aimed at raising resources for training the current cohort of Change agents . We would appreciate if you could support this initiative by sharing this unique program with all the local YMCAs and Y's Men club and encourage participation of YMCA members , well-wishers and family members . This is an intergenerational programme and people of all ages are welcome to participate.

You may contact Mr. Jose Varghese , Executive Secretary of the World YMCA : jose@ymca.int for registration and additional information.
Anticipating your support

Best regards
Johan Vilhelm Eltvik
Secretary General, World YMCAs

[Peace Boat - 2016 Presentation click here](#)
[Peace Boat - Registration click here](#)

"Dat Baby Jesus - He Makes me Laugh"

"I have set the Lord always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure." Psalm 16:8 and 9

Brennan Manning, in his book, **The Relentless Tenderness of Jesus**, tells of an experience he had at an airport. It was just before Christmas and he was in the Chicago airport waiting to get a flight to Texas for a week-end retreat. But because of a severe storm, he and thousands of others were not going anywhere. The flights were all delayed. Public address systems were blaring, people were at the ticket counter demanding a projected departure time, children were crying, some people were just sitting and staring.

Then he noticed a middle-aged black woman cradling a child in her arms and laughing. Manning asked her, "Would you mind telling me why you're so happy?"

"Sure," she said. "Christmas is coming and dat baby Jesus---He make me laugh."

According to the Psalm 16, v 8 and 9, focusing on Jesus at all times is the key to a happy and joyful heart. How about you?

During the Christmas season, our already busy life becomes more busy. Are you 'setting the Lord before you' today? Do you want to have a merry Christmas? Bring Jesus into all your activities. Talk to Him all day long. He will make you laugh!

**Father, you fill us with joy in your presence. Give us the grace to remember to enjoy your presence.
We want to laugh, Lord. Amen**

YMCA LAUNCHES WORLD'S BIGGEST EVER YOUTH RESEARCH

Dear YMCA friends,

Today is a very exciting day for the YMCA movement. After four years of dreaming and development. We have launched our YMCA One Million Voices Research and it is the biggest research of young people ever conducted!

Well done and thank you YMCAs! This could not have been done without you!

The YMCA set out to hear from the world's young people. To hear their views and to better understand their needs, with the view to helping give the young people of the world a voice. To achieve this collectively we reached out to young people aged 15-24 through local YMCAs across 55 countries. This Report speaks to the YMCAs heart for empowering young people, as well as detailing the professional research components.

[I encourage you to purchase copies of the Report - CLICK HERE - It is over 120 pages of fascinating content with a special price for the YMCA family.](#)

As part of today's launch you can;

- [Watch a tremendous video \(click here\)](#) that explains the Report's major findings



- [Read my public statement on the findings of the Report here](#)
- Read more on our website at : omv.ymca.int
- Follow #giveavoicelymca on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) feed

Over the next few weeks you will see launch events happening at YMCAs across England, Scotland, New Zealand, Australia, Ukraine and more.

Of course now the real work begins. Now we need to listen to the voices and to respond to this Research.

This will mean changing our strategies, updating our programmes and being creative to meet the challenges of serving young people for the long term future. All this hard work of the last four years means this Report cannot sit on a shelf.

You will continue to hear more about the Report throughout next year, as well as details of YMCA One Million Voices 2 – a wider and deeper study – launching mid-2016.

Thank you for your involvement in one of our most exciting initiatives ever. I hope you share my excitement and read, absorb and share widely the Report and its contents.

Warmest regards,

Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, Secretary General

