



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



MAY 2016

www.yretired.co.uk

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Dear friends and
colleagues
greetings**

This letter from the President reflects the Annual Report for 2015.

Members of the Y's Retired of the UK would wish to be aware that we have enjoyed the year under review without mishaps due to voluntary service from all who hold office and members for prompt payment of subscriptions.

We have been fortunate to have a committee of five executive members and four consultants who have been unanimous in decision making and exercising good practice in management of the Y's Retired affairs - not least financial! The wise increase in subscriptions as agreed following debate in 2015 and instituted 1st January 2016 augers well in maintaining a sound financial position for future development. We bear in mind committee members receive no remuneration but give of their time as volunteers in serving the needs of the Y's Retired of the UK. As shared in the Treasurer's Report we have met the Budgets set for 2015.

The Area Reunions have continued to be held in the South West, Scotland, Cambridge and am delighted to report that the late Sam Johnston initiated a new area meeting which we are presently referring to as the Southern Group and enjoyed two meetings - another is planned by one of our new members Blair Crawford. *Off the record Blair has invited enquiries from members in the Southern area to the third meeting which will be held in Bournemouth in the summer – contact email: jblairford@aol.com or tel:07785 286623.* Any member wishing to start a Reunion Group in their area please contact Vic Hills who will furnish the names and addresses of retired members residing near to them.

Communication. The Newsletter is our main form of communication with the Membership and Friends of the Y's Retired of the UK and here express appreciation to David Smith for his fine editorial. Extracts are published also in Bridges the newsletter of the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees (WFYR).

Loss by death (2015). We have been much saddened during the year to record colleagues who have passed away and here name: Brian Pears, David Belotti, George Reynolds, Eddie Brady, Richard Gooch, Phil Heath, Gordon Wickens and Les Yeates E&OE. We acknowledge with due reverence their service to the YMCA.

We give thanks and are indebted to the following. The Committee as listed below *, David Bennison (Independent Examiner of the Financial Accounts), Herts YMCA (distribution of the Newsletter), Rev Ron Ingamells (Pension Fund) and here record thanks to Stephen Milner in keeping in touch with the British Boys for British Farms scheme and developing reunions of their retirees. Included in this issue of the Newsletter are

reports from the Treasurer, Executive Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Scottish Group, Secours Speciaux/WFYR and Indian Retirees (UK).

The year under review has proved one of success in support of YMCA Retirees.

Committee Members 2015. President: Jim Lamb, Executive Secretary: Vic Hills, Honorary Treasurer: Ray Allen, Newsletter and Website Editor: David H Smith, Scottish Rep: Keith Rennie, Consultants – Sam Johnston, David Miller (Lay), Indian Affairs (UK) : Rupert George & Reg Wake.

Members are reminded that should they be interested in serving on the committee to contact Vic Hills, Executive Secretary. It is not an onerous piece of service!! Whilst preparing this report I have received the sad news of the passing of Sam Johnston and add this tribute.

The passing of Sam Johnston has come as a shock to those who have known or heard of this stalwart of the YMCA. His death after bravely fighting cancer over recent years was indicative of his nature. He gave of himself without reserve in all areas of life whether personal or nationally as the driving force in raising substantial -funds in the establishing of a National Memorial to the YMCA or counselling a young person in need of comfort or support.

Sam played his part as a consultant to the Y's Retired of the UK Committee as he did in service to the churches of Wesley and Dry Drayton Methodist Churches where he was pianist for the congregational singing.

We have all lost a friend, a colleague and a man devoted to his family and now live without his presence, his wry sense of humour, his contribution to debate and discussion but nothing takes away the positive memories of a true Christian gentleman.

Warm regards,
Jim Lamb President

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Member's correspondence

Dear David,

Many thanks for the newsletter, so good to see the YMCA world wide involved in supporting refugees. Exactly where Jesus wants us to be!! Delighted to hear news from many of the folk I used to know and work with some of them.!!

Sad to hear about those who passed away, they will be with their Lord one day.

Hope you are keeping well, God bless, **Stan (Wojcik)**.

Dear David,

We are away in the motorhome on the North Norfolk Coast with very iffy signal so have only just received the information about Sam's funeral. Fortunately I got the message Wednesday evening so we were able to pause for a while Thursday 25th Feb, above Kelling Heath, to be with every one in spirit, if not the flesh, and say a prayer.

I first met Sam in 1973 when I spent three months at West Bromwich YMCA as part of my college course and was very warmly welcomed, and supported by him. In later years he would always refer to me as "one of his lads"!! He leaves a big hole but will be enriching his new home in his own indomitable way I'm sure.

Anne and I are enjoying life in the motor home, when not on duty for the grandchildren. This year in June we will be celebrating our Golden Wedding Anniversary with family and friends and feel really blessed to have got this far !!

Some 26 years on from my heart attack we are supporting the British Heart Foundation and to raise funds I will be doing two 50 mile plus cycle rides. The first is the BHF Dorset ride on the 24th April from Queen Elizabeth's School, Wimborne and the second is the BHF London to Brighton ride in June. If you think this something that would be appropriate to share then donations can be made via the link www.justgiving.com/glensmith2016 or by texting GDSM54 £10 to 70070.

I trust that you and Sue are keeping well and again I would remind you that your efforts for us all are well appreciated, especially being in the firing line for bad news. It can't be easy.

Best wishes **Glen (Smith)**

Thanks for sharing the sad news David. As you say he is at rest with his Lord and Master,
God bless, **Stan Wojcik**.

Dear David

So shocked at that news which I will convey to Mervyn now. I did get to know Sam and Maureen unlike a lot of Mervyn's 'Y' colleagues. Thank you anyway .I guess it must have been sudden and unexpected.

R.I.P Sam and God grant Maureen His peace which passeth all understanding.

Bless you

Beryl and Mervyn (Moorehead)

Hello David

This is sad news, and he didn't get round to making contact with me so I guess he was too poorly.

I would really like to attend his funeral when it has been set so look forward to details of this.

Had he and Maureen moved recently because I did not have this Hampshire address - I had an address in Dry Drayton, Cambs which is where I sent their Christmas card as usual.

Jackie (Walker)

Dear David

We were very grateful that you were able to let us have early news of the passing of Sam Johnston and Alex Cloke. Sadly, February became a month of sad news for us, having heard of the passing of six people, including a family member.

Accordingly, we were unable to get to Sam's Celebration of Life Service, but Lenny Allen was able to represent West Bromwich YMCA (now YMCA Black Country) where Sam remained a Vice President. Sam came to West Bromwich from Liverpool YMCA around 1967 when the John Lees House building, with 70 single study bedrooms, was just above foundation level. The Sports Hall was then built and the new complex was officially opened in April 1970.

On the 5th April 1973 the foundation stone for the self catering residential block, Cadbury House was laid as phase 3 of the overall plan, with 48 Self Catering Units. These were the first purpose built Self-Catering Units for YMCA's to be constructed in Great Britain at a cost of £120,000.

These same buildings have been refurbished and extended during the last 12 months to create a multi million pound Western Gateway development into West Bromwich.

We have many good memories of Sam's time in West Bromwich and were pleased he was able to continue as a Vice President

In 1978 Sam moved to be regional Secretary in Anglia before moving to London to become National Secretary.

He was a Methodist Local Preacher and also served as a Magistrate in West Bromwich and Cambridge.

We were able to speak to Maureen by telephone and she outlined to us how Sam had lived so positively with cancer for over 20 years.

We look forward to keeping in touch through the Y's retired network.

Best wishes to you and Sue

Eric and Brenda (Moore)

Dear David,

So sorry to hear that Sam has passed away. He was a great YMCA Ambassador and will be sadly missed by all that knew him. He was a great supporter of Y's Retired and our re-unions in St Ives and in Cambridge will miss that Sam Johnston wit and humour as well as his wisdom. A lovely man, my condolences go out to his wife Maureen and his family.

Regards Ray Allen

Dear David,

It was of great sadness when I learned of the passing of Sam. I have many happy memories of our times together in the YMCA and can recall clearly

Doreen and I meeting him and Maureen once again in in Gran Canary Islands many years ago.

Sam's Death was quite a shock to me as I had receive a very comforting letter from him and Maureen just a few weeks ago on the death of my wife Doreen.

May I take this opportunity of thanking every one from many parts of the Movement for their prayers and comforting words on the sudden passing of Doreen. They have brought me peace.

Bob McConkey

Dear David,

Thank you for passing on the sad news that Sam has died. He was a great man and respected by all.

And followed so quickly by Alex. I worked with him when he was at the National Council before he joined us at London Central and then moved on to Guildford Y. Two men who serving our great Movement well.

Col (Mawby)



WEST BROMWICH YMCA NOW CALLED YMCA BLACK COUNTRY

Pride as £9.5 million YMCA building unveiled. A new £9.5 million YMCA centre has been unveiled in the Black Country – seven years after building work started.

The facility in Carter's Green is home to 96 housing units for vulnerable adults, a £200,000 gym, youth zone, fitness and wellbeing centre and enterprise, business and education facilities.

Work on the site started in 2008. Parts of the old building have been refurbished and new parts have also been built. It also features a new not-for-profit coffee shop called Cielo, who has been co-founded by Linda and Nick Castle. The first phase of the YMCA Western Gateway scheme was completed in September 2011 which saw the Children and Family Centre Nursery opened.

Steve Clay, chief executive officer at YMCA Black Country, said: "It feels fantastic that the work has finally been completed after what has been a long journey which has involved many twists and turns.

"We have attempted to offer a wide variation of top of the range services in a friendly environment.

"We had three aims with this transformation – to completely revamp the community services we offer, for the quality of that service to be high in every aspect of what we do and for the building to be iconic, catch people's attention and utilise its location as a gateway into the town centre. I'm very happy to say we've more than achieved all three goals."

The YMCA has operated in West Bromwich for more than 127 years. Its first premises were built in St Michael Street in 1888 before relocating to Carter's Green in the 1960s. Clive Jessup, whose company Jessup Brothers helped complete the building work, said: "Jessup became involved in the eleventh hour of the scheme but as soon as I saw this opportunity I knew it had the team to deliver.

"We would like to thank all the local suppliers as this absolutely amazes me. It really is a collaboration and a thank you to all the hard work everybody has done. "YMCA have been a very helpful and understanding client. "If this transformation doesn't inspire the people of West Bromwich then I don't know what will "

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome into membership Clyde Binfield and Ian Green - two high flyers of YMCA England over many years.

Should you know of others who have recently left the YMCA through retirement or through change of employment after seven years service, then do invite them to join Y's Retired of UK

Hut was an entertaining godsend to Crowborough troops during WW1



The Waterloo Hut, pictured during the First World War

THE Waterloo hut was a YMCA canteen which was a godsend to the thousands of troops who were encamped at Crowborough during the First World War.

It stood on the corner of Crowborough Hill and Croham Road – a long wooden building surrounded by a rickety paling fence. Even after the end of the war the Waterloo Hut continued to serve the wider community of [Crowborough](#). It was the venue for whist drives, dances, concerts, and even for film shows, in competition with the Picture House in Croft Road.

The hut was large enough to accommodate all the people who normally attended these events. But it was too small for the numbers who turned up for a Conservative-inspired show in January, 1926.

'Mrs Jarley's Political Waxworks' drew so many Tory supporters that, as the Kent and Sussex Courier reported, "the hut was crowded to its utmost capacity and large numbers were unable to gain admission".

The entertainment, inspired by the Dickensian proprietress of a travelling show, was organised by the Crowborough branch of the Women's Conservative Association. The stage had to be enlarged because of the size of the cast, but the reporter noted that "the lighting and scenic effects were utilised to good effect".

"They were surrounded by a number of living beings – all local residents – who were garbed in appropriate costumes representing the Dominions and other integral parts of the British Empire in addition to Russia and Germany.

"They seldom uttered a word. but acted as though they were actually made of wax, and contained within their frames a mechanism to make the figures move artificially".

"Each waxwork was introduced by Mrs Jarley, who at times interspersed her remarks with personal testimonies. The models were made to work, showing how John Bull and his children were given their daily wants, but the Communist Party interfered with the mechanism, with the result that the wrong effect was produced.

At the end the audience sang Land Of Hope And Glory (what else?) and this was followed by "a beautiful tableau of Britannia surrounded by her dominions, and the singing of Rule, Britannia."

So the curtain fell on Mrs Jarley and her waxworks. After the hut was demolished the site was vacant for some years. In 1962 Crowborough's first purpose-built library was opened there, and years later the building became the Town Hall.

MINUTES OF THE Y's RETIRED OF UK EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - MARCH 2016

1. PARTICIPANTS:

Jim Lamb (President), Ray Allen (Honorary Treasurer), Rupert George, David Miller, Keith Rennie, David Smith (Newsletter / Website Editor), Reg Wake, Vic Hills (Secretary).

2. PROCESS:

Documents had been circulated electronically to all participants for consideration and comment. The matters identified were subsequently approved and received with unanimous support.

3. MINUTES OF THE 2015 AGM:

As previously circulated were approved and filed in the Minute Book for reference.

4. MATTERS ARISING:

The following were approved:
The appointment of Keith Rennie as the duly appointed Scottish Group representative to the Executive as agreed by the Scottish Group in May 2015 was ratified with pleasure.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

As previously published in The March Newsletter and circulated was warmly received and appended to the minutes. Jim was thanked for leading Y's Retired through the year, guiding, and stirring our grey matters' in his President's Letter. Plus representing Y's Retired as appropriate at services to celebrate the lives of those now departed and convening one of the regional gatherings.

6. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2015:

Copies of the Audited Statements were circulated, and received with approval and appended to the minutes. Appreciation was expressed and recorded to David Bennison for his continued voluntary Auditing services.

7. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Appreciation was expressed to Honorary Treasurer Ray Allen for his quiet efficiency who continues to oil the wheels of our obligations and intentions and ensuring that Y's Retired is able to service those with the money required. His report which had been circulated raised the following items which were approved:-

- 2015 had seen a slight surplus of £330.00, maintaining a balance of £3117.94.
- 83 members paid their subscriptions in 2015, a decrease by 2 since 2014, although 3 new members had joined. 76 paid by Standing Order.
- Contributions to Secours Speciaux of £1095 included the missed subvention from 2014 (as noted last year) of £200, plus 2015 of £200.
- The subvention of £100 to the World Fellowship of YMCA's Retirees was delayed by the bank and has been provided for payment in 2016. Had the £100 been paid the surplus would be £230.00.
- Expenses this year only came to £30 which was the administration fee for the transfer of the Secours Speciaux donation.
- Donations of £260 to the Trust Fund and a donation of £50 to the General Fund.

8. BUDGET 2016:

- Secours Speciaux donation to remain at £200,
- World Fellowship of Y's Retired donation to remain at £100,
- Administration - £300 (doubled – part of the reason being the 'subs' increase 1st Jan 2016,
- Trust Fund budget to remain the same at £250,
- The implementation of the new Subscription of £20 as from 1st January 2016, moved by the President and seconded by the Executive Secretary was ratified.

9. MEMBERSHIP:

The Executive Secretary was warmly thanked for his efficient handling of the Y's Retired of the UK affairs over the year under review, his report included:

Reg' Wake was thanked for his continuing contact on our behalf with Secours Speciaux and WFYR and noted with pleasure the reports summarised at item 12.

The Member's Register varied from that minuted last year; (2014 - 130 plus spouses), to 2015 – 128 plus spouses. There are 10 lay members, 6 overseas and 4 "courtesy" contacts re WFYR and Secours Speciaux.

10. NEWSLETTER/WEBSITE:

David Smith and Sue (his wordsmith) for eight years as editor of the Y's Retired of UK newsletter (which they compile, publish and distribute six bi-monthly Newsletters per year), were especially thanked for their work. Now nearing its 50th edition which keeps the membership (and other interested parties from far and wide) informed of current affairs affecting the YMCA Movement, comments from colleagues and friends. Occasionally member's share where they are in their retirement, (David would like more, - so would we who read the Newsletter!). David asks "please do share with us any new adventures you have undertaken or experiences that have become part of your daily routine"; I would love to hear from you and perhaps have a jpeg picture so that others can remember the smiling face which is yours. Just send to: ses.dhs@hotmail.co.uk

As in previous reports, David commented "there has always been an emphasis on communication. In each bi-monthly Newsletter there are details of the website which is regularly updated: www.yretired.co.uk All the past and present Newsletters are featured on it, under the heading "Newsletter Archive." The Memorial pictures are featured there in all their glory".

David has been the conduit of information and notices of members and friends who have died. International colleagues who are part of the World Federation of Y's Retired (WFYR), received our UK news and voiced their gratitude, with some articles being highlighted in "Bridges," the WFYR quarterly Newsletter. Thanks were recorded to South & Central Herts YMCA, the CEO Guy Foxell, and Lorraine Stocken for their willingness, time and help, to print and distribute hard copy versions (for those not on email) which without their co-operation would not be distributed. South & Central Herts YMCA kindly fulfil this task as their donation to Y's Retired, which enabled the Officers to allocate a higher annual proportion of funds to Secours Speciaux.

11. SCOTLAND REPORT : Keith Rennie's report.

a) At the end of December 2015 we have a group of 24 of which 21 are Retired Secretaries and 3 retired YMCA Office bearers.

b) The first meeting of the year was held a Broughty Ferry YMCA 7th May with 9 attending. We had our normal informal round the table chat and a short business meeting when we looked at Y's Retired UK accounts and agreed the annual fee being raised to £20. Concern was expressed at the large balance in the Secours Speciaux account. Speakers included, Kerry Reilly Scottish National Secretary & her vision for the future; Jim Thompson spoke on the 40th anniversary of The Fall of Saigon and the work of the Saigon YMCA and the Chairman of Broughty Ferry YMCA.

c) The second meeting was held in Perth on 3rd October at the invitation of YMCA Scotland who were holding their Annual Business Meeting that day. Regrettably only 5 attended and heard Paul Smillie who had been invited by YMCA Scotland talk about YMCA Pension Scheme. This was followed by meeting a group of young people from all over Scotland who were looking at the history of the Scottish Movement and were keen to hear of our involvement with the YMCA. This was followed by the National Annual Business meeting where our group's members Stewart McCrae, Keith McIntosh and Keith Rennie were presented with the George Williams Medal for their long service with the YMCA. The Rev. Colin McAulay's application as a member nominated director to the YMCA Trustee Company was accepted. It is good to know that we now have two members of Y's Retired of the UK looking after our interests.

d) There were 3 bereavements recorded during the year.

12. SECOURS SPECIAUX (SS) and WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF Y's RETIRED (WFYR):

Reg's report provided a historical scenario of SS (which is included for newer members):- "the majority of older retirees will have been familiar with SS purposes, perhaps as far back as BSA/AOS conferences of the 50's/60's but especially so since the foundation of the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees (WFYR) in 1994 when it was resolved that support for SS be a priority goal.

As foundation members of WFYR, such priority was readily adopted by the Y's Retired committee and is current. Through time, annual subventions on general funds and later, approval for a levy of 50% on membership subscriptions, provided a pattern of contribution to SS which continues. Additionally, occasional special appeals, for example to subsidise travel for delegates to WFYR and/or World Council gatherings, have been well supported by our membership at large".

Extracts from Bonnie Mairs (SS committee chair) report from The World Emergency Fund Meeting are included below:

1," *In 2014, six national YMCA movements contributed to the Secours Speciaux fund. Donors were Canada, UK, Germany, the Phillipines and the USA. Part of the Scottish YMCA's contribution was in memory of John Knox. Grants totalled 5,118 Swiss Francs, The year balance was 362,888.80 SF.*

2. *"The fund has no expenses; the World Alliance covers the staff time, bank charges and occasional conference calls."*

3. *"The committee has received heartfelt 'thank you' letters from YMCA retirees who have received grants. We do not publish the names of recipients in order to respect their privacy."*

4." *Donors may ask why we seek funds when the fund has a positive balance. It is impossible to predict need. In a recent year we made grants of 90,000 SF. The World Council meeting agreed to maintain a minimum of 250,000 SF in the fund and try to increase it. I think we are doing quite well, though we would like to increase the number of national movements supporting the fund."*

5."The SS committee is very much aware that inadequate retirement provision is one of the reasons we receive requests for emergency support. Retirees concerned simply cannot manage any emergency".

6. *"The committee agreed the fund will allocate up to 30% of its assets for requests that are strictly retirement issues, such as a onetime grant at retirement for someone with no pension. The balance of the fund, at least 70% of the assets, will be used for "traditional" emergencies. The majority of requests are for medical emergencies but we have responded to other cases caused by death, natural disaster or national political or economic crisis. "*

7. *"Special thanks to the donor YMCAs and individuals who have made contributions. You are helping your colleagues who have worked for years for the YMCA, as you have. Because of circumstances beyond their control, they find themselves in need, and we are fortunate in being able to respond. Your gifts are helping your brothers and sisters in their retirement. On their behalf, I thank you."*

13. Any Other Business. None were reported.



CAMBRIDGE REUNION LUNCH

6TH JULY 2016 - 12 NOON FOR 12.30PM

Those members who attended last year will recall we met the same week. The date was helpful in that it did not clash with school holidays! I have been asked for early confirmation of a date for entry in personal diaries.

It is appreciated that the confirming of numbers able to attend is of paramount importance when booking a suitable restaurant venue for meals and ask for your support in early confirmation of attendance. Please would you respond by email, post or telephone whichever is most convenient. I share that I will be away attending my eldest daughter's wedding in Auckland New Zealand and at the request of my grandson Disneyworld in Hong Kong between 29th March and 16th April hence another reason for early responses please!

This is an invitation to all members within striking distance or further afield by car, train or shanks pony. Also copied to David Smith, Newsletter Editor for appropriate publicity.

The venue will be sent to all attending at a later date. Possibly Girton Golf Club which has proved an excellent place in previous years. You will be warmly welcomed together with spouses on the 6th July 2016 the only cost being that of the meal, drinks from the bar extra.

Confirmations will be acknowledged if not before I leave after I return and recover from Disneyworld Hong Kong!!

Warm regards,

Jim Lamb – Cambridge Reunion Lunch Organiser
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Tel: 01223 440228 Email: j.lamb22@outlook.com

HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY TO DEREK SHEPPARD



Dear All,

Thank you Vic for the last of the papers from Ray and David. It is good to see that our finances are in good order, also an excellent report from David. I am happy to approve all the AGM papers.

I think David with the help of Sue has the most difficult task of all, producing the newsletters, a great effort. We have a good Executive Team who all play their part for the benefit of Y's Retired.

With kind regards,

Keith (Rennie)

ALEX CLOKE 5TH MARCH 2016



I am sure we all have a story to tell about Alex Cloke. He was that kind of guy.

So can I ask you to share your story with Pat. Not today but go home and write it down, post or email is fine. You see I want Alex's much loved grandchildren to know much more of the man whose DNA is theirs, to know more of the man who loved them and prayed for them, spoke often to me of his hopes for them.

On occasions like this we often leave amazed that we knew so little about a man we thought we knew so well. Only Jesus knows us as we really are and still loves unconditionally and without restraint. And so it is with Alex.

Did you know that Alex had the Status, not rank, of a Lieutenant Colonel in the British Army. Why? Because Alex had strategy responsibility for over 20 YMCA Unit serving our troops in BAOR plus two centres serving our guys in Cyprus. Flying Air Troops out of RAF Brize Norton was all part of the job. If time could permit I could tell you of adventures with Alex in New York, Chicago, East Berlin, Chile, London Central YMCA, glorious Guildford and beyond.

Alex was Chair of the British Urban Group often referred to as the BUG group. This prestigious gathering of the Chief Officers drawn from the 25 largest YMCA's across 5 nations was hosted by Alex twice a year at his much loved Dunford House, at one time another of his responsibilities.

On occasions we were invited to attend gathering of our peers drawn from a across the world. The YMCA is the world's largest NGO active in over 90 countries serving well over 125 million people a year. Our first conference was East Berlin. I can tell you we felt privileged to be invited to attend.

Alex asked me to arrange cheap transport. Our unmarked plane took off from a small airfield in England. Flown by a crew from Uzbekistan cabin service was a mars bar and a can of coke. Today we would call it Ryan Air. We landed closer to the Polish border than Berlin. My companions Alan Chick and Graham Hobbs complained about our journey but Alex remarked, when hearing how cheap the return deal was, 'You know, this budget transport could catch on'.

Seriously he could read the signs of the times.... "Two men look through prison bars, one sees the mud the other the stars." Alex saw the diamonds in the mud, he saw what you, me, us, could be in Christ, he saw potential when others saw write offs. He saw opportunities brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems.

Anyway we got to our hotel in East Berlin. Whist the rest of us were checking our rooms Alex was checking the guest list. Over supper he informed us that it would be wise to miss the evening session and meet a stranger at the bar.

You see Alex had met Tony Martino, the CEO of one of the largest YMCA Operations in the United States and in a few moments had not only ascertained Tony's interest in developing social housing across North America but Alex had convinced him that his college from England were the YMCA's leading experts on special needs housing for young people at risk. Well we thought we were anyway.

Four months later Graham Hobbs, Manchester YMCA, Alan Chick St Helens and me from YMCA Norfolk left for New York and Chicago YMCA's. This time we flew Virgin Air. Alex was taking no chances.

Ladies and Gentlemen...you get to know a person if you have to sleep with them. The New York YMCA was a challenging environment. Alan shared a room with Graham so I had Alex. The only man I know who, after his evening devotions snored in tongues. In this New York YMCA, sharing a room was for protection not for convenience. The Night Manager suggested if you wanted the toilet in the middle of the night (the loos were at the end of the corridor) go with a friend never on your own. It's in situations like that that you learn who to trust.

Chicago YMCA was completely different. First class hotel, excellent food, tight business like schedule, up at 5.50, swim (by the way Alex was a Championship swimmer in his youth) shower, then breakfast then the car arrived at 7am. By the third day we were exhausted.

Then on the last night a most amazing thing happened. We were taken by our host to an upmarket, high heeled, down town bar. Dripping with beautiful people. We were shown to exclusive seats behind the red rope all of us except Alex. We had lost him!!

Soon we heard him down at the Bar High Fiving it with cool guys shaking hands with the in crowd. Eventually he returned to our bewildered table still with his orange juice in hand.

Explanations were demand.

The guys at the bar were night club owners from Guildford and very, very surprised to see Alex and not a little embarrassed to know that GOD had sent a guiding angel from England to remind them that our Lord is all seeing. There were good times and there were hard times.

YMCA ministry is and should be front line, boundary pushing, fighting, not just flesh and blood but powers and authorities, often the Housing Corporation, the Department of Employment, the Criminal Justice System as well as the drug pushers and predators.

And in any battle there are casualties. Alex asked me if I had any super skilled, courageous and committed workers looking to progress professionally. I gave him my best, Nick Stanley. Alex wept telling me how Nick had been killed on YMCA duty stabbed by a resident. Alex knew that you spell FAITH as RISK.

Alex could find inspiration in the darkest of places. Supporting Bob Metcalf gloriously dying of cancer yet still striving to finish the rebuild of Lakeside YMCA so that others could find a safe sanctuary and rediscover the grace of Christ to forgive themselves and return unto HIS service.

Alex was canny with money. He even demanded his \$1 Senior Citizen discount on the New York ferry. How embarrassing. Yet he invested recklessly of his time, his prayers, his energy and all that he had in those he was called to serve, residents, the homeless, the jobless, the young offender, his staff.

Ladies and Gentlemen, if that is the only investment that pays out on earth and guarantees a return in heaven, then Alex is quid's in.

John Drake



Y'S RETIRED SECRETARY'S NOTES FOR THE AGM OF 2015 HELD IN MARCH 2016

One complete calendar year on in the role I can comment that it provides highs and lows. As Reg' had advised me the most activity (other than the AGM papers) was associated with the passing of colleagues. This year has certainly born that out (if you will accept the mixed metaphor). Some were very sudden and tragic losses, others after long periods of suffering. All well lived who left their marks on the lives of those they come in contact with.

Not least my own and of yours too as David has written The Newsletter, which he and Sue continue to compile and distribute an admirable 6 times per year to keep us all up to date. Jim has again led us through the year stirring our grey matter in his President's Letter and representing Y's Retired as appropriate at Services to celebrate the lives of now departed and Regional gatherings.

Ray as the quietly efficient back room "boy" continues to oil the wheels of our obligations and intentions and making sure that we are able to service those with the money required. I am interested to see what impact the subscription increase has made. And how many of our colleagues have/haven't increased theirs.

I know of at least two (through conversations at recent meetings) who had not yet amended their Direct Debts! I am pleased to note that Reg' is back in control of his computer and has furnished us with reports of Secours Speciaux and WFYR. He was on good form when we recently met.

Mary and I were able to attend our first Regional gathering at Cambridge and later our second at The Southern Region lunch at Milford -on- Sea in September. Both instigated by Sam Johnston - who's service we were able to attend last week along with at least 22 other YM folks (wives and partners). This is my count of those I recognised - I'll attach my list, below so that you can check and add to if you know of others I missed. A fitting tribute to such an energetic - even in retirement - YM leader and colleague/friend.

Although not yet a member of our retired fellowship - Andy Winter convened a Story Telling Day, for those not able to attend Phil Heath's life celebration service in Brixham. We were able to drive up to Banbury and share some of our "Phil" stories. What a lovely idea, which was new to us.

The regional gatherings have been fun, enjoyable occasions at which Mary and I were able to catch up with folk - some of whom we had not seen for many years. I would encourage all to make the journey - if they can - to their nearest one. Or spend a few days at the St Ives gathering in April. We hear good reports but have not been able to attend yet.

LEAVERS AND JOINERS

Members who died during the year.

DAVID BELLOTTI - Aug-15
EDDIE BRADY - March/April 2015
RICHARD GOOCH - Advised of passing on 17th Dec 2015
PHIL HEATH - Jul-15
BRIAN PEARS - Sept' 2015
GEORGE REYNOLDS - Advised of passing Dec 2015
GORDON WICKENS, OBE - Sep-15
LES YEATES - Advised of passing in March 2015

Spouses who died during this year.
DOREEN Mc CONKEY - Wife of Bob died on 15th Dec 2015

Notified - but not on Y's Retired list

Ruth Edwards (ex of Manchester YMCA on retirement in 1983) died on 5-12-15 I had no previous record - notified via Isabelle Kaye.

Margaret Hart wife of George Hart (previously deceased) who died on 1st July 2015

Colin Campbell Williams of Conington, Cambridgeshire, died at home aged 73 years on Tuesday June 30th 2015.

We were pleased to invite the following into Membership during the year:-

BLAIR CRAWFORD
ROBERT KELSO
BRENDA MOORE (Lay Trustee)
ERIC MOORE (Lay Trustee)
LYNDA VOYSEY
PHIL WILLERTON

MEMBER'S REGISTER

The Member's Register is therefore varied by the above from that minuted last year; (2014 - 130 plus spouses), to 2015 - 129 plus spouses. There are 10 lay members, 6 overseas and 4 "courtesy" contacts re WFYR and Secours Speciaux

SCOTTISH REPRESENTATION

It is pleasing to note that Keith Rennie who had volunteered to become the interim Scot's contact was confirmed as the Scotland Y's Retired representative at their own Annual Meeting in May 2015.

IRISH and WELSH REPRESENTATION

I noted last year that our President and I were endeavouring to find contacts with the two respective National Councils in an endeavour to contact past and prospective Y retirees. Despite communications little progress has so far been made, but we have not given up.

Vic Hills. ***March 2016***

Y's Retired attendees meeting together at Sam Johnston's funeral

Stephen Milner	Hannah Milner
Geoff Cooper	Jan Cooper
Reg Wake	John Drake
David Smith	Sue Smith
Vic Hills	Mary Hills
Roger Hunt	Elaine Hunt
Lenny Allen	Jim Lamb
Norman Owen	Janet Hopkins
Ron Ingamells	Graham Clarke
Ian Green	Paul Smillie
Jackie Walker	Chris Batten
Derek Sheppard	Maureen Sheppard
David Pendle	Peter Clarke
Blair Crawford	

Scenario:

The majority of older retirees will have been familiar with SS purposes, perhaps as far back as BSA/AOS conferences of the 50's/60's but especially so since the foundation of the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees (WFYR) in 1994 when it was resolved that support for SS be a priority goal. As foundation members of WFYR, such priority was readily adopted by the Y's Retired committee and is current. Through time, annual subventions on general funds and later, approval for a levy of 50% on membership subscriptions, provided a pattern of contribution to SS which continues. Additionally, occasional special appeals, for example to subsidise travel for delegates to WFYR and/or World Council gatherings, have been well supported by our membership at large.

For sums transferred to World Council for SS, see audited Statement of Accounts for our last financial year.

Update: (Extracts from latest report of World Alliance Emergency Fund (SS) per Bonnie Mairs (SS committee chair]

1." In 2014, six national YMCA movements contributed to the Secours Speciaux fund. The donors were Canada, UK, Germany, the Phillipines and the USA. Part of the Scottish YMCA's contribution was in memory of John Knox. The fund made grants totalling 5,118 Swiss Francs, The year balance was 362,888.80 SF.

2. "The fund has no expenses charged against its balance as the World Alliance covers the staff time , bank charges and occasional conference calls."

3. "The committee has received heartfelt 'thank you' letters from YMCA retirees who have received grants. We do not publish the names of recipients in order to respect their privacy."

4." Donors may ask why we seek funds when the fund has a positive balance. It is impossible to predict need. In a recent year we made grants of 90,000 SF. At the World Council meeting in the USA, the Secretary General advised the SS committee to continue to maintain a minimum of 250,000 SF in the fund and to try to increase it, I think we are doing quite well, though we would like to increase the number of national movements supporting the fund."

5."The SS committee is very much aware that inadequate retirement provision is one of the reasons we receive requests for emergency support. Retirees concerned simply cannot manage any emergency".

6." The committee has agreed that the fund will allocate up to 30% of its assets for requests that are strictly retirement issues, such as a onetime grant at retirement for someone with no pension. The balance of the fund, at least 70% of the assets, will be used for "traditional" emergencies. The majority of requests are for medical emergencies but we have responded to other cases caused by death, natural disaster or national political or economic crisis. "

7."Special thanks to the donor YMCAs and individuals who have made contributions. You are helping your colleagues who have worked for years for the YMCA, as you have. Because of circumstances beyond their control, they find themselves in need, and we are fortunate in being able to respond. Your gifts are helping your brothers and sisters in their retirement. On their behalf, I thank you."

Reg V Wake

"YMCA working for Refugees and Asylum Seekers"

11-13 March 2016

"Ernst Sillem Hoeve"

Den Dolder (The Netherlands)

Conference Statement

Approximately 70 YMCA leaders from 16 countries met from 11.-13. March 2016 in the Netherlands to exchange experiences in their work with young refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and migrants in their countries, and to explore new initiatives and new projects for future years.

This conference was a joint initiative of YMCA Europe (www.ymcaeurope.com) and YMCA of the Netherlands (www.ymca.nl).

The YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) in Europe is an inclusive ecumenical Christian organization where young people can grow and develop in body, mind and spirit. It works in more than 45 countries in Europe.

In the context of this work the primary focus of the YMCA is in the work with children and young people.

Conference delegates recognize that:

- wars and other global challenges are increasing tension in Europe and in the world. This leads to many young people searching for safe places and a better future.
- this causes large scale migration, that will continue for many years, asking for an increased response from society.
- young refugees and asylum seekers arriving in new societies are a special vulnerable group that requires specific attention.
- the YMCA has a longstanding tradition and a good reputation in its work with and for refugees and asylum seekers.
- the YMCA is available and willing to deliver support in emergency situations and helping refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons to integrate in societies in Europe, and support them in building a new future.
- National governments are inclined to see refugees and asylum seekers as a "logistical" issue and that the YMCA can deliver complementary support to develop young refugees and asylum seekers to become European citizens and full members of their new societies.

Therefore the participants in this conference recommend:

- YMCAs in Europe to join forces in developing programmes for young refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons to stimulate integration in the different countries.
- to create spaces in order to enable co-operation, sharing experiences and developing new initiatives across Europe.
- YMCAs in Europe, in coordination with YMCA Europe and YMCA World to make representation to European institutions, the United Nations and other relevant agencies to offer support in assisting young refugees and asylum seekers across Europe.
- YMCA Europe to develop project proposals together with the National YMCAs in Europe, to be delivered by national and local YMCAs.
- that YMCA Europe advocates on issues expressed in this statement.

Den Dolder (The Netherlands),
13. March 2016.

This statement will be sent to all national YMCAs in Europe; to the other YMCA Area organizations and to the World Alliance of YMCAs.

TRIBUTES TO SAM JOHNSTON



What a shock! To hear of passing on of Sam Johnston OBE who was onetime National General Secretary of YMCA of England. Indeed the labourer's task is over.

David, in these moments of great sorrow and grief, this comes with words of heartfelt sympathy to his family and prayers for the soul of their departed loved one. May the Almighty God give him a resting place. To God be the glory! Shalom!

**Brother Jonathan Quayefio-Mexico
Y's Retired-Ghana YMCA.**

Dear Friends

Sadly I shall not be able to attend the service of thanksgiving for dear Sam owing to my restricted mobility. Sam was very special to many of us both as a devoted servant of the YMCA and as a personal friend.

I shall always remember with gratitude the help he gave to our son Andrew in a critical situation which threatened his confidence and career ambitions. And of course his support for lay membership of Y's Retired and helping institute the Cambridge gatherings.

I shall be joining you all on Thursday in giving thanks for Sam's life and friendship as well as his service to the Lord through the YMCA. I have written to Maureen.

Warm personal regards to all.

Professor David (Miller)

SINCERE THANK YOU TO ISOBEL KAYE

President Jim wrote to Isobel on behalf of the Y's Retired of the UK, to express appreciation and thanks for the outstanding service she has rendered during the time she was employed by YMCA England sorting out the needs of YMCA staff as they became retirees, and since, from the 'Pensions office'.

Members of the YMCA Pensions Fund have reason to be thankful that their pensions have been efficiently managed in their retirement. They all would wish to express their thanks for the helping hand of Isobel starting and during retirement, which has our lives easier knowing the future is financially secure.

Now its time for Isobel to enjoy retirement and may the future hold much happiness to her and her family.

Renewed thanks

Warm regards,

Jim (Lamb)

We are celebrating the life of Sam Johnston a stalwart of the YMCA and no means least the Y's Retired of the UK! As President I offer sincere condolences on behalf of the Y's Retired of the UK to Maureen and her family

Each of us have different images of Sam for he was a friend to all and to my knowledge enemy of none!

It was my good fortune to enter the service of the YMCA as a career at the same time as Sam and if I were to add the years of full time service and the years since retirement with membership of the Y's Retired of the UK it comes to about 40 years of knowing Sam Johnston not just as a colleague but as a person. We never lived in each-others pockets as close friends as the saying goes but we always maintained a valuable relationship and apart from the annual conferences plus numerous other YMCA meetings I refer to one in particular!

Immediately before the opening of the new Milton Keynes YMCA Sam was on behalf of the English National Council of YMCA's one of the main negotiators with the Milton Keynes Borough Council and the Milton Keynes Development Corporation in relation to establishing a YMCA with 132 residential flats of a high calibre in that brave new city. He had to arrange the Interviewing Committee for the new post of General Secretary, I became that person but to this day I am thankful that Sam was not on the Interviewing Committee! Otherwise I might not have been appointed!

A further recollection I have and here ask Maureen and her family to close their ears for Sam blighted my life forever. As two long time Methodists we were attending a National Conference in the early days of the young Sam Johnston and Jim Lamb and as I recall Sam arranged but I paid for our first two half pints of beer! Whilst it was a happy occasion I noticed out of the corner of my eye another colleague (Methodist) well known for being teetotal was observing our actions!

Sam & Maureen retired to Cambridge as my wife and I did. We were all regular members of Wesley Methodist Church. Here he used his pastoral skills with members and in particular with new members many were students moving to the city and Cambridge University, he played the piano for Dry Drayton Methodist Church for occasional morning services.

Our lives are somewhat diminished with sadness for we appreciate that we have lost a friend, a man who loved his family, a man who loved his work giving of himself in service to others, a man who sincerely believed in the words of John 17 verse 21 and adopted by the YMCA as its' logo. Jesus had just crossed the brook and entered the Garden of Gethsemane and prayed on behalf of his disciples, quote; "....That they all may be one....that the world may believe..." Sam so believed. The memory of a true Christian gentleman is ours!

**Jim Lamb
President**