



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

**NOVEMBER 2019**

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



Dear David,

Celebration 175 has come and gone and, from what I observed during my two days there, the young people, of which there was a preponderance, celebrated with a joyful will. Having said that, the more serious presentations were also given appreciative attention. You will be hearing more of the 'Celebration' from others who attended the entire event.

My remit was to attend and participate in two sessions of the European Working Group on Refugees, Migrants and Displaced Persons which grew out of a Conference on this issue in 2016 in the Netherlands. Firm guidelines for the Group were laid down then and endorsed by the European Alliance. Critically, determined leadership has been provided throughout by Ed Eggink, former President of the European Alliance who worked extremely hard to ensure that the allotted sessions were informative and encouraging. These sessions were designed as meetings of the Working Group which consists of about twenty persons but upwards of two hundred persons attended each.

The agenda began with a video on refugee work in Greece which showed YMCA staff and volunteers literally working at the waters edge with refugees from Syria and the resettlement assistance programmes which resulted there followed a presentation from the United Nations International Organisation for Migration, a discussion on the Refugee Resolution passed at the World Council at Chiangmai last year and which was led by Germany and the World Alliance staff person now responsible. There was a further presentation by the YMCA of Thessaloniki of quite remarkable work undertaken by a local association. Finally, there was the launch of the YMCA Europe data base for work with Refugees led by Stuart Buchanan of Ireland.

The second session heard reports from the Spanish YMCA of work with migrants, from Esslingen in Germany of its 'Learning by Doing' programme for refugees, programmes for refugees in YMCAs in North Down, Ireland and an extraordinary presentation on co-operation between the YMCA's of Lebanon and Finland. This involvement marked a crossing from Europe into a Middle Eastern nation where one in four persons is a refugee and where the YMCA has an unequalled record of service to displaced. The session ended with a quite remarkable report on the work of the Ukraine YMCA with some of the 1,500,000 internally displaced persons in their country.

No report can capture the commitment of the largely young people who are pushing this European YMCA initiative with refugees, migrants and displaced persons. One thing is certain. It is a commitment which is now established and a template to be copied elsewhere in the YMCA world.

**Jim (Thomson)**



Good afternoon David

The 6th YMCA British Boys for British Farms Reunion was held on Wednesday 5 June 2019 at Adam Henson's Cotswold Farm Park when 20 former BBBF boys attended with partners and friends making up a group of 40.

We met at 9.30 am for morning coffee. Adam Henson and his team made us very welcome and gave us a short introductory talk on the Farm Park. This started with Adam Henson's father Joe saving and rearing rare breeds and then opening the Park to the public.

We were able to go around the Farm Park on our own and joined guided Tractor Ride Tours. The Cotswold Farm Park is only a small part of the whole area of 4000 acres with 5 farms plus 1000 acres of woodland. We enjoyed a ploughman's lunch with desserts entertained by Robin and Ruth Foster singing folk music and Ruth playing her Q Chord instrument and her harp. We all joined in the traditional folk song "To be a Farmers Boy".

In the afternoon Adam Henson gave us a talk about the Farm Park and farming in general when he mentioned that he has been talking to a mattress making company suggesting that mattresses should be made from wool instead of using synthetic fibres. Adam is going to talk to the Cotswold sheep farmers about this and he hopes that they will take this on board and collect as much wool as possible for this purpose. We may hear more later.

We ended the day with tea and cakes from the restaurant. In the evening some members of the group gathered for an evening meal at the Halfway House at Kineton. We had a lovely day at the Cotswolds which was enjoyed by all

Plans are being made for our 7th Reunion in 2020 possibly at the Royal Agricultural University College at Cirencester.

**Stephen and Hanna (Miiner)**



**Dear friends  
 and colleagues.  
 Greetings**

I openly acknowledge that the President's Letter takes a different form this issue as will be revealed!

The excitement created as we celebrated the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary during 2019 in different countries but centred on London with the Thanksgiving Service at St Martin's in the Fields and the Excel Centre revealed a vibrancy not often published under the name YMCA. Those of us who have retired from full time involvement can recall similar occasions but on this occasion appreciate a new dynamic. This Anniversary has drawn glowing reports in YMCA press world-wide, not least in our own Newsletter and Bridges but in over 100 countries. Above all for me it was predominately YOUTH centred and not stolen by the older generation of YMCA 'veterans'! There is a climate of change, I can even hear Sir George Williams and I precis his words, "Young men (women) of every Nation I give you the YMCA".

Personal Profile! I came into the YMCA applying to the YMCA as a Christian Youth Movement in preference to the ministry of the Methodist Church such was my 'calling'!

The first year of training as experienced was together with another young recruit painting and decorating a gymnasium, breaking my leg severely playing for the YMCA Football team on Wandsworth Common, (the goalkeeper at the other end exclaimed it went off like a pistol shot!), hopping round London on two crutches, trying to entertain my girlfriend, later my wife (she stayed at the YWCA I quickly add!) and meeting up with some 60 young men supported by what was crudely referred to as, 'A Poor Boys Hostel' but better known as the 'Sir John Benn Society'.

Yes, you may have guessed the YMCA was King Georges House, Stockwell which was given to the National Council of YMCAs by Sir John Benn on the condition that we retained the 60 boys already in residence! Far from being 'poor' most were engaged in different professions and trades, I recall in particular the London Film Industry and Colleges of Music. Of the latter I recall one young man being an extremely fine pianist who I used to listen to practicing, Chopin's Fantasia Impromptu in 'C' Sharp Minor, now one of my favourite pieces of music. It was truly a baptismal year as the introduction to my YMCA career!

There followed a career I look back on with the happiest of memories enjoyed with colleagues now renewed at Cambridge Reunions, my work as President and likewise.

A YMCA Career with practice of moving between different YMCA posts is good in that experience is gained offering a balanced view of the different aspects of the work and not least socialising with colleagues, laypersons and of course young people. My YMCA service included namely, Stockwell, Sheffield CEO, Wellington GS, Lincoln, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (twice AGS., & GS), Leeds CEO. Other activities. President Y's Retired, Chair British YMCA Urban Group, CEO World Urban Network.

**REVEALED!** I have advised the Committee that I will retire (not resign) from the Presidency of the Y's Retired of the UK as from December 2019 due to my age (86 in December) and for health reasons. They have been 11 very happy years but common-sense indicated that 'now was the time'. I leave the post of President of the Y's Retired of the UK in very good health with a sound Executive/Consultants, financially viable and recognised by the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees (WFYR) as an important member of this world organisation.

Whilst you may think I am packing my bags for eternity, I assure you that my membership of the Y's Retired of the UK is paid up to date and membership of the WFYR for 3 years! I will arrange the Cambridge Reunion in 2020!

Thank you one and all for your fine support during the years of my service to the Y's Retired of the UK as President.

Keep well and in good spirits.

**Jim Lamb. A retiring President**

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## MEMBERS CORRESPONDENCE

### A conversation between Fred Daldry and Stephen Milner

Fred was able to attend the Southern Y's Retired lunch on Thursday 20 June at the Miramar Hotel in Bournemouth arranged Blair Crawford.

We talked about the two trips we did with Fred up Snowdon with a couple of boys from Portsmouth YMCA and one had to use old fashioned wooden crouches and did very well. We also talked about the YMCA BBBF Farm scheme and Fred wanted a book which I sent him.

On Tuesday 13 August I tried to phone Fred Daldry and his daughter Maggie Foster answered the phone. We had a good conversation and she mentioned that Fred moved into a care home about a month ago.

Fred is 96 and now has Vascular Dementia. Maggie and her sister Sarah were visiting Fred that afternoon. Maggie has since sent the following email:-

#### Hi Stephen

It was good to chat to you yesterday, I'm glad we were at Dad's flat at the right time. We were just going off to see Dad at Clifton Lodge up the road from Dad so at least he is in an area he knows.

He looked well when we saw him yesterday and is benefiting from having regular food and medication. I mentioned that you had phoned and he did say he was enjoying mulling through the book (British boys for British Farms by Barbara Vessey) you kindly sent and I did have a quick thumb through although there wasn't a lot of time.

We had a family meeting with my sister and her husband and Bob my husband and Dad has made the difficult decision to sell the flat in Hengisbury Road, (Southbourne, Bournemouth).

Thank you for offering to let people know in the Y's Retired of UK of Dad's changed circumstances; I know it would be good for him to be able to keep in touch with friends and colleagues. I did wave as we drove home late last night going through Dorchester and it was a very good journey home to Somerset.

Now we have the difficult task of putting his flat on the market. We have, fingers crossed, managed to get a buyer interested in Dad's car which he hasn't been able to use for some time.

Address now for Fred Daldry is: Room 11, Clifton Care Home, 16 - 18 Clifton Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth BH6 3PA.

Thank you for your interest in Dad I know friendships mean a lot to him.

Kind regards from Somerset.

**Maggie (Foster)**

## TWO NEW MEMBERS



We welcome into membership **John McMurray**, whose first YMCA contact was with the Irish National Council of YMCAs in May 1978.

From that other appointments came such as:-

- Greenhill YMCA Summer Camp Director from June-September 1979
- Carrickfergus YMCA General Secretary October 1981-May 1983
- Bangor YMCA General Secretary May 1983-July 1988
- YMCA Glasgow Deputy Chief Executive August 1988-November 1996
- Paisley YMCA General Secretary November 1996-January 2009

Other offices John held both National and internationally were:-

Irish National Council Member  
Scottish National Council Member



**Walter Crosby**, now 86 years of age, has his side profile photo'd above in the cockpit of a plane - not in the air!! His grandson is a pilot.

Walter's YMCA involvement was with the Scottish National Council of YMCAs circa 1978  
YMCA appointments were:-

- Treasurer YMCA Scotland - several years 1980s
- Chairman YMCA Superannuation Committee - several years 1980s/90s
- Vice President YMCA Scotland

**A warm welcome to both these fine men**

## BEAUTIFUL "BERTHA"



During the second world war K2 tea cars like 'bertha' were operated on the 'home front' by volunteer groups such as the WVS (Women's Voluntary Services) and the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association).

For hard pressed service personnel and others they provided a much appreciated opportunity to have a hot 'cuppa' at a time of great stress and peril. Very few K2 tea cars have survived from the war years as they were no longer needed.

That 'bertha' has survived is down to the efforts of a few dedicated volunteers. they saw it advertised in Cumbria in the 1980's where it had been used as breakdown towing truck. it had been taken off the road as a rear wheel brake cylinder had failed.

After purchasing the vehicle, it was taken down to Brooklands race-track where it was rebuilt and restored. Much timber was replaced, the chassis cleaned up and the original steel skin replaced with aluminium. the interior fittings were recycled from an old bakery in Kent.



I would very much like some YMCA support in order to move this project forward in saving this YMCA Tea Van.

I look forward to your thoughts, comments and suggestions. With best wishes,

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PUTTING ON THE NEW ALUMINIUM BODY



A BIT OF A CHALLENGE!



PUTTING ON THE NEW ALUMINIUM BODY



BERTHA FINISHED AT BROOKLANDS.

**ARTHUR BENNETT ASKED ME TO LISTEN  
TO THE BBC RADIO SUNDAY MORNING  
SERVICE ON 8<sup>TH</sup> SEPT – THIS BEAUTIFUL  
PRAYER CONCLUDED THE SERVICE**

Loving God, who made us in the womb, and guides us each day, thank you for the gift of life. We pray for everyone in our communities, each person bringing their whole selves to you, and to one another.

God of all nations and all people, thank you for the gift of communication. Through words, spoken and written. Through sign and picture. Through emotion, gesture, expression and movement. Through rhythm, music and song. Help us to truly listen, learn and share life with one another.

God of togetherness, thank you for the gift of community, for places we can belong. Thank you for communities offering safe harbour and true friendship, each sharing their gifts and personalities, each bringing so much of worth to one another. Be their hope, as they invite all to live with respect, acceptance and love.

God of all life, who leads us on paths that are sometimes hard, sometimes steep, and sometimes scary, give us wisdom to follow you. Courage to be by your side, knowing that we never face difficulties alone. Hope, that we can make good choices and good decisions, right for our own lives, our energy and our needs.

God of life everlasting, we pray for those amongst us who are unwell, or in pain, or living in fear and despair. We pray for those who are nearing the end of life, and for those who wait alongside those whose lives are at an end. We ask for comfort for those whose loved one has died. You are by our side, now and forever. AMEN

**Trans urethral resection of bladder  
tumour (TURBT)**

Mervyn Moorehead is currently resting up after a TURBT procedure on 21<sup>st</sup> September. Beryl reports that Mervyn did well and was allowed home in the same evening. The young surgeon said 'all looked very good meaning there were "No obvious lumps and bumps." Mervyn will have to get this good news confirmed at Osteitis Pubis Clinic however. Look forward to seeing you all the colleagues at the next St Ives in April 2020

Bless you both  
Beryl and Mervyn

**All our love and prayers are with you both**

**Passing of Jim Wilson  
(ex Director of Fairthorne Manor)**

Sadly, Jim passed away suddenly a week shy of his 99th birthday. It was a massive heart attack so mercifully quick and at home as he wanted. His life spanned such a huge period and touched so many people- he will be so very missed.

**PASSING OF GILBERT DICKSON**



It is with great sadness that I inform you of the death of Gilbert Dickson 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019.. Gilbert had been in hospital for the past five weeks after suffering a broken hip.

I know you will all join us in holding Gilbert's family in your thoughts and prayers at this time.

At our Annual Business Meeting in 2018, Gilbert was awarded the Sir George Williams Medal. This is the highest award available within the YMCA in Scotland and is for distinguished and outstanding service to the YMCA in Scotland.

At the time of our ABM Gilbert had only recently stepped down from the Board of Tollcross YMCA, reflecting a life-long commitment to the YMCA. Gilbert started his YMCA journey as a local association member, then a voluntary leader before he began his staff service.

For many years he served local YMCAs in the Lanarkshire area, he became Secretary of the Strathclyde Federation and then led the YMCA Scotland Training Services Department before his retiral.

In 1994, for our 150th Anniversary, Gilbert researched, wrote and produced our 150th Anniversary booklet.

I have forwarded the message on to the members of our Scottish group. David, would you kindly forward this news to members in England and Wales as I expect that a number of them will have known Gilbert as a regular attendee at the Association of YMCA Secretary's Annual Conferences.

**Kind regards, Keith Rennie**

**PASSING OF ANDREW HAIG**

You might not be aware that Andrew Haig of YMCA Seafar House and the YMCA Barbican was recently in Strathcarron Hospice but sadly passed away on the morning of Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

His niece managed to make contact with Archie Swan, formerly Chief Executive of YMCA Barbican through part of the Y's retired network.

**Robert (Kelso)**