



GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Dear friends
and colleagues
greetings**

The often quoted phrase by colleagues and retired friends, "There is no such thing as ageing" can be related to the very nature of the Y's Retired of the UK membership as a caring 'organisation' and the mutual friendship experienced through YMCA service. Our letterheads strip-line says, "Keeping Retired YMCA staff in contact with each other."

There is no doubt that 'retirees' due to their age play an important part in local communities and society in general. With the abundant evidence of people living longer mainly due to advances in medicine and improved therapies, as revealed in the increasing pressures on the National Health Service year by year, we are faced with more leisure time! Mind you I often hear that retirement gives one more time to be busy – but busy at what?

Often added is also the comment that there is more time to be lonely especially for those of us who have lost a loved spouse, partner or friend and passed through the trauma of such experiences. There is a void left needing to be filled. One avenue for such sharing is with colleagues for which there is the opportunity through committee members listed below – confidentiality is maintained.

Emphasising the points above are the increased number of films, plays and documentaries 'in' the media' on the question of ageing as most recently on TV The Marigold Hotel for retirees where a number of celebrities, not necessarily friends to begin with, spend weeks together in a retirement environment in a delightful part of India.

Quickly, misgivings about the venture are dissipated as barriers are broken down and the realisation dawns on each person that ageing is a time to find fulfilment missing since the original date of retiring. I recall in similar vein a colleague who died recently, sharing that on his retirement some years before was like 'falling off a cliff into a great abyss'. Suffice it to say that he conquered the feeling and exhibited his skills in doing good works in the community/society where he lived and further afield.

Retirement is as important as in all other areas of life's experiences bringing opportunities for developing our lifestyles not realised through full-time employment.

Two such illustrations I use from my time as General Secretary of Lincoln YMCA. We had in lifelong membership a gentleman in his 80's, a retired popular city centre 'Cobbler' who taught many young people in the YMCA how to play chess and draughts to a high standard but always told them at every opportunity to "Take an interest in an interest" in their lives! Mind you he also told them that putting a man on the moon was a hoax!! The other story – the local road sweeper, a gentleman in his late 60's trained our young footballers in the skills and art of the rules of the game and standards of play expected of them!

It was the Rev John Wesley (Founder with others of Methodism) who gave advice to all who would listen whether young or old, "Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. As long as ever you can." These words are as applicable today as they were in the 1700s to peoples of all Faiths and of none.
Quo Vardis – Whither goest thou?!!!

In closing I draw attention to the AGM reports (which will be sent to you shortly) by individual members of the Y's Retired of the UK Committee and not least the Finance Report which due to the increased to £20 subscriptions instituted in January 2016 reflect a stable and healthy balance.

May the present season put a 'spring' into your step followed by a warm summer. Keep in good health as far as you are able and read again for your edification John Wesley's words quoted above!

Jim Lamb

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MEMBER CORRESPONDENCE

Dear David

My son William got married last January, we were going to put up a marquee on the practise ground at Epping golf Course but then he attended his friend's wedding at a "Fabulous place in Somerset with golf course (first tee on the roof) fishing, archery, swimming pool, gym 25 rooms cellar disco and casino"

I thought the name rang a bell but it was only when I looked round the place two days before (I had gone with some golf machinery to prepare the golf course) that the penny dropped!! North Cadbury court!! Fairthorne Manor's partner training centre.

The present owner's mother lived there and helped during BBBF and the walls are full of YMCA memorabilia. He was thrilled to meet someone who knew all about its past and the principles of YMCA. True to form, I was able to help him with his golf course and setting up his archery and an orienteering course.

Too much to tell here but the 150 strong party had a fabulous time and you can be sure, went away a lot more knowledgeable about YMCA history.

Gaye and I danced in the cellar till 5 am -I hear Will and his mates saw the sun up as they played volleyball in the pool!
Bit different to the kipper on the exhaust stuff of my wedding 46 years ago!!

Neil (Sjoberg)

Dear David

I have been trying to encourage Don to join Y's retired since late last year and have just been able to welcome him into membership. He was responsible for all the grounds and much more at Fairthorne Manor from 1967 to 2002. We got to know each other when I used to take youngsters to Fairthorne to undertake grounds work i.e. clearing streams and undergrowth in the 70's in exchange for a free activity and later in the 80's and 90's when Eurocross was based there.

He was one of "The Gang of Six" who kept Fairthorne going when it was going to be sold!! It was only through a chance communication from Neil Sjoberg that I discovered he was still in contact with Don....

Anyway, mission accomplished. **Vic (Hills)**

OUR EASTER PRAYER

Three times the cock crowed,
and by the third the whole world knew
that Peter had denied his Lord.

The echo of that moment can still be heard today,
each time we hide our face, afraid not of death,
but a mild rebuke, or at the worst a little ridicule.

The world may never know our silent denial,
for as yet, Lord, it has not known our silent faith.

Cambridge Reunion Lunch

Jim Lamb – Cambridge Reunion Lunch Organiser
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Dear Colleagues,

Cambridge Reunion Lunch **5th July 2017 – 12noon for 12.30pm**

I have retained the same time as previous years for the Reunion normally convenient to the majority! The date does not clash with school holidays.

This mailing is early but as is appreciated the setting of dates and numbers is of paramount importance when booking a suitable restaurant venue for meals and ask for your support in early confirmation of intention to be present. Please would you respond by email, post or telephone whichever is most convenient.

This invitation is for all members within striking distance or further afield by car, rail or shank's pony to Cambridge. (A wonderful city for a day out!).

Suffice it to share that I have been able to make a provisional booking with the Girton Golf Club Restaurant with excellent car-parking facilities much appreciated in recent years. You will be warmly welcomed together with spouses. The cost will be the meal (price awaited – expect a small increase on the £15 of last year!), drinks may be purchased from the bar!

Warm regards, *Jim (Lamb)* - Organiser

YMCA speaks to Parliamentary Select Committee on supported housing funding



Denise Hatton, Chief Executive of the National Council of YMCAs, warned a joint Communities and Local Government and Work and Pensions Select Committee that proposed funding changes to supported housing could leave high-needs young people left with nowhere to go for help.

Appearing alongside Sian Hawkins, Campaigns and Public Affairs Manager for Women's Aid, and Lisa Hubbard, Senior Support Officer at Working Chance, Denise spoke in depth to MPs about the impact that funding changes would have to young people as well as sector providers, such as YMCA.



DOES ANYONE KNOW WHO NORAH WAS?

"An interesting story arrived in my Inbox this week, courtesy of Jane Robinson, a postgraduate studying at London University. Jane tells us that a gentleman in Fiji, Mr Michael Thoms, is hoping to trace the family of a young woman who, it is believed, worked between 1917 and 1919 for the YMCA at Oatlands Park, a hospital near Weybridge in Surrey for wounded soldiers from New Zealand.

Jane tells us that she thinks that the uniform and badge worn by Norah in this picture suggest membership of the YMCA's Women's Auxilliary and is hoping that our readers might be able to confirm this.

Jane understands that the YMCA stood halfway between Oatlands Park and the Mount Felix Hospital at Walton-on-Thames.

Have any readers heard of a YMCA building in that area at the time? Norah befriended Mr Thoms' father-in-law, Ivor Norman Fleet and he and his wife, Ivor's daughter, should like to know who Norah was.

Any guidance on sources of information which might help Jane with this research will be most welcome. Jane tells us that she will be most grateful to our readers for any ideas, no matter how small."



OUR VALENTINE STORY



Dear Ken Montgomery, David Smith tells us you are stirring things up and have requested some 'Y' tales to relate? He doesn't know we have just celebrated our 59th wedding anniversary this very week and we met at the Liverpool YMCA (circa 1955)

First of all, I am talking about **David Mervyn Moorehead from Londonderry and Beryl Dorothy Rogers from Huyton (now Merseyside)** both pictured above with daughter Ruth.

I was a very gauche new student at the Liverpool School of Occupational Therapy, somewhat shocked by our introduction to anatomy at the dissecting rooms of the Liverpool university department of anatomy ,as we had to learn by observation the origin and insertion of every muscle of the human body.

A much older friend who had enrolled in the course in her fortieth year took me under her wing and decided I needed a lot more fun than I was currently getting! She told me to get dressed in my 'Calamity Jane' outfit as we were going square dancing. "Where, I enquired?"

"Where my brothers go, to the Liverpool YMCA, she replied. There is a new young assistant secretary under the wings of Les Adams, the General Secretary. He is an Ulsterman and is newly appointed after his time at Swansea YMCA."

The old Liverpool YMCA had an ambience about it and I still sometimes see it in my dreams. Downstairs there was a large room suitable for dancing with a refreshment counter and a big log fire. That's where the dancing took place on a Saturday night. Can't for the life of me remember who provided the music!

Every Sunday afternoon, music of a different kind, which resembled the Palm Court Orchestra was played, very genteel, which suited the older members.

Upstairs was a large room to accommodate a congregation and I remember an evangelist booming out a somewhat doom and gloom message. On the stairs was a plaque to commemorate the opening by DL Moody who I believe was a devout 'Y' Secretary, before becoming an evangelist.

Apart from the 'doom and gloom' message it felt very welcoming and homely and I soon became somewhat attached. It became a regular Saturday night at the 'Y' event! There were other events like the rambling club. Just the place to go to relax and unwind after the somewhat serious rigours of the week.

All to soon I was qualified and working in Eccles, near Manchester and the new young secretary was moving on to Leeds to run a satellite youth Centre at a place called Osmondthorpe.

His Christian Faith was the mainspring of his life and I had become a Christian too. It seemed an inevitability that we should move on together and that is why on one snowy day in Feb 1958 we married at St Michaels church Huyton.

If we were asked what has held us together after 59 years I expect he would quote, "A THREEFOLD CORD IS NOT QUICKLY BROKEN!"

The Red Triangle, symbol of the 'YMCA' has also been another meaningful icon in his/our lives.

A Weston charity which supports homeless people in the town says it is 'blown away' after receiving a grant worth more than £200,000 to support its work.



The Somerset Coast branch of the YMCA has been awarded £209,140 for its Weston Rough Sleeping project by the national Big Lottery Fund.

The money will be used to help people sleeping rough across Weston and North Somerset through the YMCA's network of support for rough sleepers.

It means YMCA workers and volunteers will be able to go out into the town and offer support to people sleeping rough, alongside signposting rough sleepers to appropriate support and places of help.

Stephen Hooper was involved in the project's development and played a major role in the application for Big Lottery funding.

He told the Mercury the application process had been difficult but worthwhile.

Stephen said: "It has been really hard to get the money – considering how important it is, it is impossible to find.

"It (the outreach work) is a really vital job and it is part of a patchwork quilt of resources for people who are either homeless, at risk of homelessness. We work with a lot of other agencies like St Mungo's, Weston Churches Together, the NHS, the street pastors, PCSOs and North Somerset Council."

The YMCA found accommodation for about 250 young people, vulnerable adults and families in North Somerset last year.

Stephen said the Weston rough sleeping project began life as a pilot scheme two years ago, but its future had not been sustainable since funding ran out last year. He added: "The money (for the pilot scheme) ran out in April last year and we were limping along after that – it was not sustainable.

"Now we are ready to get it up and running again. "The Big Lottery Fund said it was one of the best applications it had received.

"When they phoned me and said we had got it I was blown away."

Nottinghamshire YMCA named among the UK's best places to work



Staff and volunteers at Nottinghamshire YMCA are celebrating making it into the prestigious Sunday Times Top 100 Not-For-Profit Organisations To Work For 2017.

A solid achievement, Nottinghamshire YMCA secured their place on the list that is created from anonymous employee engagement surveys and are based on eight factors, ranging from leadership and management to personal wellbeing and charitable efforts.

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Dear David

Another YMCA British Boys for British Farms Reunion is being held on Wednesday 26 April 2017 at North Cadbury Court, Somerset.

We will be having a talk and tour of the Elizabethan Court as well as talks on the variety of potatoes that are grown on the farm, the cheese processes on the making of the famous Montgomery Cheeses and visit the Cheese Parlour. There will be Morning Coffee 50p, Lunch £10 and Tea £3.

North Cadbury Court is a Elizabethan Court and is still the home of the Montgomery family. There are two farms: one grows potatoes and the other is a dairy farm.

The milk is used mainly for producing four varieties of Montgomery cheese - see the Montgomery Cheese website. Also, have a look at the North Cadbury Court website and photos - it is now a really good and very busy event centre.

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ST IVES DATES FOR THE NEXT 2 YEARS

Monday 16th April 2018 and Monday 1st April 2019
Prices next year same as this year
En-suite £214, Non en-suite £184.00. Deposits £40 per person by 20 October please, balance Feb 2018
God bless - Margaret

MEMBERS CORRESPONDENCE

I still have copies available of the book: "British Boys for British Farms: The Story of the YMCA Farm Training Scheme (1932 - 1968)" by Barbara Vessey. Cost £10 plus postage. I have read with interest in the Y Enews that some YMCAs are involved with horticultural projects. BBBF also had in the mid to late 60s BBBH British Boys for British Horticulture which is mentioned in Barbara Vessey's book. The YMCA Community Services Department managed the hostels at the RHS Gardens at Wisley and at the at Home Park belonging to Royal Family. Please let me know if you would like a copy.

In May I will be visiting Bletchley Park with a friend: His father taught SOE agents Morse Code and also went abroad during WW2. My friend still has his father's radio set and is also a Radio Ham. This will be a rather special visit as the National Amateur Radio Society is based in what was the YMCA hostel for the CAA Air Traffic Control Apprentices.

In June we shall be going to the Federation of Cathedral Old Choristers Associations Festival at Norwich for a weekend and then on to **Cromer for a holiday**.

I recall that in 1975 or 76 (?) I did two weeks relief work at the YMCA General Services hostel at Bletchley Park and I am fairly certain this was for Ernie Carroll while he was on holiday. The CAA Air Traffic Control apprentices made me feel very welcome at the hostel and had 2 good weeks there. I was informed by the apprentices that there a was a really good traditional Scottish Burns Night at a local pub and the apprentices eventually persuaded me to join them. There was a Piper there, a Haggis on a sword was brought into the bar which was shared among those present. The barmen and some others in the bar were wearing kilts and before the end of the evening there a Sword Dance.

Bletchley Park also had on site former GPO (British Telecom) Telephone Engineering School. David Fail was warden - see 1982 YMCA Directory and later Mrs (Ann / Anne) Thompson who was at Fairthorne Manor, Botley, Southampton was also a Warden at Bletchley - see 1984 YMCA Directory.

I also had the opportunity to do two weeks relief work at Wisley when Mrs K Akrill was on holiday with free access to the gardens. Hanna and I also did two weeks relief for Mrs A Innes-Banks at the Windsor Hall, Royal Gardens, Windsor and we looked after her delightful dog Shirley. Mrs D Allen was warden there before Mrs K Akrill.

Hanna and I also did relief work at the YMCA London Transport hostel at Chelsea where there were only 3 residents. The hostel was due to close. There was no need for us to provide meals as they had their meals at the depot or made there own arrangements. We did not go far from the hostel but it was an interesting area of London and the weather was good.

Last year, Hanna and I visited the Wisley RHS Gardens and we learned that the former YMCA Hostel there is going to be pulled down to make room for the new RHS administration offices and the resource / library centre.

I have 4 copies of the YMCA World Directories: 1980, 1982, 1984 and 1994. I had a 2 or 3 from 1967 onwards but sadly they have become lost or I threw them out when one moves around not thinking then how useful they would be now!!

With best wishes - Stephen

Maybe I'll send a message to David Smith for inclusion in the Newsletter asking if anyone has copies of early Directories that they would be willing to lend me, for possible copying onto the website. That would keep me busy!! All replies please to Vic Hills.

Dear Jim

Very many thanks for your letter and the info on the 2017 Cambridge Reunion - I very much enjoyed being with you all last year but regret that I shall be in Sri Lanka in July.

Yes I'm still involved with various projects out here, although taking a back seat on most now. On 1st May it will be 15 years since I arrived here in Kalmunai on the East Coast to work as a VSO Volunteer with a local Peace Organisation. Then of course we were hit by the tsunami on 26th December 2004 when I became involved with a local NGO and worked with USAID on providing sports equipment and a mobile film unit to the many IDP Camps in the District. There were some 15,000 deaths in our District alone.

Then the "Ceasefire" between the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan Government broke down and the conflict was resumed with the war breaking out not many miles from here. We could hear the multi barrelled rockets being fired and we had some work to do with the displaced who had fled their homes in the affected areas with almost nothing.

Now the conflict has finally come to an end but there are still deep wounds as a result of the war and as it is said "Justice not only has to be done but be seen to be done" I hope and pray that my presence in this mainly Tamil speaking area (Mixed Muslim and Tamil -Hindus and Christians and a small Sinhala community) has in some small measure helped with reconciliation.

I continue to play outdoor badminton- wind and rain permitting most days and get around a bit on my cycle. I live now in a very large unfinished house with squirrels and mice and a rat snake which visits from time to time. There are endless streams of visitors - our cooking is always shared with whoever is visiting at the time as is the tradition.

Fortunately, I love the people as well as the food! There are times I have to admit when the requests for financial "Loans" or gifts become a bit wearing but I do have to remind myself that I am very fortunate to have my pension which allows me to live comfortably in my dotage!

Greetings to all and good wishes for a successful reunion in July.

Best wishes - John (Newton)

Scottish Y's Retired Members

I hope this notice finds you in good health and enjoying the warmer weather that we have been having recently although the wind has made it feel colder. I always like when the clocks have changed resulting in longer daylight and seeing the yellow daffodils out in full in my garden it just cheers me up.

It is time to remind you of our next group meeting which will be held at **Y' People in Glasgow on Monday 8th May at 10.30am for 11am**. It is a few years ago since we visited Y's People in Glasgow and they are pleased to again host us. I hope that you will make every effort to join us. For catering arrangements please let me know if you are able to attend.

With best wishes - Keith (Rennie)



starting at the top row, left hand side

Stephen Milner, Tom Libby, Val Libby, Gill Buckingham, Liz Harper, Paul Harper, David Buckingham, Mary Jarman, Peter Sutton, Beryl Moorehead, Sheila Hardy, Ray Allen, David Libby, Mervyn Moorehead, Margaret Libby, Des Willcox, Delphine Sutton, Margaret Haile, Hanna Milner, Front row:- Sue Smith, Ruth Wright, Maureen Johnstons, Pearl Willcox, Oona, Ian Haile, David Smith, Joan Petts



The 'Y's Retired Spring Break at Treloyhan Manor St Ives Cornwall.

Monday March 27th 2017 saw the arrival of the YMCA retirees for their annual reunion in St Ives Cornwall, this being the twelfth year at this delightful venue. There were twenty four in total, all pleased to be together again and all united firmly as ever on the Rock that is Christ Jesus!

One does not have to be living in the South West of England to enjoy this event and other 'Y' retirees plus friends would be more than welcome to join us on future occasions. Next years' event being arranged already for April 16th to 20th 2018.

There are no great expectations and the programme is flexible to allow individual choice as to how the week is spent. If your need is to 'crash out' and rest awhile the opportunity is there.

The fellowship is rich and meaningful however and friendships are consolidated. A programme is arranged for those who wish to participate. The evening meal is at 6.30 pm and devotions at 8pm led by one of the retirees.

A social activity is arranged by the host and hostess, Rev and Mrs Ian Hail. The first night and a fun quiz are organised by Liz Harper and a current movie, usually well chosen by the Libby's, on a subsequent night. A day out is a popular feature and this year we visited Gwennap Pit near Redruth, taken by bus and we were excited to see this historic spot where the Wesley preached outdoors to over 2000 locals.

Inside the chapel the overseer, Rev Jenny Lockwood, told us of the history and led us in the most lovely meditation. We felt the Presence of the Lord there. Then on to Porthleven Methodist Church for coffee and finally to Mousehole for lunch.

I do recommend their Crab bake if you are a lover of sea food! The little cafe on the rock was pretty basic but the view was fantastic. We were curious as to the history of the Christian Holiday Guild and the Managing Director Kevin Mantle enlightened us.

Each morning we congregated after breakfast for devotions and celebrated communion prior to departure. It certainly was well worth the effort of getting there and we all felt encouraged and revitalised. Deo Volente - See you there next year.