



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

NOVEMBER 2020

www.yretired.co.uk



President's ponderings

Treasure Hunting!

I am a fan and I admit it! The focus of my enthusiasm is BBC's 'Repair Shop'. If you haven't seen it, the programme involves members of the public bringing items of family or historical interest to be restored by a team of outstanding crafts people.

The programme has it all. There are human interest stories behind the items, like the grandson bringing his grandfather's radio which he had carried through D Day to be restored; there is the amazing craftsmanship involved such as in the restoration of a silver cup awarded to a Great Grandfather for playing in the unbeaten 1905 Welsh Rugby Team and then there is the human emotion that flows when the owners are reunited with their now restored object and the memories they hold.

(At this point I always get a tear in my eye which has led Julia, my wife, to call it 'The Time to Cry Programme'!)

One of the striking things about the 'The Repair Shop' is, that unlike other restoration/ antique/ collectables programmes, no financial value is ever put on the objects.

The restorations are not about improving the monetary value of the objects but are about renewing and restoring the symbolism and human memories that they hold for the owners which they nearly always want to pass on to the next generation, continuing the family story and links.

This is the nature of true treasure, that deep in indefinable meaning and memories that objects carry and which makes them valuable to us and which cannot be stolen from us .

I am sure that we all have such items in our homes, objects which connect us to history, people and places.

Few of them may be of any great financial value but they enable us to look back in gratitude and thanksgiving, for love, friendship and achievement.

These are treasures which call us to offer prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Have you looked out your treasures lately?

PS What is the YMCA link here?

Answer:

The Repair Shop is filmed at the Weald and Downland Museum at Singleton West Sussex a few miles down the road from the former YMCA Conference Centre Dunford House in Midhurst!

Peace and Blessings to all
Graham Clarke

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As Embrace's Programmes and Partnerships Manager for Israel Palestine, I have the benefit of spending time with the staff of the East Jerusalem YMCA, visiting and speaking with children who have been detained by the Israeli military or who experience real life challenges under the Occupation.



The Director of EJ-YMCA, Nader Abu Amsha, who has himself experienced much of what these children go through, tells us about the work of this programme, its vision and the hope and healing it brings to children and young people across the West Bank.

Peoples' concerns in Israel/Palestine vary so much: some are thinking of how to spend vacations with family and loved ones, others are concerned about their income and their businesses. Bigger numbers are living in fear of the angry nature and the horror of the ongoing political conflict that they are caught in the middle of and/or are hostage to as a result of where they happen to live. The majority of people are thinking of how to secure their basic needs. Now, almost everybody, is concerned about their health and when they will be free from all the measures imposed as a result of Covid-19.

Bethlehem in Palestine is not an exception, but all of these concerns are intensified in one place. Here the space is shrinking at all levels. The geography is becoming much smaller than ever before, with land confiscations from the Israeli Government to build new settlements, or to expand existing ones. Palestinian life is increasingly hemmed-in by walls.

One of the consequences of the Occupation by Israel of Palestine is that military law applies to the territory under occupation. Under Israeli military law, children as young as 12 can be arrested, questioned, imprisoned and prosecuted by the Israeli military.

The most common offence for which children are prosecuted is the throwing of stones. Many of those arrests take place at night, where children are taken from their beds by a group of 8 to 12 soldiers, all of whom are carrying weapons. The family are rarely fully informed about the grounds for the arrest or where the child is being taken.

According to the organisations that monitor the arrest of children by the occupying forces, a high proportion of children that are subject of arrest report that they were blindfolded when arrested and or their hands were tied using plastic ties which caused a level of pain and, for some, caused significant swelling or injuries to their wrists.

It is also common for the child to be subjected to verbal and/or physical abuse during the process of arrest, transfer to detention and when being questioned. Many are transferred to prisons in Israel –which is illegal under international law. A consequence of this is that it is extremely difficult for family members to visit their children who are detained. This only adds to the psychological harm experienced during detention.

The Rehabilitation program which we at EJ YMCA run offers counselling for those affected by instances of violence as a result of the conflict, children who have been released after detention by the occupying forces and their families. The program also provides education for the children who drop out of school because they have missed out on too much whilst being detained by the Israeli military, or who are too traumatised to cope with a formal classroom environment.

Today the Program has expanded its witness to include additional help for those who can't afford the protection and hygiene needs required since Covid-19. At this time we ask for prayers to strengthen and enable the YMCA to keep on with its mission and strengthen its witness to bring hope to the hopeless and to open the eyes of the people, especially the young people, so they can see that there is light at the end of the very dark tunnel in which they find themselves.

You can read the full version of this blog on our website, simply click here:

<https://embraceme.org/blog/child-detention-israel-palestine>

Many thanks,

Rhiannon De Laune

Programmes and Partnerships Manager, Israel/Palestine

BBBF NEWS

I received an email from Carol Lomas saying that her mother-in-law Joan Lomas, a former BBBF Matron, died on 30 September 2020 aged 100. Joan would have reached 101 on 30 October 2020. Joan was Matron at Mammerton Farms and Park Hill at Egginton near Derby from 1945 to 1960. A few years ago, Hanna and I had the opportunity to visit Joan at Windermere. Carol and Martin Lomas address is: 32 St Mary's Park, Windermere LA23 1AZ.

Margaret Peebles will be 99 on 13 December 2020. Margaret and her late husband Frank were Warden / Matron at Mappleton in Yorkshire, North Cadbury Court in Somerset and Park Hill at Egginton near Derby from 1948 to 1959. Frank at different times was also YMCA Regional Secretary for the North of England and the Midlands.

Jean Saunders who was secretary at Wilderwick, West Sussex celebrated her 92nd birthday on 23 September 2020, her late husband Walter was the Assistant Warden there. They later moved to Wimbledon YMCA.

We were not able to hold a BBBF Reunion this year (because of Covid 19) which we were hoping to have on Lord Bathurst's Estate with a visit to the adjoining Royal University Agricultural College at Cirencester. Hopefully it will happen 2021.

Since January 2020 five new former BBBF boys have contacted me, also recently the daughter of the late Arthur and Gladys Hughes who were BBBF Warden and Matron at Williamson Hostel at Lathom nr Burscough, Lancashire. She sent me a family photo of them in front of the hostel in 1941.

With best wishes to you all - **Stephen and Hanna Milner**

Members correspondence

Dear David

Thank you for the news. Mervyn so enjoyed it. How are you coping with the heat? We are feeling it. Ruth is now home with us confined to the couch. In good spirits I am glad to say! She missed her footing and broke her femur and her thumb and at the moment has a carer each morning to help with breakfast and ablutions. She is 61 tomorrow. The 92 year old kidney she received from her dad is working well thank the Lord.

Just been reading Roy Calne, 'The Ultimate gift'. Wonderful. What knowledge and work went into it all! What a privilege still to be alive
Love to all

Beryl and Mervyn (Moorehead)

Dear David
we had a special outdoor service last Sunday (August) and I wrote a service to fit in with the theme of the rainbow... thought you may be interested!

The Rainbow by William Wordsworth

My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began; So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

I read the mother Julian passage...

'It is god's will,' this word, 'you will not be overcome' was said very distinctly and firmly to give us confidence and comfort for whatever troubles may come. He did not say 'you will never have a rough passage, you will never be over-whelmed, you will never feel uncomfortable' but He did say 'you will never be overcome.'

God wants us to pay attention to these words, so as to trust him always, with strong confidence, through thick and thin. for he loves us, and delights in us; so, he wills that we should love and delight in him in return and trust him with all our strength.

So, all will be well.

Ron. (Revd. Ron Ingamells)

THANK YOU

Recently received anonymously, two donations totalling £750, the majority of which has been earmarked for Secours Speciaux.

The Y's Retired of UK Executive are most grateful to the donors for their great generosity.

On top of Sugar Loaf Mountain near Abergavenny.

Welcome to new members



Nick Nightingale (pictured with wife Sue) joined the London City Board in 1992, approximately and subsequently became the London treasurer.

He became National Secretary in spring 1994 and so had a front seat for the 150 year celebrations and the YMCA World Conference held at Warwick University.

At the World Alliance Assembly in July 1998 Nick was appointed to be the next Secretary General of the World Alliance of YMCAs and moved to Geneva in the January of 1999. He Stepped down from this post in 2002. Nick celebrated his 78th birthday on 30 August 2020.

FUTURE CAMBRIDGE REUNIONS

Dear colleagues,

I have to inform you that despite waiting to the last minute to rearrange the Cambridge Reunion for a late Autumn date I have, in consultation with the President and Executive Secretary of the Y's Retired of the UK, due to the continued problem of the 'coronavirus' and Government advice, to arrange the next date for July 2021.

Suffice it to share our disappointment! It has been suggested by one colleague the feasibility of having two Reunions in 2021, this I will consider!! Apart from you addressed above I will ask David to publish future details at the earliest date in the Newsletter.

An opportunity to wish you all well given the present circumstances.

I would wish you all to know that given a further 'lockdown' I will be continuing to build my personal escape tunnel (named The Great Escape 2) from my back garden to Cambridge City Centre!!

Keep well and in good spirits.

Warm regards,

Jim (Lamb)

Maureen Johnston



Dear friends,

It is with great sorrow that I write to inform you of the death of Maureen Johnston, wife of the late Sam Johnston OBE.

Maureen (78) was determined to live life to the full after Sam's sad passing in 2016 and to make the most of time and life as she always did throughout the whole of her life.

Happily, she found companionship with partner Tim Jobson, an old family friend from the West Bromwich days. Both had found freedom and friendship in their three very happy years together. All members of the family were pleased that this friendship had blossomed.

They had both found their youth again and in fact on the weekend before were kayaking and swimming on the South Coast near their New Forest home. They were definitely making the most of life and both were very happy. Maureen also continued to keep close to all of her three children and six grandchild - always bringing fun and laughter to family gatherings and social events.

Sadly, early last Monday morning on 17th August Tim woke to find Maureen had sadly passed away during the night.

Obviously, the Covid 19 situation is such that funeral details and arrangements are dealt with in quick time and without the opportunity of friends being able to be present to show their respects and offer condolences.

However, I know many of you would wish to send your condolences to the daughters, Laureen and Valerie and to son Stephen, please do send them to the following address:-

Maureen's children : - Stephen Johnston, Laureen Barnes, Valerie Clabburn.

"Penryn" Hamdown Crescent, East Wellow, Romsey Hampshire. SO516BJ

For those of you who wish to share condolences with Maureen's partner, Tim's address is:-

Tim Jobson,
8 Arrun Way, West Wellow, Romsey, Hants SO51 6GT

Dear David,
I have to share that I am much saddened by the passing of Maureen Johnston. She was a delightful person with the ability to socialise easily in any kind of company and a source of strength to her late husband Sam.

She and Sam were both popular members of Wesley Methodist Church, Cambridge making their unique contribution to church activities. Their sporting interest was golf being members of Girton Golf Club where they were honoured in being made Captains taking a positive role during their year of service. Together they were founder members of the Annual Cambridge Reunion (YMCA).

Maureen will be missed by all who knew a lovely person and recall memorable conversations and the way she enhanced any group in which she was involved.

Jim (Lamb)

Dear David,
Totally shocked! So many good friends have died that I don't always cry but this morning I found the tears coming. We had such a good friendship – often met up in Cambridge after I moved to Buckden and kept in touch after Sam died. She certainly sounded so happy last time we chatted on the phone.

Of course, it reminds me of Janet's death – finding she had died in the night 6 years ago this coming Monday (24th August) – but at least not totally unexpected like Maureen's.

I do appreciate the way you let us know.

Blessings

Ron (Ingamells)

Dear David,
A very thoughtful and sensitive response to such a sad happening. Elaine and I have so many happy memories of times spent in the company of Maureen and Sam.

Roger (Hunt)

Crossing The Bar by Alfred, Lord Tennyson read by Tim Jobson

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.

For tho' from out our borne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

A PERSONAL THANK YOU

Hi David,
I hope you received the info from Tim about Maureen's cremation service which was on 17th September. It all went well and the vicar, Rev James Makepeace, who led the service was really good making it sympathetically and upbeat and bright as possible.

Thank you for your lovely sympathy card and please could you, through the Y's Retired newsletter, put a big thankyou out on our behalf, to everyone who sent cards. It really is appreciated.
Laureen, Stephen and Valerie.



Colin Mawby

10th September 1928 - 12th February 2020

The service of celebration of the lived of Colin was held at St Peter's Church, Heswall on Monday 24th February 2020 at 12noon

Poem: entitled "**Afterglow**" was read by Margaret Mahoney

I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.
I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles when life is done. I'd like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways, Of happy times and laughing times and bright and sunny days. I'd like the tears of those who grieve, to dry before the sun; Of happy memories that I leave when life is done.

Col's Prayer

Thank you Lord for a wonderful life, a wonderful wife and a great family.

I worship You, I praise You and I give thanks to You my dear Lord and ask for Your forgiveness for when I have strayed from the path You set for me.

Please dear Lord protect my lovely wife Bet, and keep her safe and well in body, mind and spirit. Thank you for bringing her through 2006 and 2013 so successfully.

Also, please care for our children, Nick, Rose and Deb, their partners Vonno and Annie. Further, Lord please look after our grandchildren Kate, Anna and Sarah and their partners, Helios, Lisa and Henrik and our great grandchildren Florence, Matilda, Elliott, Alba, Amalia and León - all very important people in my life.

Then my Lord please look with Thy mercy on my late sister June and sister Diana, my brother Bob and their partners Duke and Veronica. Also, my brother-in-law Stuart and his wife Margaret.

Bless and help Eveline and please care for all my nephews and nieces and my cousins all over the world.

Thank you Lord for my friends, locally and in different parts of Your world, for the pleasure, help and support they have given me. Bless them and care for them as they go through life.

All this I ask in the name of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Poem: You Can Shed Tears

You can shed tears that he has gone
or you can smile because he has lived.
You can close your eyes and pray that he'll come back or
you can open your eyes and see all he's left. Your heart can
be empty because you can't see him or you can be full of
the love you shared.
You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday or
you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.
You can remember him and only that he's gone
or you can cherish his memory and let it live on.
You can cry and close your mind,
be empty and turn your back
or you can do what he'd want:

smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

Dear David,

I am in receipt of the sad news of Colin Mawby's passing and hasten to share that we, the Y's Retired of the UK, have lost a valuable member.

Colin was instrumental as our only layman on the committee at that time giving tremendous support. Two occasions come to mind. One, at a most difficult time in 2008, Colin played an important role in the resurgence of the Y's Retired of the UK as a valid organisation being one of five members who supported a meeting at the Barbican YMCA London, to discuss renewal with the subsequent success of our 'group'.

Second, being the founder member of the Y's Retired of the UK Trust Fund with a gift of £525 which has served us well in supporting attendance at International meetings and the YMCA main Charity Secours Speciaux, including not least retired colleagues worldwide who could not afford such expense.

He continued his deep interest in the YMCA via Y's Retired of UK as a Consultant. His background in 'Finance' enabled us to maintain 'good practice' in such affairs. His fine personality and wide knowledge of the YMCA was indeed a bonus giving many years of service in his retirement.

We have lost a fine member.

Jim (Lamb)

Hi David

My own memory of Colin was being on the same Induction Course led by Rodney Stone at the YMCA College in E17 when Colin was just beginning as CEO at London Central. At a crucial and quiet point in proceedings, his brief case began to vibrate with a noise from within. These were the days of IRA awareness and we were a little disconcerted!! It was however his alarm clock that he had brought with him going off!

Graham (Clarke)

Dear David

Thank you for letting us know about dear Colin. We know that part of the Wirral very well. He would have received good care in Arrowe Park Hospital. I will let Mervyn know when he comes in.

Beryl (Moorehead)



100 YEARS

REG WAKE OBE

**HOLDER OF THE
GOLD ORDER OF
THE RED
TRIANGLE**

**WELL DONE THAT
MAN!!!**

OUR VERY OWN CENTENARIAN

Just as Reg wrote on his 95 birthday I'm sure he would share similar sentiments as he celebrated 100 years (6th September 2020).

"My one regret is that circumstances prevented an appropriate personal expression of deeply felt appreciation of the surprise marking of my 100th birthday anniversary. What a kind thought.

So belatedly, my sincere thanks, even if I really do not need to be reminded of passing years. 'Tis said that time alone is of little consequence but rather how well or otherwise one uses it. For me, the years have brought nothing but deep thankfulness for many blessings received and none more so than in service of Our Lord in and through the worldwide movement of YMCAs.

A respected long-time colleague, the late **Norman Ingle**, once voiced a conviction that to be part of the fellowship of the Movement of YMCAs worldwide is no small thing - and I have reason to believe him right!

With renewed thanks and every good wish.

Sincerely, **Reg Wake**

My first memory of Reg was of the time when I first met him. I was a young and callow 'youth leader' at Liverpool YMCA and was drafted in to do some sessions for Youth at Work which had just won a contract with the Distributive Industries Training Board. I was asked to meet Reg at the DITB offices in Sandbach. There the great man waved his pipe at me and said "Now don't you worry my boy I'll do all the talking!" ... which he did! After my silent participation in the meeting he said to "You were very good, you'll do well!"

I subsequently enjoyed a number of years in and out of Youth at Work - one of the main clients being a small chain of frozen food shops on the Wirral called 'Iceland'!! I like to think it's now ubiquitous success was partly due to me keeping quiet in Reg's presence!!! I also remember nervously turning up to my first AOS conference at High Leigh when Reg was President. He was at the door welcoming arrivals - equally warmly to old timers and young new bees alike!!

Many years on as I was seeking my first appointment as a Baptist Minister I was invited to explore a vacancy in Reg and Peggy's home village of Ashted. After one quick phone call I was welcomed into their home and given a warm and very objective ecumenical view of the church from Reg, a stalwart of the local parish church. He was right.....!!!!!! Think YMCA - think Reg Wake.

Graham (Clarke)

My first memory as hostel and Youth Secretary under Gen Sec Jim Lamb, was taking a group of 25 youngsters from Lincoln YMCA for a week in Lakeside South camp in July 1968. Our train journey was across country and I was so pleased that we arrived safe and sound. We had a wonderful week canoeing, camping, climbing and generally getting to know each other. Reg was busy securing the surface of the lane leading to South Camp and soon manage to enlist the lads in helping fill in the pot-holes in order to level the road. Singing round the camp fires and experiencing summer in the lakes was brilliant - thanks so much Reg for the great hospitality.

PS - I remember on the homeward train journey I had trouble keeping the boys quiet whilst engaging with an elderly lady who wanted to know everything about the fabulous activities the boys had experienced. It was quite a shock to find out that just as we came into Newark station I noticed that the lady had stopped asking questions and had gone quite pale. We will never know if it was something I said but sadly somewhere between Nottingham and Newark, she had passed away. As the train left Newark station the Guard had her laid out on the platform, so undignified - A total experience that stays with me - the week I first met Reg Wake!!

Many Many congratulations on your 100th birthday Reg - from David and Sue Smith

I first met Reg at a SYMCA Camp at Lakeside in 1977. I was very much a naive fresh-faced young youth leader who for some reason thought it a good idea to take two minibuses of young slightly unruly male and female teenagers away for a week, having never experienced such a project before. Why did Fred Daldry let me do this?!

All us male leaders shared a tent for the week and Reg was one of those leaders. As the week seemed to get longer and longer I found great support and encouragement from Reg which I have never forgotten. I was wondering why I had entered the profession! At the camp fire one night he performed a very lively and hilarious song with many actions which had everyone in stitches.

It's amazing to think that Reg was then nearing 60 years of age - and here he is at 100! Happy birthday Reg and thank you!

Best wishes. **Andrew (Jenkins)**



Well, just before the lockdown of six only, we were able to celebrate outdoors, the 100th birthday of our father Reg.



Many visitors came to the At Home mainly church buddies and neighbours. There must have been 30 for tea and buns along with the vicar, and our entire family of 3 children, 3 grandchildren, two in laws and my daughter's boyfriend.



COLIN, LIZ AND JANE WITH DAD REG

After such a busy day we packed him off to bed at 8.30pm, but when Liz got up at 1.30am to answer a call of nature, she smelled tobacco and when she went downstairs, she discovered Dad fully dressed, in front of the gas fire smoking his pipe!!

After a cup of coffee, she managed to persuade him back to bed at 2.30am. Hey ho, he does get a little confused now, but he's 100, he's allowed a little confusion.

At 100 there are few material needs but I had got printed his "Life Story" written by him in typescript after his retirement. He was delighted along with the added photos. Dad was delighted to receive over 60 cards including one from the Queen, quite a haul.

So, it was a remarkable day, he is an amazing man and I am proud to own him as my Dad. I think his service to the YMCA was remarkable, we talk often about how the Y has changed, no longer I feel a genuine calling but for many just a job..... but then, perhaps I'm biased. I think all YMCA secretaries were a breed apart.

With regards – Daughter Jane

FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

(Your very nervous {at the time} successor to be asked to walk in such well respected and competent footsteps). With your and Jim's help and encouragement the nervousness has evaporated. – Thank You.

Dear Reg' my first memory of you was on Friday afternoons at Waltham Forest in the early months of 1970. You were our lecturer at the last of the One Year YMCA Youth and Community course. Explaining the development of Youth Work, the government's recognition of the need for training and professionalised Youth Work through Albermarle and the Newsome Report "Half our Future". Occasionally we actually saw you, when the haze from your pipe smoke drifted out of the window! Ha Ha.

While at Reading YMCA (probably 1974) I was "nominated" to attend the European Youth Centre with Beverley ?? Mary (my wife) was able to meet you when you and Beverley came to dinner to brief on what to expect on our foray into Europe. Good memories and for many years I was a European!

In the early 80's I had lots of good stories from young members who had enjoyed your company and facilitation of great times of Easter at Rhyl. Some are still volunteers at Maidstone YMCA.

More recently you emerged from your Naval Smokescreen in front of your garage doors when I came to meet you to discover what I had in store as Secretary to The Y's Retired of the UK. Long may it stay the UK.

Reg' you are leaving an incredible legacy and imprint of your presence in the YMCA. I am delighted to be wishing you a Very Happy 100th BIRTHDAY. Just sad not to be wishing you the congratulations in person. You're a rarity – like 100th birthday cards!! Hope the Queen's found one.

CONGRATULATIONS

Very Warm Regards, Vic & Mary Hills.

In anticipation of Reg's 100th birthday on 5th September 2020 his daughter Jane thought it appropriate that his journey, written after his retirement, should be published in book form to sit with 'Peggy, Her Story' (which was published some years ago). Reg was delighted.

A further 29 years since Reg's writings finished at the point of their Golden Wedding, indeed Diamond Celebrations took place and 66 years of marriage clocked up before Peggy's death in 2007.

Some of the events and happenings of those years are recorded in "Her Story." Colin, Liz and Jane are conscious of how grateful they are to have had such wonderful parents, both Christians in the real sense, the children genuinely felt they had been blessed in many ways.

Jane has very kindly agreed that quotes, extracts and pictures of interest from the book, which is a reflective window of their lives, can be used in future articles, and I will attempt to sensitively copy and then reproduce "pearls" in future newsletters.

David (Editor)

YMCA and Covid: the journey travelled, the way ahead - 'Re-imagination' and 'Reset'

**A message from Carlos Sanvee,
World YMCA Secretary-General**

Dear leaders, dear friends,

At the beginning of this Covid crisis, the World YMCA adopted a response strategy built on the three pillars of 'Resilience', 'Recovery' and 'Reimagination'.

Six months later, and while the world is still battling with the health and financial challenges caused by Covid, I would like to pause and look in our rear mirror to see how far we have come, and also to share thoughts on the months ahead in our collective journey.

Covid hit different countries in different ways, and the responses of different YMCAs varied from country to country. We were amazed by how many of our YMCAs adjusted to serve their communities, despite themselves being severely affected by the crisis.

Young people have been severely affected: jobs lost, schooling interrupted, social interactions upended, mental health issues spiralling. And yet we have seen how young people have also been quick to volunteer as first responders to serve their communities, and to help those more vulnerable than themselves.

In this time of Covid, the youth sector has proved that its services are essential for millions of young people - and older people - worldwide.



YMCA leads the community response to Covid – in Savar, Bangladesh

The road travelled so far in 2020

At the global and regional level, we have continued to provide the space and opportunity for the Movement to connect, to learn, share and support each other in building resilience to navigate through the crisis. Collectively, as a global Movement, we have responded to Covid in two main ways.

First, in response to the 'Resilience' pillar of our strategy, we sought to provide ourselves with Thought Leadership – intellectual, emotional and spiritual.

We came together and talked, and invited others to share their wisdom with us. In doing so, we reaffirmed each other and our leadership. The six **Leaders Talks** of April and May assembled almost 1000 people, who were addressed by some 20 renowned global leaders from the YMCA Movement and far beyond.

We shared the principles, the lessons and the ingredients of the quest for resilience. The first of those is the need for adaptability. 'Organisations do not have needs; people have needs': our task, any way we can, is to adapt to meet those needs.

A MEETING OF LESS THAN SIX!!



It was great to have a late September get together in Victoria, near Roche, Cornwall for Sue and David Smith of Marazion and Vic and Mary Hills staying near Bude, but holidaying in Devon for a much needed short vacation.

The day was sunny but cold out of the sun, but we were able to consume crusty toasties and hot coffees to keep us warm and share memories and thoughts and news of families and friends.

The above picture only exists so you can distinguish who's who in the picture below.





ROSEMARY BENNETT

**LAST PRESIDENT OF THE UK WOMEN'S
AUXILIARY LATER TO BE CALLED –
YMCA FRIENDS**

Who passed away – 7th September 2020

Dear David,
Rosemary's passing is so sad. As she was about 10 years younger than Arthur. It was so unexpected, although I had known of her illness for about two weeks. I didn't expect her to pass away so soon.

I have been going to All Saints Church for just 40 years, when I got to know Arthur & Rosemary very well. Rosemary was a real organiser! In the late 1990s a group of us went for two holidays at the YMCA premises at Dunford, close to Midhurst just north of Chichester. It is in a wonderful area of West Sussex - almost heaven.

We got to know Arthur & Rosemary very well and their close friends Arthur and Jackie Rowell. It was a most memorable and enjoyable holiday. While Arthur was Secretary of Nottingham YMCA in Shakespeare Street, Rosemary was of great help, particularly in the domestic and catering field. They were a most effective couple. I always feel that Arthur is the next person to God himself. It is such a sad time for Arthur as they were a most loving couple.

I will remember Rosemary with great affection, as we all do with Arthur.

Regards. David Towers
Rosemary's cremation service was held on the morning of Monday 28th September with a following service celebrating her life at All Saints, Carlton, Nottingham at 2.30pm

A PRAYER FOR ALL YOUNG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Heavenly Father we pray for our students
Scattered across the country
At a time when wings are usually tested
And the world opens up,
Many of our young are finding their worlds closing in,
Locked down, isolated and far from home.
God of comfort, be with them,
Ease their fear and help them to fly,
In Jesus name,
Amen

THE LATE GREAT FRANK C BROWN

Dear colleagues:
October 2nd was the birthday of the late Frank C Brown who established the YMCA Boy's Division at Tirupattur, India. He was the Senior Secretary there for many years. John Newton and I had the privilege of working with him. When he completed his YMCA service, he decided to establish a Christian Youth Centre not far from the YMCA premises. Those two institutions stand at Tirupattur as a testimony to his dedication and service to the Indian youth. Though John lives several miles away from Beulah and I, we made sure to celebrate his birthday by raising our glasses! I thought of sharing this with Y's Retired. This news was also shared with our colleagues in Scotland.

Best wishes to you all from the IFYR (UK) Chapter
Rupert (George)

Prayers in a time of coronavirus

Love never fails

Even in the darkest moments, love gives hope.
Love compels us to fight against coronavirus alongside our sisters and brothers living in poverty.
Love compels us to stand together in prayer with our neighbours near and far.
Love compels us to give and act as one.
Now, it is clear that our futures are bound together more tightly than ever before.
As we pray in our individual homes – around the nation and around the world – we are united as one family.
So, let us pause and find a moment of peace, as we lift up our hearts together in prayer.

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

For the health workers tending the seriously ill
for the scientists working on a vaccination
for the researchers analysing data and identifying trends
for the media outlets working to communicate reality
for the supermarket workers, hygiene and sanitation providers
for the good news stories of recoveries and effective planning
for the singing from balconies by locked-down communities
for the recognition that isolation doesn't need to mean loneliness
for the notes through letterboxes offering help and support
for the internet and telephones and technology that connects
for the awakened appreciation of what is truly important
Thanks be to God.

For those who are unwell and concerned for loved ones
for those who were already very anxious
for those immune suppressed or compromised
for those vulnerable because of underlying conditions
for those in the 'most at risk to coronavirus' categories
for those watching their entire income stream dry up
for those who have no choice but to go out to work
for those who are afraid to be at home
for those who are more lonely than they've ever been
for those who are bereaved and grieving.
God be their healer, comfort and protect,
be their strength, shield and provision
be their security, safety and close companion

And raise up your Church
to be your well-washed hands and faithful feet
to be present to the pain
to respond with love in action
if even from a safe distance.
God, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.



Spotlight on... Ken Montgomery, Head of International

Joining YMCA

Overall, Ken has been with YMCA for 50 years, initially volunteering part-time for his local youth and community centre in Northern Ireland. Here, he quickly moved into the official position of General Secretary/Youth Worker, but it wasn't until his first international experience on a trip to India that Ken says he realised the true breadth of the organisation, and the colossal opportunities available on a global scale.

After two years studying youth work at the YMCA George Williams College, Ken headed back to Northern Ireland before moving in 1987 to Romford YMCA to manage housing.

Then in 1997, he joined the charity nationally as a regional officer, looking after YMCAs across the North East and Yorkshire. He was in this role for 15 years, before taking on the brand new position of Head of International, connecting YMCAs across the world and looking after the YMCA archive and heritage work.

Growing international engagement

When this role was created, there were very few YMCAs engaging globally or even on a European level. Ken believed his job was not about creating something new, but enhancing and adding to what was already there, and since being in the role, international engagement has grown from a few CEOs to hundreds of trustees, staff and young people participating in YMCA world programmes, coordinating global work groups, moderating delivery of global research, and even attending United Nation Youth Forums in New York.

Ken believes his main responsibility as Head of International has been, "plugging everyone and everything into the global movement, all the while ensuring YMCA E&W is represented at every level and giving young people across England and Wales the chance to belong, contribute and thrive from international experiences."

These experiences give young people the chance for personal and professional development, to become involved long term in international projects and to discover and develop their passions, and Ken says, "I've seen hundreds of young people succeed through these programmes and I believe this will continue."

"YMCA England & Wales have also become one of the strongest supporters of international and European involvement and we are committed to working strategically internationally to widen our reach and effect legislation to help young people. Ken has helped to link people all over the world, and his relationships and networks helped to set up Discovery Visits enabling staff to experience and learn from YMCAs across the world."

The Youth Ambassador programme

Ken's favourite part of the job has been engaging and working with young leaders generally and more recently in the Youth Ambassadors programme. He says, "The programme is so successful because it's open to anyone, and a lot of thought and quality work goes into it, with commitment from the top at national board." Since the start of the programme in 2016, Ken has worked with around 150 youth ambassadors, and he believes their depth of knowledge is invaluable.

He says, "They are immediately linked into issues being faced by young people, and the buzz they get from going on the programmes is great to see. These opportunities are never a jolly, these are the most enriching, fulfilling time you can have with YMCA, practically and intellectually."

"Challenges and reflections

In terms of challenges, Ken says pulling together the YMCA175 heritage project was one of the biggest tasks he tackled. "People were visiting from all over the world and we wanted them to feel reflected in the exhibition. It was lots of responsibility and we organised it from scratch with no idea what it would look like. However, it all paid off and came together well in the end!"

On leaving the role, Ken will miss watching young people grow and thrive in what has been a very fulfilling job, as well as the camaraderie of working at YMCA. However, he is excited to enter retirement and is already looking at launching his own coin collection and trading enterprise. He says, "One day I will buy a cottage on the coast somewhere up north, perhaps the Scottish Highlands."

"Finally, a brilliant piece of advice from Ken for those involved with YMCA, "Always engage with opportunity. If an opportunity lands in your inbox, take it, it is meant for you."