

President's ponderings

The word 'Solidarity' has been with me over the past few months. This is because I don't think that I have ever experienced the same sense of unity and recognition of mutual cooperation such as that which has become almost the norm during these days of the Covid 19.

It has been inspiring and humbling to see and experience the common commitment that has transcended all groups across the community.

The most visible evidence of this has been the support given to Captain Tom (Now Colonel Sir Tom!) in his endurance walk and the army of volunteers supporting those needing help as well as the Thursday Night Clap for NHS and care workers. This latter event has become an important part of our weekly calendar, providing an excuse to talk to the neighbours!

Sadly, it seems to take serious threats to our well-being whether they be wars, illnesses or natural disasters like floods and tornados to actually bring about this level of unity to communities and nation.

It seems they are needed to create a shared sense of purpose, to provide a joint focus on which to concentrate on and to give us a reason for joint action.

Perhaps the most famous saying of Jesus that most people would have heard of and would be able to quote- even if they couldn't name the source - is '*Love your neighbour as yourself*'.

This is more than just an instruction to be kind, it is a call to live in Solidarity and unity with one another. It is an instruction to recognise that what we want for ourselves we should also want for others and be prepared to make happen.

As YMCA people we have had and continue to experience and share in Solidarity with each other focused on our shared aim to see the holistic development and welfare of people in Body, Mind and Spirit.

As former YMCA staff members and friends we stand in Solidarity with our colleagues around the world who share in the working out this commitment in all kinds of settings.

Solidarity can be a much used word and is easily rendered valueless if it is not accompanied by action.

I am delighted, therefore, that we have been able to make a tangible expression of this Solidarity by making a donation of £7000 to Secours Specieux from the AOS/APS Benevolent Fund to support colleagues in other parts of the world who find themselves in particular need during this pandemic crisis. (John Naylor provides more details about this elsewhere within this newsletter.)

So, as we continue to watch the current circumstances created by Covid 19 unfurl, may this sense of community Solidarity continue and may we play our part in it, no matter how small.

Meanwhile, I pray that you and your love ones stay well and that you would also know the love and peace of God (His Solidarity with us) in the days ahead.

Graham

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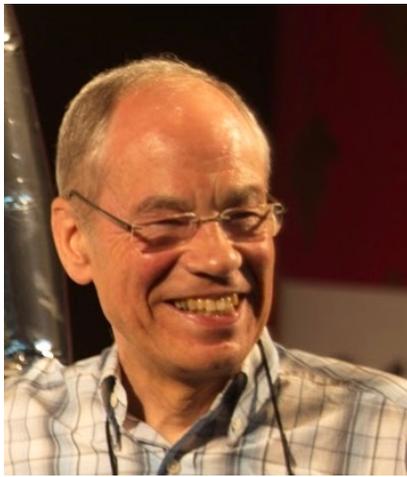
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Secours Speciaux and the Coronavirus

Secours Speciaux is set up to respond to emergencies. What bigger emergency than the coronavirus? Secours Speciaux is responding.

200,000 swiss francs (SFR) from our reserves were allocated to the emergency. The US World Brotherhood Fund matched it, so 400,000 SFR were available. At the same time an appeal was launched.

Ys Retired UK responded magnificently. Vic Hills identified that £20,000 residue of the APS Benevolent had not been used. President Graham Clarke recommended, and the Committee agreed, £7000 be donated to Secours Speciaux.

At the same time as seeking funds, with impressive leadership from World Alliance Secretary General Carlos, three strands of funding were agreed.

Secours Speciaux initially allocated 100,000 SFR to each strand, leaving over 100,000 SFR to be allocated, once the greatest needs became apparent.

- 1. Retirees with no or extremely low incomes - to receive \$500 each** as the virus hits the poor disproportionately. So far over 70 grants have been made to colleagues in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and Africa. We have already received heartfelt letters of thanks, saying what a major difference the money has made.
If you know any YMCA staff retirees who may qualify for support, please let me know.
- 2. Staff or retirees who are hospitalized with coronavirus and do not have insurance or a state medical service or adequate income - to receive \$500 on hospitalization.** On receipt of hospital bills, not paid by insurance, an application can be made for additional help. So far, no applications have been received.
- 3. Solidarity Fund to support National YMCA Movements, critically short of funds - up to \$20,000 will be given.** Secours Speciaux will support the staff element. 24 applications have been received and they are being assessed at present. Secours Speciaux contributed, as did WAY 125 Fund, Tencent, the Chinese company, and a number of National Movements.

Phil Dwyer, President of the World Federation of YMCA Retirees and Secours Speciaux Committee member, sits on the Solidarity Fund Committee. Phil has been a tower of strength in the raising Secours Speciaux funds and developing the work.

These funding strands were developed at the beginning of the pandemic and will be reviewed to see how we may need to change in the light of experience.

For example, we know that some needy National Movements have not applied to the Solidarity Fund because they felt other Movements had greater needs. It is almost certain that there will be another application round for the Solidarity Fund. More Secours Speciaux Funds may be needed.

Spin offs from these initiatives have included a simplification of Secours Speciaux application procedures and application form, a website review and consideration of communications.

The Secours Speciaux Committee recognise that there are many requests for donations, during these challenging times. However, if you would like to support Secours Speciaux, please send your donations to Andrew Jenkins or Keith Rennie (Scotland).

John Naylor – Secours Speciaux Committee Member
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IN REMEMBRANCE OF VE DAY

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=180&v=mxmKNXqwYzY&feature=emb_logo

Double click on the address above for a revealing Youtube YMCA video -

“YMCA was one of the largest providers of civilian support to soldiers, munitions workers and families during the First World War.

An unbelievable £158 million was spent on cups of tea and other refreshments, £55 million on relief stations at home and in France, £7 million on notepaper for over 200 million letters home, £1m on sports, concerts, etc and £850k on putting up families of terminally ill soldiers who would otherwise not get a chance to say goodbye.

Over 40,000 volunteers gave their time and left their homes and families to follow the troops and go wherever they were needed, and many lost their own lives in the process, either from injury or illness. The graves of these YMCA workers were granted official recognition by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and many received military and civilian honours.

Few organisations have done so much in caring for the comfort and well-being of our soldiers as your Associations.

They have given invaluable help to the Army and have immeasurably lightened the hardships which have to be endured by our troops. In recognising the excellent work that has already been done, I should like to wish you success in that which you still propose to undertake. I consider that your plans for after the war are not the least important of your activities.”

The Right Hon. David Lloyd George, M.P.
(In office 10 April 1890 – 13 February 1945)

MEMBERS CORRESPONDENCE

Memories Of Roy Weaver

Following mention of Roy in the last Ys retired Newsletter I remembered meeting Roy in Slough with the President of the Slough Soropomists to discuss the possibility of establishing a YMCA hostel in the town, Roy left the meeting but soon returned exclaiming that his car had been stolen!

The Soroptomist President who was also a JP was appalled that this could happen in here part of town. We went into the street to look and Roy realised that he had just taken delivery of a new staff car – this was blue and he was looking for the old red one! He also had a gift of leaving articles of nightwear in colleagues houses where stayed on his travels!!

Graham
Dear David,

Thank you, as ever, for your excellent bulletin and for the hard work which lies behind it.

Reference Norman Owen's fishy tale. I remember the incident very well. Initially I concluded that the car's condition was due to its having been in the possession of two habitually indigent VSOs for some hours under the Kenyan sun.

Ah well, the Good Samaritan did not enquire what was in the traveller's bag before he gave him a lift.

Jim (Thomson)

Wonderful to have news of you all. One of the blessings of current technology miracles is that we can still keep in touch, chat, even "see" each other on our home screens at will.

We are lucky in our new home. St George's is a retirement village set in a lovely Park and not far from two of our four families. We are well cared for in every respect.

Sorry the Cambridge Reunion has had to be put off but with our travel limits doubtful if we could be there. Still enjoy memories of Y friends and adventures. Please keep me on mailing list. Warm regards to all and hope you can keep C virus at bay.

Professor David (Miller)

Hi John, (Vic here)

Thank you for your recollections.

I too was at a function in Beijing attended by HRH Duke of Kent.

The other honoured guest was a former leading member of the Chinese elite who in times past was Chairman Mao's trusted Russian interpreter. I think they when back to the days of the "long march".

Anyway, in turn I was introduced to the two guests, who incidentally were talking together in Russian, as the man from the YMCA. At which this very old Chinese leader grabbed my hand and shook it most warmly. He then declared in a loud voice to the 800 guests that he was most proud of the YMCA. His father was, in years gone by, the General Secretary of the Peking YMCA.

Must go Barbara wants a shed painting.

Cheers

John (Drake)

COLLEAGUES REMINISCING

Hi John (Naylor),

Good to hear from you and learn you and our Scottish members are avoiding the CVD-19 "pest".

For some reason when I first started reading your message my mind went back to what was the opening lunch or dinner (my very first) at a YMCA European Conference. I think I was working at Reading YM at the time, so probably early 70's. The venue was Canterbury University.

You and I happened to be sitting next to each other and between courses or maybe at the end of the meal we were encouraged to stand and sing "Willy has a head like a ping pong ball" with all of the accompanied actions. It was a hoot. Don't think I've ever heard it since.. Fun memory.

I wonder what "Fun" memories other Y's Retirees recall? Take care, stay safe.

Vic (Hills)

Many thanks, Vic for your reminiscence - happy memories indeed.

As the theme seems to be international meals, here is a moment of perspective.

In the early 80's, Gerald Ward, then Chairman of the National Council, Geoffrey Palmer and I were the first YMCA visitors, as China began reopening its borders.

We were royally treated. One of our meals was at the best Peking Duck Restaurant in Beijing – simple surrounds but amazing Peking duck – the only dish they served.

Our host was the Vice President of the All China Youth Federation.

We were discussing the YMCA as one of the biggest international youth Movements in the world with, I think at the time, about 40 million members.

I asked him about the membership of the All China Youth Federation. He replied..... about 500 million members.

Cheers John (Naylor)

Dear Vic,

You asked for it - a humorous moment at an International YMCA Conference! Older members will recall Harry Hepworth a true Cockney as I remember.

Harry was asked to say Grace before a crowded evening dinner of members and various countries Interpreters/ Translators. Calmly standing in a hushed room many with heads prayerfully bowed he said loudly, "Heavenly Pa - Ta!" The room erupted in laughter by the English speaking members but equally humorous was the Interpreters in various languages explaining "Heavenly Pa - Ta"!..!!

I worked with Harry when the YMCA took over Stockwell King Georges House from Sir John Benn when he 'gave the Premises to the YMCA on the condition we took over the 60 boys in residence! Now there is another story!

Enjoy life! Warm regards

Jim (Lamb)

Jim,

Good to hear from you. You may have started an avalanche here, David Smith may just have the beginnings of a page in the next Newsletter. Let's hope our colleagues have a memory or two to share to keep us smiling.

Vic (Hills)

Members Correspondence

From Neil Sjoberg Harlow Essex UK (late April)

In self isolation with wife as instructed as we are over 70.

Haven't had Covid 19 as far as I know but both of us have had mild symptoms that could have been.

As we are in isolation we have seen no one and the incubation period passed thus.

Family member had symptoms consulted Dr stayed at home got better.

Friend had it admitted to hospital very weak, very distressed, recovered back home no one else in his household affected.

Dear editor David,

Many thanks for the wonderful Newsletter and attachment. Brought back many memories when I started my first job with BBBF at Park Hill that was in 1961 I was just 21 years of age. Then on to the YMCA Training Course, then Bolton YMCA, then Neath YMCA. Then change of age group when I became General Secretary Age Concern, Nottinghamshire. Yesterday, Good Friday, Edna and myself should have been at the Neath YMCAs 139th Good Friday Breakfast. But sadly not! But I have received a short presentation from Neath which I forward below:-

*Dear Friends of YMCA Neath,
As you know, we sit down together at 8:30 am on Good Friday each year. This Good Friday, 10th April 2020, would have been the 139th time we had broken bread together to commemorate the Crucifixion of Christ.*

Having temporarily shut our doors to 'Save Lives' in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, the trustees and friends of YMCA Neath have put together a video message. We hope you watch it, enjoy it, and join us when we say God Bless everyone.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlTiq9b5Odg>

*Thank you for your ongoing support,
Kevin Lewis,
Chairman*

Take Care David and a Happy Easter to you and yours.

David (Tipping).

Thank you David (Smith) for sharing the link. I have many happy memories of the YMCA in Neath from when my father was the General Secretary there and before I even thought of working in the YMCA myself. I have indeed helped out on Neath YMCA Good Friday Breakfasts – many, many years ago!

It is certainly worth watching the video and what a shame it is we could not gather at this time this year.

Very best wishes,

Andrew (Jenkins)

MESSAGE FROM NIGERIA

Dear David

I want to acknowledge receipt of your Easter Greetings as well as your message which has drawn attention to the global epidemic COVID-19. The effect of this virus on the Christian family around the world is unbelievable. It is the first time in my 81 (almost 82) years that a worldwide disease is keeping us away from everything including our places of worship.

For us in Nigeria it is unheard of. Most of us were not alive during the plague of 1819 but that was child play in comparison.

Reading the letter from the National General Secretary was nostalgic reminding me of my days as National General Secretary in Nigeria.

Thank you very much for your message I just wanted you to know that I received your mail and also that it got read
Best wishes

Cornelius T Olaomo

Dear David,

Thank you so much for sending me the May newsletter – the article and photo you put in of Kathleen (Akrill) has come out very well and is very clear. I am forwarding copies to our family as I am sure they will enjoy reading the article and learning about the work of the group.

I wish you all much success in the future,
Kind regards

Pamela Gelder

Dear David S and Y's Retired friends.

Many thanks for the latest Newsletter. I have spent a hunk of "self isolating" time reading the many varied and interesting contributions from our members.

I am struck by the enhanced sense of community, love and common purpose which the present crisis seems to have generated among Y's Retired and other friends and the caring that is being extended to neighbours who are isolated from friends and relations and unable to care for themselves.

The welcome sun this week, shining and warm has been a great help!

Our family keep us in check with regular phone calls, shopping as needed, and the grandchildren often appear on their bikes at our windows.

For this we are grateful but miss the personal chats and cuddles!

Hope you are coping Ok. Take care and God bless!

Warm regards

Professor David (Miller)

I saw the attached **YMCA Order of the Red Triangle Badge** for sale on the Internet at Rennies, Folkestone website.

I was wondering when and to whom these were issued.

Stephen (Milner)



The operative words are that the badge is awarded for 20 years of service to the YMCA and over.

They are awards held by the National Council of YMCAs for such service.

A prayer for this uncertain time

**Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.**

Hi David,
I am writing to let you know of the passing of the Reverend Tom Hall who died on Friday 10 April 2020 aged 99. Tom lived at Thornbury and was a former YMCA BBBF Assistant Warden at Clifford Lodge, Clifford Chambers, Warwickshire from 1944 to 1948. Tom went on to become a Methodist minister.

The Service of Thanksgiving and Committal took place at Lodge Hill Chapel on Tuesday 28 April 2020 at 11am. Hanna and I visited Tom at Thornbury a few years ago. We also visited the former BBBF Hostel, Clifford Lodge at Clifford Chambers, Warwickshire where Tom worked and we met the owners.

Stephen (Milner)

Hi Y's Retired membership and friends,

I know that many people receiving this email will be aware of Naomi's (our Daughter's) involvement with South Sudan as a Research Fellow with the LSE. Now that most African states are beginning to experience COVID 19, articles are being written and published to make people aware of the developing situation and, if and when you do pray, to ask for your prayers for nations, including South Sudan, that sadly do not enjoy a national health service neither they expect much help from the international humanitarian community.

I have attached below a paper written by Naomi inviting us to reflect and pray. Please click for the in depth article from Naomi's Blog:

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2020/05/17/covid-19-south-sudans-un-protection-of-civilian-sites-poc-trust-unmiss/>

Thank You
Stay Alert. Stay Safe.
David (Pendle)



Hi David.

What an amazing email you kindly passed onto me today from Anja in Germany, I have replied straight away to Anya.

I think it must have been the early 90's when Anja and I last met when she came to visit me in Plymouth.

The background story is that Anja was a student who came to Winchester to sort out a placement and to arrange a start date. All was arranged and then, I was called to hospital for a hysterectomy and Anja was literally on her way to stay with me for three months.

No time to stop her, so my parents who were coming to look after me had to host her. They got on extremely well, Anja was thrown in at the deep end at the YM but I and the Board were really pleased to have her.

I was in hospital for 10 days but I think it gave my parents something else to focus on too. We lost touch when she married and moved to another city. I am so pleased we are back in touch thanks to the Ys Retired of UK website.

Hope you and Sue are keeping well.
Every Blessing
Hilary (Robins)

Hi David,
Thought you might like to know that I have made telephone contact with Anja again. Really fascinating talking to someone also in lockdown but in another country. As part of the story you may like to know that she came to Winchester because she was a voluntary youth worker at Geissen YMCA and Winchester was or is twinned with Geissen Blessings
Hilary (Robins)

Dear Colleagues,
Thank you for your rapid response and replies to confirm that you are in agreement to transfer £7,000 to SS. This evening I responded to Richard Lock instructing National Council (as The Custodian Trustee) to transfer the £7,000 agreed to Secours Speciaux as quickly as possible. I'll be in touch when the transfer has been completed.

Warm regards,
Vic (Hills)

VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY

This special day of 28th May 2020 saw the very Happy Birthday of **Arthur Bennett**, who reached the grand age of 97. Arthur shared his special day of celebration with his wife Rosemary, son and daughter Matthew and Suzanne and with all the grandchildren. Arthur's last appointment before his retirement was that of CEO of Nottingham YMCA.

Prayers in a time of coronavirus



Dear David,
Many thanks to you for keeping us informed and entertained during our "Locked Down" enforcement.

I want to tell a little bit about some of the work that I've been attempting to do is to support the Mullaitivu YMCA in North Eastern Sri Lanka.

You will recall that it was near to Mullaitivu where the last tragic days of the civil war between the LTTE (Tamil Tigers) and the Sinhala Sri Lankan Armed forces took place in May 2009. This is where thousands of Tamil civilians lost their lives. (See U N /OHCHR Rupert Colville Report) There are horrifying reports on:-

- (1) Unlawful killings
- (2) Enforced disappearances
- (3) Torture
- (4) Recruitment of Children
- (5) Attacks on Civilians
- (6) Denial of Humanitarian Assistance
- (7) Violations against IDPs

I was in Sri Lanka in February and March this year and visited the Mullaitivu YMCA and was saddened at the lack of support that they have been receiving. At present they occupy a small bungalow where they operate a library and conduct some classes. Their main programme is running sports activities in local schools with the assistance of two "staff" though neither of the two "staff" are paid, only receiving "Pocket Money"

Their Project Proposal for which I have promised to seek support is to sponsor 72 students from 3 local schools particularly supporting those who have been most affected by the civil war.

Many of their families lost loved ones and in addition, their homes and properties were destroyed. They are still traumatized by their experiences.

Their livelihoods too have been affected as much of their farming land is still occupied by the military.

At present, due to the Corona Virus pandemic, the opportunity to raise funds is very limited as most NGOs are struggling to maintain to fund their existing work. It was my hope to interest Y-Care International in this project, but sadly it seems that they do not at present support any work on the island.

Anyway, these challenges will not go away and God willing, we will find a way to demonstrate our love and caring for those who appear to be at present "The least of these our brethren"

John (Newton)

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

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 have ever been
for those who are bereaved and grieving.

God be their healer, comfort and protection,
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.** Dear friends - Stay Safe

THE PASSING OF TED EWING

Dear friends,
Just heard the sad news via Beryl Goodall and Graham Clarke that **Ted Ewing** aged 98 passed away on Friday 29th May 2020.

Ted will probably be best remembered for leading the Secretaries Training Course when it was based at London Central. I think Peter Brooks, Paul Harper, Arthur Bennett and Ted Milburn CBE may all be an alumni of that time. More info about Ted's life in the September Newsletter.



Protect A Child Project

The implementation of this project to improve the life quality of children and families in Northern of Thailand to protect them against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Human trafficking, has been a preventive task continuing for 27 years. The main objective of the project is to provide sustainable development of children, youth, their families and communities and better life quality with Multi-Disciplinary Network Organizations working together to protect children, youth and people in the community against involvement in Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking.

The main core of the implementation is the focus towards the improvement of life quality and life skills of children in the home centre and in communities which are at risk with Human Trafficking. Initially, the project is aimed to provide educational opportunities, support funds for education, promote knowledge, develop life's skills and diverse occupation and also to provide support for the community protection network including coordination of the cooperation among Multi-Disciplinary Network Organizations in protecting and assisting children who have been victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking.

To provide knowledge and actual experience and to be exposed to the various problems and obstacles; all of these provided many lessons learned to improve and solve problems and together create a development task plan on life quality of children in the future.

The Project Objectives are:-

1. To improve the life quality of children in the home centre and promote the quality of children's council;
2. To promote children and youth networking implemented to protect them against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking;
3. To support community networking for the protection of children's safety against Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation;
4. To develop and strengthen life quality of both local and international children and youth;
5. To coordinate the cooperation among Multi-Disciplinary Networking Organizations for the protection and assistance to children involved in Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking.
6. To promote the development of children and youth power through cultural exchange project of Thailand with foreign countries.



As a charity and a family of colleagues, YMCA are deeply concerned with the ongoing challenges faced by COVID-19. Like you, we are uncertain of how deep this virus will impact our communities and how long it will continue to be in our lives.

YMCA's unique nature is particularly affected by this crisis.

Our work stretches across every aspect of the community and throughout people's lives. Whether it is the youth clubs we deliver to thousands of young people, the nursery provision we provide to tens of thousands of families' or the health and wellbeing services we deliver to the elderly and vulnerable, YMCA supports communities across the country; every hour of every day, through the good times and the bad.

Our frontline work is and will continue to be significantly disrupted by the Coronavirus outbreak. It is affecting those people who come and go from our services as well as those individuals who depend on it as a lifeline and place to call home. With more than a hundred YMCAs across England and Wales, YMCAs are facing a multitude of challenges in keeping our support operational. Not least, ensuring that our staff and volunteers are safe whilst at work.

We are also bracing ourselves for the financial impact of COVID-19. As challenge events are cancelled such as the London Marathon; our income is reduced from membership services like our gyms and nurseries; and we see less visitors come through the doors of our charity shops; YMCA's ability to support our communities and those most vulnerable may be put into jeopardy.

As a country we are facing an historic crisis and YMCA has considerable experience in being there when times are tough. Our work during both the first and second World Wars, supporting troops on the frontlines and their families back home, is a testament to our commitment and something which still holds true to this the day and underpins our values as an organisation.

Our communities *need* YMCA support; the homeless young people for whom YMCA is their only sanctuary; the key workers whose children will remain in our nurseries; those facing increased anxiety but still receiving our mental health support online; and the isolated young people engaging with friends through our virtual and distance youth work activities.

While financially we will be tested and emotionally may become weary, our resolve will not weaken. As we support our young people and communities through this most difficult of times, all we ask of our friends and supporters is that you do what you can to support your local YMCA. YMCA has been in our communities for more than 175 years and we fully intend to be here for another 175 years.

Many happy returns to our new centenarian



Many congratulations to Ron Lane who had his 100th birthday on February 19th this year. Ron's son, Ken, sent Vic Hills the attached two photos of the celebrations which apparently include folk we were members/staff at Croydon YM during Ron's time there. Ken was also a YM employee with BBBF, but is not in contact with Stephen, so Vic is putting them in touch.

Ken Lane writes:-

Ivanka was one of the first Females at Croydon YMCA and she was part of the big Polish group that came to the Hostel. Muthu and his wife Shantha, married as a result of a friendship that Dad cultivated.

Dad was at Croydon YMCA in the 1970's when the Queen Mother opened the new building. He left in 1982, and a group of the Polish residents presented Dad and his wife Phyl a silver "Thank You" goblet.

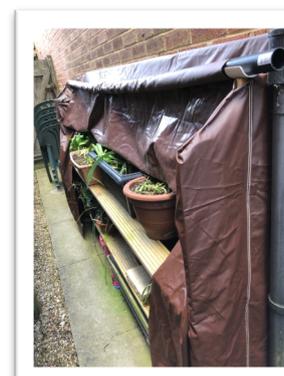
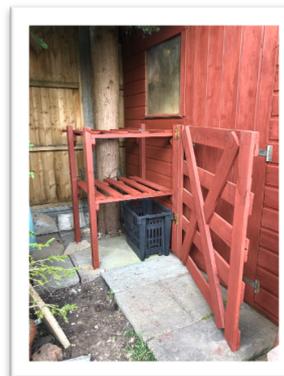
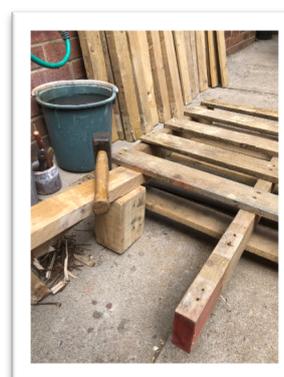
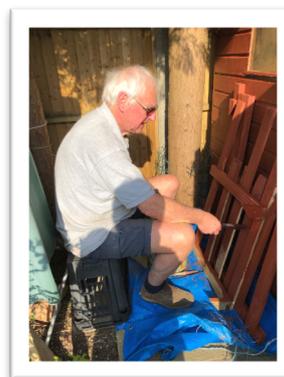


The names of the folk in the group picture above seated and standing around Ron are from left to right in the photo:-

Ivanka Lennon, John Loydd, Shantha Muthulingasmy, Jim Lennon Muthu M., John Robert's with Thu Robert's in front of him, then to the right is Vache Gulbekian.

Information brought to us by **Vic (Hills)**

Vic Hills making the most of 'lockdown'



As we wandered our estate on our permitted walks in this CVD-19 restriction of movement, discovering among other things, a garden where the flags almost changed daily, footpaths and alley ways we didn't know existed. We also saw empty pallets laying around in gardens doing nothing, where building work had ceased! On request the owners allowed them to be relocated to No 5.

One of the benefits of a School Technical Education in the late 50's early 60's, means that carpentry & engineering have always been DIY hobbies. The "lock down" time has meant that pallets once dismantled – {thank goodness for Youtube – it revealed better ways than I knew on how to knock them apart} - have now become a rack for garden pots and other items, a gate to hide them, plus repairs to the mini greenhouse frame and roof. In the future pallet wood may well evolve into planters, plant stands, patio railing repairs, and other items yet to be imagined and designed. All at no cost – except for screws, glue, (I rarely use nails), hinges, bolts and wood treatment, already in stock. Any ideas for reusing pallet wood for our small garden or items I could make to be sold in the charity "bric a brac" and furniture shops I am a trustee for would be welcomed.

Repurposing a large tent groundsheet.

The tent was a gift from Peter and Ali Robertson, in the 80's when they no longer needed it. In the 90's it became known as the swamp at Eurocross events. Several years ago, the groundsheet was separated from the canvas, which was fraying and donated to the tip!. The groundsheet having been stored for a "rainy day" has been brought into use and reconfigured as a waterproof blackout cover for storing the many pots of bulbs that flowered in the early spring, ready for 2021. Speaks a lot for the quality of the material, now nearly 50 years old.