



## President's ponderings

In my Easter Assemblies for the local primary schools this year, I have asked the children to vote for their favourite day of the year.

The options were:

- Your Birthday (Cake and Presents!)
- Christmas Day (lots of presents!)
- Holidays (Lots of free time) or
- Easter Day (lots of chocolate!).

Sadly, as these were all online or pre-recorded talks, I have not been able to tally up the actual votes given for each day!

The point that I was making was that, for Christians, Easter Day would be at the top of the list. Yes, the other days are important and should be celebrated, but Easter Day is the most important of them.

It is at the very centre of our faith, bringing us the message of Hope and New life through the Resurrection of Jesus. If we do not celebrate The Resurrection, we have nothing!

Of course this year we all may have had or are looking forward to another special day-JAB DAY! in fact, two days - Jab1 Day and Jab 2 DAY.

My Jab1 Day was at the headquarters of the Roche Pharmaceutical company in Welwyn City. This was a bit of a disappointment as most other people who I know had been sent to the rather infamous Night Club frequented by most local young people at some time in their lives. I just wanted to see their faces when I told them that *'I've been up Batchwood!'* That would have shocked them!!

However, there is something that connects Easter Day and Jab Days!

Both were unexpected! Just as we did not expect to be part of the millions rolling our sleeves up this time last year, so the friends of Jesus did not expect to have witnessed the events of Good Friday and then finding an empty tomb.

Just as the Jab has brought light and hope and the promise of a new life after lockdown, so too the Risen Christ brings us light and hope for the future.

He demonstrates God's gift of freedom from the 'locking down' power of sin, evil and darkness.

As dawn broke on that Easter morning, the lives of the women visiting the tomb were changed from grief and sadness to lives full of celebration and assurance of new beginnings in the presence of God, just as when we leave the Vaccination centre (wherever it is!) our grief and sorrow is mediated with hope and new beginnings for the future.

Have a Blessed Easter!

Graham

**PRESIDENT** : Graham Clarke  
The Manse, 4 Sherwood Ave, St Albans, Herts AL4 9QL  
T 01727 857786  
E: [Julia-graham@talk21.com](mailto:Julia-graham@talk21.com)

**SECRETARY**: Vic Hills  
5 Kernham Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6GB  
T: 07974 683627  
E: [vic\\_hills@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:vic_hills@yahoo.co.uk) (underscore between Vic & Hills)

**TREASURER**: Andrew Jenkins  
33 Amesbury Road, Penylan, Cardiff, CF23 5DW  
T: 029 2031 7153  
E: [a.jenkins@ntlworld.com](mailto:a.jenkins@ntlworld.com)

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR & WEBSITE DESIGNER**:  
David H Smith  
Chyreene Warra, Rosehill, Marazion, TR17 0HB  
T 01736 719432  
E: [ses.dhs@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ses.dhs@hotmail.co.uk)  
Website address:- [www.yretired.co.uk](http://www.yretired.co.uk)

**SCOTLAND Y'S RETIRED REP**:- Keith Rennie  
78 Dundee Rd, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 1DW  
T: 01382 774092  
E: [keith@beechhedges.com](mailto:keith@beechhedges.com)

**SECOUR SPECIAUX**:- John Naylor  
Orchard House, 25b Cramond Glebe Rd, Edinburgh, EH6 6NT  
T: 0131 312 8956  
E: [Cjohn.naylor@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:Cjohn.naylor@blueyonder.co.uk)

## MEMBERS CORRESPONDENCE

Following the extracts from Reg's book in the previous newsletter – correspondence arrived from our Scottish Ys Retired of UK friend, Jim Thomson.

Dear David,

In the extract of 'Peggy's Story' compiled by Reg, he mentions the port city of Chittagong. Oddly enough, during the many hours when Reg and I would 'Swing the Lamp', that name never emerged. Chittagong was railhead for those of us who served in the Arakan Sector of the 14th Army. Much better known was the Assam Sector where the Japanese Army was halted at Kohima.

I was Indian Army and with 120 Pathan Engineers put together the bits and pieces which armies tend to break. We also had 3 Bengali Christians as Clerks. Had Reg and I reminisced about Chittagong, my contribution might well have been something like this.

We were a mobile unit and, as you can imagine, loading a complete workshop together with 120 Muslims and 3 Christians into 3 ton lorries took patience. On one occasion, just as we were ready to move off, a jeep pulled up and a uniformed figure alighted.

His cap badge bore the symbol of the red triangle and he insisted that my three Bengalis alight and be led in a prayer meeting. It was my introduction to the YMCA.

My 120 Muslim Pathans, who had sweated for 45 minutes in the trucks, were ready to begin the second Indian mutiny. They forgave me and we remained together until the end of the war. Then, no doubt, they went back to the North West Province to commit mayhem.

Ten years ago, I returned to Chittagong and visited the beautifully kept war memorial. On one of the gravestones was the badge of my old Corps together with the name of the soldier and his rank. It was given as 'Sweeper'. What was known in these days as an 'Untouchable'. At the base of the stone were written these words. **"In this place he is honoured"**.

Kindest regards. **Jim (Thomson)**

### THIS SPACIOUS PLACE

Jan Cooper and her publisher are doing another promotion of her autobiography "This Spacious Place." The book shares a powerful true story of overcoming depression and might be just the read to any sufferers out there, especially after a long and destructive covid19 pandemic.

Clearly appraised by Revd Paul Deeming who comments, "Here is a reminder to us all of what the healing grace of God can do."

Copies of Jan's book can be obtained by emailing Jan at [jancooper48@hotmail.com](mailto:jancooper48@hotmail.com) – by phone 01424 425527 or writing to Jan at – 8, Sedgebrook Gardens, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 25Z. All monies received for the book are gifted to Crowhurst Christian Healing Centre. To date over £600 has been gifted in this way.

## WELCOME INTO MEMBERSHIP

### PAUL KEERIDGE



We welcome into membership a long standing YMCA lay colleague in Paul Kerridge – owner of KJ Holdings pictured above with his wife Thelma.

Paul's first contact with the YMCA was when he was a young lad and he stayed as a resident in Norwich YMCA. That was in 1954.

Paul then joined Cambridge YMCA in 1957 and has continued as a member, Treasurer and Chairman giving great guidance and support to the Association over many, many years up to 2000 plus.

He then shared his knowledge and expertise as representative on the YMCA East Anglian Regional Executive from 1965 and then as part of Central Region of YMCAs from 1994. Paul represented the Central region at National YMCA Meetings. Through the years, Paul has combined his YMCA lay service with his firm KJ Holdings.

### THE NEXT MUTATION

We're still battling COVID-19, and the next strain is here already. The \*NILE Virus, type C\*

Virologists have identified a new Nile virus - type C. It appears to target those who were born between 1930 & 1970

Symptoms:

1. Causes you to send the same message twice.
2. Causes you to send a blank message
3. Causes you to send a message to the wrong person.
4. Causes you to send it back to the person who sent it to you.
5. Causes you to forget to attach the attachment.
6. Causes you to hit SEND before you've finished.
7. Causes you to hit DELETE instead of SEND.
8. Causes you to SEND when you should DELETE.

It is called the \*C-NILE\* virus!

And if you can't admit the above characteristics, you've obviously caught the mutated strain —

The \*D-NILE\* virus.

## Obituary of John Wilford

Dear David,

Can I use you as a conduit to the Y Retired. The Guardian (30.1.21) printed an obituary of John Wilford, Yorkshire TV editor. I have a feeling that he was on the first "Dunford in August" week, and that it was thanks to him that the way was opened to the Royal Gala Performance, in aid of YMCA, at Harrogate. It must have been Alex Goodall who had his eye on him. Anyway, if anything justified those still memorable weeks, it was that. Is my memory correct?

The obituary makes no reference to the YMCA, but it does mention that "he was also coach for a local boys' football team". And that rang a bell.

With kindest regards,

**Clyde (Binfield).**

Yes, David and Clyde,

John Wilford was an early Dunford graduate and it was from this contact that we were able to begin to do the deal that resulted in Yorkshire TV Royal Variety Performance at Harrogate Conference Centre.

The show was broadcast early in the New Year to celebrate the International Year of Youth. Up and coming young stars were twinned with mature established stars. David Frost was the compere.

Sir Paul Fox was head of Yorkshire TV at the time and this was the first ever Royal Variety Show based outside London.

John Wilford was either a member or the Chair of the branch of Leeds YMCA, at which Graham Clarke was secretary. John was full of admiration for Graham and his work in that tough part of Leeds. He carried this message about the great work of the YMCA to Paul Fox based on Graham's outstanding example. Obviously, Graham knew John well.

I have copied Graham, as he may have more to add about John Wilford.

I could give more information about the way the deal was done (Gerald Ward and his royal contacts were pivotal). It was also a very successful fund raiser. If you are interested in detail about the fund raising, David Bedford would be the man to contact. If you want some stories about the evening, I can give one or two.

Hope this covers some of the points.

All the very best

**John (Naylor)**

### NEWS OF BERYL GOODALL

#### Editor

Just received a lovely phone message from 91 year old, great grandmother - **Beryl Goodall.**

She has recently moved down from Berwick on Tweed to be nearer to her son and his family in Wetherby. A town Beryl knows well having previously lived there for many years with her husband Alex, YMCA Regional Secretary of the North East.

Dear all

I also missed this obituary in the Guardian! John is correct in his e mail The bigger picture is this. John Wilford answered an advert I placed in the local newsagents for volunteer help at Hawksworth Wood.

He had a passion for football and for working with hard to reach young people.

He took on the task of forming a youth football team at the YMCA which he disciplined into a regular Sunday league team which was remarkable given the chaotic lifestyle of these young men

At the height of the Northern Ireland troubles when the Peace Women were to the fore John through his journalism became friends with a priest in Tadcaster a Mr Michael Buckley. Between the three of us and with some support from Belfast YMCA we had a series of exchange visits between Hawksworth and the St Peter Immaculata Youth Club in the Divis Flats.

On our trips to Ireland – ( free flights blagged from AirUK!) we played both protestant and Catholic Youth Club teams and even had a three way five aside tournament with teams from both sides of the peace wall. On one visit we visited the Army Barracks in Hollywood for lunch and A catholic monastery for dinner all in the same day.

When St Peters came to Leeds they bunked down at Lawnswood YMCA and played against Hawksworth, Osmondthorpe and Beeston YMCAs.

His theory behind the Irish Adventure was to confront our Leeds Tykes with a picture of what a really broken community could be like as that was where Hawksworth was heading at the time.

At some point he joined the Leeds YMCA board but I was not aware that he was Chair ( That was Colin France) Sadly some dispute arose and he gave up his YMCA involvement as I was leaving Leeds. However at one point we needed a manager for a second team and he recruited John Meade the first producer of Countdown and the first programme ever broadcast on Channel 4.

I am now going to hunt through the recycling hoping to find the said newspaper!"!

**Graham (Clarke)**

Very sad news of Mavis Allbutt. She had been a pillar of strength in the Central Region of YMCAs. Mavis was one of the first female CEOs within the Region alongside Ann Gough (Wolverhampton) and Irene Liddy (Birmingham).

Mavis helped establish the monthly APS newsletter which I edited, with young volunteers from Stoke YMCA arranging the printing and postage to all parts of the UK.

Along with husband Colin, the residents of Stoke YMCA, the largest residential building in Hanley, were just a wider part of her family. She show real concern for each and every one of them.

She also had an excellent rapport with her staff. She showed faith in the teenagers by establishing an alcoholic bar inside the premises, which also served the sporting community of the YMCA and folk from the local surrounding community. This also helped to fund a variety of projects.

Her faith journey continued when she was ordained as an Anglican priest, yet still working for the YMCA until her retirement.

Mavis was a blessing to many folk who fondly remember her humour, smiling face and kindness.

**David (Smith)**

**THE REVEREND MAVIS ALLBUTT**  
**RIP 19 02 21**



Bill Sargison, Arthur Bennett, Ted Milburn, Stuart Page, Mike Kent, Paul Harper, Peter Brookes, Bernard White, Mervyn Moorehead, Allan Reed, are some of the possible names in the picture. Do you know of others?



The privilege, pleasure and joy of knowing Mavis Allbutt has lasted some 44 years.

I was asked to meet with the Board of the Stoke on Trent YMCA to see if I would help them find a way forward. The new building had been open four months and was in a muddle. I was told I had complete freedom to do whatever I felt necessary with an exception – the Office Secretary was very loyal and was remaining!

I was obviously interested to meet this paragon of virtue! Mavis Allbutt was loyal, sincere, committed, compassionate, efficient, interested in her workplace and fellow employees and determined to see a real future for the YMCA. Her loyalty immediately passed to me; she was the most underused person I had ever met and knew nothing about the Movement. She was gradually introduced to the YMCA world outside the immediate city and took a real interest in the college students from around the world.

She very quickly introduced me to her husband and young family, all of whom became involved in the work and a deep friendship was formed. Mavis became my PA, effectively working with me rather than for me.

Stoke on Trent YMCA was officially opened by HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh – hence the building being named Edinburgh House. I was asked to put together some notes about the new YMCA and the building; this I did and Mavis typed everything including the programme and sent them off to the Palace. On the morning HRH arrived, was introduced to a number of people, including Mavis, and invited to unveil the plaque. He didn't have a scrap of paper in his hand, but knew the chairman had skipped an item, which Prince Philip re-introduced then, as Mavis put it, "out of his mouth came every word I had typed". (She had a copy in her purse!).

She took a personal interest in the welfare of the overseas students and gave an amount of her personal time to assisting them, also knowing most of them came from countries with their own YMCA Movements.

Working closely, as she did, with the church I was not surprised at receiving a phone call inviting me to her ordination! The Reverend Mrs Mavis Allbutt continued as CEO of Stoke on Trent YMCA until her retirement from the post. Mavis continued her priestly duties.

Mavis and husband Colin adopted two children, Stephen and Lisa. Stephen joined the army but was present at the ordination. Tragedy struck on the night of Mavis' retirement from the YMCA. Stephen had been killed when his "Challenger 2 tank was accidentally hit by another Challenger 2 during a period of multiple engagements with Iraqi enemy forces". Mavis continued supporting her daughter in law and grandchildren.

She died on the forty-third anniversary of having met Prince Philip. The world is a lesser place without Reverend Mavis, but the better for her time and love given to it.

Thank you Mavis - Rest in Peace and Rise in glory.  
Funeral 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

**John (Berry)**



Ted and Jeannie Milburn, Peter and Anne Brookes, Colin and Bet Mawby, Paul and Liz Harper, Stuart and Hillary Page + 2 more

More sad news David, re Mavis. Inevitably so, as we are all getting older. Mavis was a very kind and caring person, of whom I have happy memories - bless her.

**Roger (Hunt)**

Hi David,  
Thank you for sharing the sad news of the passing of Mavis Allbutt. She was a fine colleague executing her duties as CEO at Stoke coping with problems professionally.

She studied to deepen her well known skills in Youth Counselling which continued throughout her career in the YMCA and vocation in the church.

Warm regards,

**Jim (Lamb)**

Hi David,  
So sad to have this news of Mavis. Stoke was one of the many places I enjoyed visiting and valuing her friendship and wise leadership at Stoke Y.

Too many deaths!

Take care.

**Rev Ron (Ingamells)**



## Spotlight on... Y's Retired of the UK

### Drumming up future support from today's YMCAs secretariat

We spoke to **Graham Clarke, President of Y's Retired of the UK**, about his time with YMCA, what staying in touch means to him and how others can join the network.

#### **How did you first become involved with YMCA?**

I joined YMCA in 1977 as a youth worker in Liverpool after seeing an advert in a graduate directory. It fitted with my Christian beliefs and having studied at college to work in the probation service, I realised prevention and help were needed early on in people's lives, which is what YMCA provides. After a few years in Liverpool I moved to Leeds to be a Youth and Community Worker on a housing estate, before becoming Regional Secretary for the South and South East in 1987. I then worked for YMCA England (now YMCA England & Wales) until the year 2000. I was also involved in European YMCA projects and am in the archives group because I'm interested in YMCA history.

#### **Why did you decide to join the group?**

During my time at YMCA England, I had been struggling with the idea of becoming a church minister, and so in 2000 I left the staff and became a Baptist Minister. I initially became involved in the group because so many of my old colleagues were part of it and it was a good way to stay in touch. I wasn't retiring age like many of them, but after 25 years you build up a lot of friendships and I didn't want to lose contact.

#### **Why is it important for YMCA folk to stay in touch?**

Working for YMCA is not a normal job that you can switch off from, it's something that many of us are passionate about. I'm passionate about the fact that it's a Christian organisation, it helps people, and it provides opportunities for young people. I know what it's given me as a person and I want to continue to give something back. Being a part of Y's Retired is a way of staying in touch with the movement as well as the people. We're connected to the World Fellowship of Y's Retired, so hear from colleagues all over the world about what's happening over there. We are all about remembering and keeping in touch with old colleagues but also staying a part of something that is bigger than just an organisation.

#### **Who can join Y's Retired?**

We welcome all former YMCA workers, including those who weren't paid members of staff, because a lot of people gave many years to being board members or volunteers. The word 'retired' can also be misleading, as if you've simply moved onto another organisation, that's fine too. There is no time or seniority factor - we are open and welcome to everyone and encourage anybody who has had an association with YMCA and wants to maintain it to join us.

My challenge as president of the group is to build the organisation and bring more people. I would like to celebrate a movement of the past and a movement of the present with new members all the time. How many Y's Retired members are there? We currently have around 137 members, including spouses and widowers of those who have passed away. There was a generation just before me where you had a lot of husband and wife teams within YMCA, due to their Christian calling and shared values. We think it's important to stay connected with them too.

#### **How does the group stay in touch?**

We send regular newsletters keeping you updated on what's happening, and especially including letters and notes of encouragement during this time. Regional groups will usually organise reunions, from lunches to residential visits, but obviously in the last year none of us have been able to meet. We are hoping to organise more Zoom events now that people are getting used to it. How does the membership fee work? Our membership fee is £20 a year, £5 of which goes to Secours Speciaux, a charitable organisation that supports YMCA staff around the world who don't have a pension, for example those in Africa or Latin America. In 2019 we gave £4,000 from Y's Retired in the UK.

#### **What was your favourite part of working for YMCA?**

Here in the church we just had a building project and I got chatting to one of the tradesman who said he was from Eastbourne. When I told him I was involved with YMCA projects there, he said he had lived in the YMCA hostel and that 'they really got me back on track.' Eastbourne YMCA was a project I worked on 25 years ago, and now here is a young guy saying they got him back on track. To see the full circle of how the work has changed someone's life, I was blown away. For me, that's what it's all about. You can never tell the impact you've had on people years and years ahead, but people do remember and if our work enabled him to have a stable life, that's amazing.

#### **Where would you like to see YMCA in the future?**

I would like to see YMCA staying true to its values of being there for young people, those of faith and those of none. Reaching out to young people to help them fulfil their greatest potential and focusing on the triangle of body, mind and spirit. It's not just about providing a bed for the night, it's meeting the deeper needs of people. The internationalism is also special to me. This is an international movement and we should remember there are people doing really valuable things in other parts of the world. Also, keeping the public aware that we are more than just a disco song!

#### **What advice would you give to people working at YMCA now?**

I would say remember you're there for the people you're serving. I've had some horrible times back in the day, seeing the youth centre get vandalised, for example, was soul destroying. But all the way through I had to keep telling myself, I'm there for them. No matter how many disappointments you might have, remember you're there for the people you are serving.

Y's Retired of the UK welcome anybody who would like to become part of the network. Please contact Vic Hills, Secretary of Y's Retired, or visit the Y's Retired of the UK website: [www.yretired.co.uk](http://www.yretired.co.uk) for more information.



### Reg's story continues:-

I need not rehearse the process by which my appointment as Youth Work Organiser for YMCAs in Ireland came about. Having been offered and feeling it right to accept the post, even before family consultation, there was pressure to make the earliest possible start. Surrendering the remaining weeks of paid freedom, I reported for duty at the National Council Offices at 22 Howard Street, Belfast. It was early 1946.

The then National Secretary was Fred Thomas. He had served for many years with the YMCA Forces work in China, mainly Shanghai, was well past retirement age, but had been brought in to "hold the fort" during the wind-up of the extensive YMCA Forces work in Ireland.

The 1944 Education Act had opened opportunities for expansion of voluntary youth work through finance for capital building and full-time staff support. Work life became demanding but exciting. Through time, Carrickfergus YMCA opened with Sam McCutcheon and then Portadown with Jack Moody.

Links with UK YMCAs had understandably been limited during the war time. These were gradually fostered through sporting events and camps, especially with young members. In connection with the Youth Leadership Scheme, contingents were taken to the annual summer schools at Rhoose in Wales or at "Lakeside" on Windermere with opportunity to meet leaders and members of other YMCAs. Together with attendance at the annual British YMCA Secretaries Association (BSA as it then was), I began to feel part of a larger whole.

Quite early in my service, RE Roberts (Bob) came to relieve Fred Thomas. Bob brought a wealth of YM experience and drive. I was greatly helped by his wise counsel and friendship. Mid 1949 Bob left to become National Secretary for YMCAs in Wales. During May 1948, Peggy imparted that Colin was to have a 'wee sister.'

The day before 4<sup>th</sup> February 1949 having driven back from Ballymoney on a bitterly cold night, I parked and drained the car against frost and jumped into bed. In the small hours Peggy shook me suggesting birth was imminent. I drove quickly only to find the engine seized as I had failed to re-fill the radiator.

Our daughter Jane Patricia made her entrance in the early hours and so our "pigeon pair" was complete. Life was good and we were thankful.

In August 1949 there came a letter from Officers Training and Nominations Committee seeking approval to nominate me for the post of Warden of Lakeside, with the dual role as General Secretary to Kendal YMCA – said to be "a post of great opportunity and challenge." I would be replacing Norman Ingle who had been at Lakeside for a several summers. Norman would go to Northern Ireland to specialise in "Leader Training." An added incentive was that resources for development of Lakeside had been obtained, mainly as part of the £1million gifted to the youth of UK by the Government of South Africa.

So it was that I went to meet the Management Committees for "Lakeside" and Kendal. With Leslie Somerville insisting a house was bought for my young family to live in, I was in post well in advance of the Easter opening of Lakeside. So it was in January 1950 I took up post. I was able to find lodgings at 1 Parr Street, Kendal, the YMCA Divisional Office was just around the corner where I found friendship and support from Jack Francis (Divisional Secretary) and his wife Olive. Later in the year a house at 29 Parr Street was secured for £1850.

My general working routine was on Mondays I prepared the banking, shopping orders for next day. After leading the campfire singsong and finishing at 22:30/23:00 I dashed by motorbike to Kendal to be home by midnight. Next day was taken up by YMCA business, both camp and Kendal. Come evening, a visit to the cinema or theatre, with plates warming in the oven ready for a fish and chip supper bought on the way home. At 06:00 dash back to camp next morning ready for the start of a new day. Opportunities for growth were wide open and could well have justified a full-time post had this been financially possible. Activities and membership grew. A thriving parents group formed giving support including their meat and potato pie suppers. The YMCA gained in popularity amongst the youngsters and in goodwill and support by the community at large. Perhaps surprisingly in the light of later developments, when women and girls came to form at least a third of the Movement's total membership, in the 1950's membership was exclusively male.

When the time came, in August 1952, for the family to take up residence at "Lakeside" we left Kendal with great affection for the town and friends made there. It then became possible for a full-time appointment in Kendal, with Derek Webb taking the post of General Secretary.

My first season was not plain sailing. Some young folk had been coming to camp for years and sadly at night time did nothing to endear themselves to the local residents. Petty theft, raucous singing and trespass of groups as they made their way back from Newby Bridge or Lakeside village.

Not all was gloom and doom. I remember a gang from Islington YMCA concreting a kitchen area. They were due to catch an early train from Grange. They were all up at the crack of dawn to finish concreting the floor and with the help of "Myrtle" the camp van, I was able to get them on the London train – just!!

To round of the season in North Camp, it was officially opened by HRH the Princess Royal in August 1952. The occasion brought together all the top brass from miles around and the YMCA hierarchy (see photo above). I recall I wore my usual rig of shirt and shorts, plus a blazer in honour of the event, which seemed to raise eyebrows among the formally dressed YMCA folk.

**More to come in the next edition of the Newsletter.....**

**MARGARET PEEBLES**  
**99 years old – passed away**  
**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

Message received from Stephen Milner that Margaret Peebles, wife of Frank Peebles, passed away peacefully last night, Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March at the very grand age of 99.

Margaret was BBBF Matron and her husband Frank, was the Warden at Mappleton from 1948 to December 1949 and then moved with her husband Frank to Park hill, Egginton, Derby from December 1949 to January 1951. Frank Peebles then became the YMCA North East Regional Secretary living in Newcastle.

For messages of condolence please send to her great niece, Isobel Carver. The address is:  
50 Pennington Place, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 0AR.  
Email: [isobelcarver@gmail.com](mailto:isobelcarver@gmail.com) Tel 0044 - 1892 - 543736

Margaret's hospitality, friendliness and laughter was well known by those of us who worked in the North East. Great support to husband Frank and the promotion of the Women's Auxiliary.  
May she now rest in peace –  
**David (Smith)**

Dear David,  
Very sorry to hear this news of Margaret. She was always so kind and welcoming when I visited the N.E. and Frank.

Hope you are both OK.  
We are fine and looking forward to the summer and hopefully a more normal time although I think we have all recognised some priorities in life during the lockdowns. I have a very full programme of Services in Holy Week and Easter. Very privileged!  
Blessings  
**Revd Ron (Ingamells)**

Many thanks, David, for this sad news.  
Frank and Margaret used to come round to our house when my father was NE Divisional Secretary and Frank worked for him, so happy distant memories.  
Best wishes  
**John (Naylor)**

Hi David,  
Thanks for the news about Margaret. That's very sad, she didn't quite make it for a letter from the Queen. May she rest in peace.  
Hope you are keeping safe and well.  
Blessings  
**Ray (Allen)**

Hi David,  
Thanks for the information regarding the passing of Margaret Peebles, wife of Frank. She supported Frank 100% in his fine service in the YMCA but as you say her service to the Women's Auxiliary was second to none. She spoke her mind on most relevant subjects but never with rancour.  
Warm regards

**Jim (Lamb)**

**Condolence message from Ex BBBF student  
now in Australia relayed via  
Stephen and Hanna Milner**

Thank you so much both for thinking of me and taking the time to relay the melancholy news of Margaret's recent passing. For me this means drawing a line between a time period some of us still cling to that occurred 70 years ago that today's modern generation could not start to understand or assimilate to.

I was only at Mappleton Camp for 2 months in early 1954. There were between 20 to 30 boys there from many areas but mainly the north east and we were all products of the generation that somehow survived not only the fortunes of a bomb blasted Britain and the range of childhood diseases we encountered before the advent of the NHS only 6 years earlier. We were a disparate lot - runaways, Borstal candidates, Orphans. Products of failed marriages and some with anti-social behaviours.

However, I recall no bullying, personal theft or vandalism in the time I was there. It was as if this was the final safety net we had landed in and we were given a good opportunity of restarting our young lives at no cost to ourselves by the goodness of people who genuinely took an interest not only in our survival but our future.

Mrs Peebles was one of these people at the "Coal Face" dealing with us and winning not only our respect and trust but no doubt in some cases our love. She showed me how to peel potatoes in that first few days after arrival and now, all these generations later, when ever I peel one, I think of her.

We had no time really at the BBBF camps to establish firm friendships with other boys but no doubt some were made but she was omnipresent at Mappleton and always made time for us as individuals as well as a happy group.

It is at times like this we measure our own vulnerabilities and I revert to the poem by John Donne. 'No man is an Island'. But then, conversely, I think of the song, "Bye bye miss American Pie" by Don Maclean where there is a verse that goes, "There we all were in one place. A generation lost in Space with no time left to start again.."

Well..... in 1954, we were that lost generation but we were offered that chance to start again because of good folks like Mr and Mrs Peebles and their colleagues in the YMCA. I would ask you the favour of perhaps relaying these few words to Isobel as I feel they would be better coming from you.  
Please extend my sincere condolences on the loss of a very special human being. We are thankfully unaffected by the floods but thanks for your concern.

**Furthermore, our thanks to you and Hanna and others within the YMCA who have been so helpful to thousands and thousands of people everywhere over so many years.**

**Chris Tomlinson**  
**BBBF boy at Mappleton Camp April 1954**