



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



NOVEMBER 2015

www.yretired.co.uk

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Dear friends and
colleagues
greetings**

I am concerned so make no apology for my opening paragraphs! More an article rather than a letter!

An eventful summer up to autumn has proved a whirlwind of global action in relation to the social problems found by thousands of Europeans involved globally by the influx of yet thousands more from countries where war and rumours of war has caused their inhabitants to flee their countries. Mixed messages by the media have brought chaos to a worldwide movement of refugees and asylum seekers by whatever means they could to find and seek shelter and food. *I am reminded of listening to Jim Thomson one of our members speaking on Leeds Local Radio after the fall of Saigon and sharing experiences making a statement saying "...people will flee to wherever they can find food and shelter.." how true in present history where the greatest calamity and upheaval of humanity since WW2 is happening.*

We have all been affected by the way in which our morals and principles have reacted perhaps with financial donations or clothing or other means. Whilst I am sure there must be some Local Associations of the UK reacting where are the voices of the International YMCA or our respective National Councils? I hope I am wrong and someone will correct me, for I have to share. Not once have I seen or read in the media any reference either internationally or nationally of action mooted by **THE YMCA MOVEMENT**. Has the spirit of the 'Tea Cars', health and material support experienced in WW1 and WW2 for those in need gone forever not least in this age of technology where communication has changed from 'letterheads' to mobile telephones, from photographs to skype. The YMCA was at one time proud to be one of the foremost Youth Organisations in the world to nail its' colours to the mast at such times but where are **WE** today? Please someone enlighten me!!!

With a lighter tone again more of an article! I will call it "If music be the food of love what is vinyl!" Do you ever experience a weak moment as the differing moods of ageing hit you? My moment occurred recently whilst clearing out a cupboard over the stairs and discovering a twelve inch box hidden away in a corner and not seen for some 20 plus years! It was a well manufactured box containing ten LPs (Long Playing Records!) vinyl records! Vinyl? – Consulted the Oxford Reference Dictionary – 'one of a group of plastics made by polymerization, especially, polyvinyl chloride'! I tried Collins English Dictionary – "Conventional records made of vinyl as opposed to

compact discs!" Coincidentally at the same time a whole page of a National Newspaper had published under the title, "Vinyl Revival" – my heart leapt! Not only did the box labelled 'Music for You', contain 10 LP's but each was double-sided containing 84 recordings with famous orchestral accompaniment! Of course I checked out my ageing music centre which plays cassettes, radio, CD's and yes the turntable with the magic needle still intact! As I write all 10 + 2 sides have just completed one of the most exciting 'listening' periods of my life with the Dance from William Tell (Paso a seil) by Rossini! A summary - Vinyl is the best for the music is with you in the living room and not some recording studio in Abbey Road! Tesco's are apparently stocking the new vinyl album by iconic rockers Iron Maiden!! If music be the food of love what is vinyl? You tell me!

On yet another note may I remind all members again that the total subscription of £20 commences on 1st January 2016. Some members have already taken independent action. For those awaiting the new Standing Orders (SOs) will find a copy with this issue of the Newsletter – please pay promptly as it assists our administration!

Thank you one and all for your continuing support it is much appreciated in maintaining links with retired colleagues throughout the UK. I share that the World Federation of YMCA Retirees issue a Newsletter called Bridges. It is available to all members for a small subscription - details from our Executive Secretary Vic Hills, see his address on the front page of this issue.

Enjoy the autumnal weather and prepare for the happiness created at Christmas time!

Warm regards, **Jim**

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Member's correspondence

Dear David,

Have just got around to reading the latest Y's Retired Newsletter and plenty in it to absorb.

I was not able to attend the BBBF Reunion but obviously very interested to know that they intended to have lunch at the Royal Oak, Dormansland. I had been evacuated from London two days before war broke out and a few months later my mother came to fetch me home. For three Londoners we took to country life like 'ducks to water' and I have very fond memories of the village in those days. But we saw a great deal of the war at Dormansland with the Battle of Britain being fought overhead and subsequently Doodlebugs on a flight path to London!!

Getting the job as Secretary to Ralph Elsdon was an interesting experience and just a few months later Walter Saunders arrived as Assistant Secretary and the rest is history!!

My son and daughter-in-law who come over each year from the USA are going to take me to Dormans and I have had contact with Sara and she tells me people remember my parents!!

The BBBF scheme was a marvellous one - a pity there could not be something similar to-day for youngsters.

Kind regards, **Jean Saunders**

Dear David,
I regret to inform you that my mother **Anne Thompson** died on August 1st 2015 after a long battle with dementia and cancer. She was with the YMCA for many years and she loved the challenges and rewards her work gave her, we know how important the work was to her.

When she retired in 1985 she much appreciated the gesture of being made an Honorary Member of the Y's Retired and until the last few years of her life was pleased to be kept in touch by the regular arrival of the magazine.

She devoted the time of her retirement to the Milton Keynes U3A and was also happy to spend more time with us as a family, we have always been a close knit family.

The last few years of her life were difficult. She moved to West Sussex 2 years ago where she was close to my brother and was wonderfully cared for in Ashdon Grange nursing home in Horsham. Her funeral was a small private affair in the 18th of August.

Kind regards - **Tricia Hegde (daughter)**

Anne Thompson, a delightful character as I recall, served with General Services as hostel manager and I believe her last posting was at Bletchley Park and the MOD hostel there.

Reg (Wake)

Dear David

May I, through you, thank Professor David Miller for his article on London Central YMCA. I seem to remember meeting David many years ago, on Bill Hannemen's boat at Henley-on-Thames.

The article took me back to the 60-61 Training Course, (see Professor Ted Milburn's photo) which met daily in the Caldecot Room. There is no doubt that the former London Central YMCA was a landmark for the English movement, and maybe even worldwide.

One would move from the activity of the association to the hushed corridors of the National Council, where such revered figures as Sir Norman Tucker or Walter Waterworth and EM Brown would be hard at work.

Perhaps the greatest memory is that wonderful painting of Sir George Williams in the entrance hall, inscribed with words from Psalm 111 "The fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom"

Thank you, to both Davids!!

Paul (Harper)

Really sad to receive the news re Gordon. I don't think I would have survived my years at National Council without his guidance and friendship. He was one of the YMCAs outstanding personalities. **Sam (Johnston)**

Dear David

Thank you for the very sad news about Brian and Gordon. Gordon was of course Deputy National Secretary for much of my time as National Secretary. I was stunned to hear the news. Do you know the cause of death? I will write to Erica when we know a little more.

Brian came to Lakeside with Idle folk when I was at Lakeside and I had contact with him when he worked with the YMCA.

Yours in shock - **John Naylor**

Dear David,

Brian Pears was a Barnsley lad, and became a staff member of his local YMCA. This is where I found him when I washed up in Barnsley in 1972. We had a happy year together before Brian escaped to Idle (Bradford). He was a very keen outdoor pursuits man, and almost every weekend he would be out with a group from the YMCA, canoeing, rambling or climbing. There was a keen mountaineering club in Barnsley at the time and Brian was a leading light.

Gordon Wickens was another stalwart of the YMCA and a man for whom I had great respect and admiration. Others who knew him much better than me will no doubt write a suitable appreciation.

Peter (Brookes)

I had a long and fruitful relationship with dear Gordon and will miss him as a friend and greatly valued colleague. We encountered each other in those days when the senior professional and amateur lay person worked together in harmony.

With my best wishes to all,

Peter (Clarke)



It was a challenge for Jan Cooper, wife of Geoff Cooper to pick her #FavouriteFriday Bible verse as she has so many. She says "It is my delight, at this moment, to know that my Heavenly Father has promised always to be with me. It gives me such peace and security, as I nestle into His tender embrace to hear Him say "I love you my precious child""

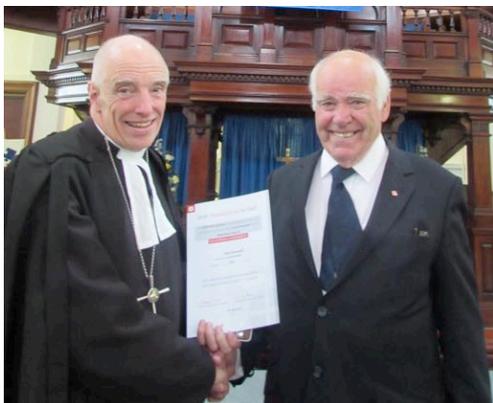
So Hebrews 13:5 where God says "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" is one of Jan's favourite verses.

Jan is also enjoying listening and singing "I am not alone" by Kari Jobe. Some of the words are as follows:

"I am not alone, I am not alone,
You will go before me, you will never leave me.
You amaze me, you redeem me,
You call me as your own.
Through these trials you've always been faithful.
You bring healing to my soul!"

Jan is on the ministry team

Dear David,
I was sorry to see Gordon Wickens had recently died and that the Funeral arrangements were scheduled for Wednesday, 7th October, 2015.
Gordon was my initial supervisor at Henley on Thames and although I cannot be in Brighton, I will write to Erica.
Kind regards - **Peter (Robertson)**



Above is a picture of Ivor Cresswell receiving the Local Preachers certificate for 60 years from Methodist Conference President, Rev Steve Wild. Ivor has been such a hard worker for young people in Cornwall for so many years - lovely to see him. I remember Cornwall '89 the MAYC Provincial Weekend, working with Ivor was a joy. Ivor served at Ipswich YMCA in the late 60's.

The new Gareth Malone Series started mid September on BBC2. This is the programme which our "Close Shave Chorus" was asked to enter for audition in June of this year - but we were beaten by another group. There is just the slightest chance that the audition for which we performed (which was filmed) might briefly appear in a clip. I am afraid I cannot offer you more hope than that!!!

By the way - the title "NAKED CHOIR" refers to choirs which sing acapella - "unaccompanied" i.e. without musical.

With love - **Ted (Milburn)**

Dear David:

Thanks very much for keeping me informed of the deaths of Brian Pears and Gordon Wickens. You have kindly sent details of the funeral arrangements for Brian. Sadly I won't be able to attend.

The members of the IFYR UK Chapter join me in sending our deep condolences to all the members of the bereaved families. It is our prayer that God should be very close to them especially at this time and offer them the needed comfort. As their lives are celebrated, may we thank God for all their contributions to our Movement.

Kind regards **Rupert (George)**

Dear David
Thank you so much for the important, but sad, information you have passed on regarding the death of Gordon Wickens. I am unfortunately unable to be at the funeral on 7 October but I knew Gordon and Erica very well when I was YMCA Secretary of the Marmion Centre, Hove, from 1965 until 1970 when I (miraculously) got a place as a mature unqualified student at the University of Sussex. Gordon was our Regional Secretary at the time and his office was in the Marmion Centre.
During the period I served in Hove, Gordon and I were both members of the YMCA Commission and we travelled together twice a week for a year, to London, for Commission meetings.

Best wishes - **Ted (Milburn)**

Dear David,
Elaine and I have just arrived back from holiday, hence the delay in acknowledging your Email.
It was Gordon who conducted my first interview, when I became interested in pursuing a career in the YMCA and for obvious reasons we had frequent contact over the thirty years that followed. My recollection of Brian, is that he was a feisty and likeable chap, with whom I related to very well. Sad to learn they are no long with us.
Thank you so much for keeping me in touch. Best wishes to Sue
Regards,

Roger (Hunt)

THE BACK NINE

I FIRST STARTED READING THIS EMAIL & WAS READING FAST UNTIL I REACHED THE THIRD SENTENCE. I STOPPED AND STARTED OVER READING SLOWER AND THINKING ABOUT EVERY WORD. THIS EMAIL IS VERY THOUGHT PROVOKING. MAKES YOU STOP AND THINK. READ SLOWLY!

AND THEN IT IS WINTER

You know ... time has a way of moving quickly and catching you unaware of the passing years. It seems just yesterday that I was young, just married and embarking on my new life with my mate. Yet in a way, it seems like eons ago, and I wonder where all the years went. I know that I lived them all. I have glimpses of how it was back then and of all my hopes and dreams.

But, here it is... **the back nine of my life** and it catches me by surprise...How did I get here so fast? Where did the years go and where did my youth go?

I remember well seeing older people through the years and thinking that those older people were years away from me and that I was only on the first hole and the back nine was so far off that I could not fathom it or imagine fully what it would be like.

But, here it is...my friends are retired and getting gray...they move slower and I see an older person now. Some are in better and some worse shape than me...but, I see the great change....Not like the ones that I remember who were young and vibrant...but, like me, their age is beginning to show and we are now those older folks that we used to see and never thought we'd become.

Each day now, I find that just getting a shower is a real target for the day! And taking a nap is not a treat anymore... it's mandatory! Cause if I don't on my own free will... I just fall asleep where I sit!

And so...now I enter into this new season of my life unprepared for all the aches and pains and the loss of strength and ability to go and do things that I wish I had done but never did!!

But, at least I know, that though I'm on the back nine, and I'm not sure how long it will last...this I know, that when it's over on this earth...it's over. A new adventure will begin! **Yes, I have regrets.**

There are things I wish I hadn't done...things I should have done, but indeed, there are many things I'm happy to have done. It's all in a lifetime.

So, if you're not on the back nine yet...let me remind you, that it will be here faster than you think. So, whatever you would like to accomplish in your life please do it quickly! Don't put things off too long!! Life goes by quickly. So, do what you can today, as you can never be sure whether you're on the back nine or not!

You have no promise that you will see all the seasons of your life....so, live for today and say all the things that you want your loved ones to remember...and hope that they appreciate and love you for all the things that you have done for them in all the years past!!

"Life" is a gift to you. The way you live your life is your gift to those who come after. Make it a fantastic one.

Live it well! Enjoy today! Do something fun! Be happy!
Remember *"it is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver.* Live happy in 2015!

LASTLY, CONSIDER THIS:

- Your kids are becoming you.....but your grandchildren are perfect!
- Going out is good.. Coming home is better!
- You forget names.... But it's OK because some people forgot they even knew you!!!
- You realize you're never going to be really good at anything like golf.
- The things you used to care to do, you aren't as interested in anymore, but you really don't care that you aren't as interested.
- You sleep better on a lounge chair with the TV 'ON' than in bed. It's called "pre-sleep".
- You miss the days when everything worked with just an "ON" and "OFF" switch..
- You tend to use more 4 letter words ... "what?"..."when?"... ???
- You notice everything they sell in stores is "sleeveless"?!!!
- What used to be freckles are now liver spots.
- Everybody whispers.
- You have 3 sizes of clothes in your closet.... 2 of which you will never wear.

But Old is good in some things: Old Songs, Old movies, and best of all, **OLD FRIENDS!!**

Stay well, "OLD FRIEND!" Send this on to other "Old Friends!" and let them laugh in AGREEMENT!!! It's Not What You Gather, But What You Scatter That Tells What Kind Of Life You Have Lived.

TODAY IS THE OLDEST YOU'VE EVER BEEN; YET THE YOUNGEST YOU'LL EVER BE, SO ENJOY THIS DAY WHILE IT LASTS

**“ do not regret growing older.
it is a privilege denied to many. ”**

BRIAN PEARS **Obituary**

It was a pleasure to be invited by Ann Pears, Brian's wife to speak at the 'Celebration of his Life' on Thursday 30th September 2015 at Esh Winning Methodist Church, Durham. I cannot refer to it as a Funeral Service for Brian had arranged a 'Living Will' giving his body on death to scientific research and indicating that he did not want a 'formal' funeral service!

The church was full with some 80 people who had travelled from all over the UK to be present at what proved to be an inspiring occasion – sad but happy. The Local YMCA's in which Brian had served as a volunteer then a staff member at Barnsley followed in 1973 when his career started in earnest as General Secretary of Idle (Bradford), Airdrie (Scotland), and as Warden at the new city of Milton Keynes YMCA where he majored in the development of outdoor pursuits including mountaineering, hill walking, camping and canoeing/sailing to a very high standard.

Legend were the stories shared by family and friends from the lectern together with, poetry, 'chats' on Brian's life and cameos on a remarkable life to an appreciative congregation. The only formality was the opening with a recording of the Colliers Requiem, brief prayers, the YMCA hymn "To God be the Glory" and ending with the Celtic Blessing "May the Road rise up..." and when quietly leaving the church the 'Skye Boat Song' "Speed bonnie boat like a bird on the wing, onward the sailors cry, carry the lad that's born to be king over the seas to Skye" Skye a favourite place in Brian's itinerary of life.

A fitting occasion for a life well lived.

Jim Lamb

POTTED HISTORY OF Y CARE INTERNATIONAL

Y Care International grew out of the YMCA movement – an international association of youth organisations from more than 120 countries. Founded in 1844 in London, it is one of the oldest and largest voluntary youth organisations in the world.

The YMCA works to bring social justice and peace to young people and their communities, regardless of religion, race, gender or culture. YMCAs take a holistic approach to young people's development emphasising their personal, social and spiritual development.

In 1984, the YMCA National Councils in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland agreed to better co-ordinate their existing international humanitarian relief efforts. The resulting organisation became Y Care International and focussed on international relief following an emergency. It would work in partnership with YMCAs across the global South to **respond to the needs of the most vulnerable young people.**

Terry Waite CBE, along with two members of the National Council of England, John Naylor and David Bedford, officially **founded Y Care International in 1984. Terry Waite remains President of Y Care International** to this day and is an active advocate of our work.

Over the years we strengthened the role as a development agency focussed on supporting disadvantaged young people, whose needs and rights are so often neglected. Y Care continued to be a subsidiary charity of YMCA England before becoming a fully independent charity in 2005. In 2010 it strengthened its link with the YMCA movement and became an Associate Member of the **World Alliance of YMCAs**

GORDON WICKENS **Obituary**

Gordon Ewart Wickens OBE 88, passed away on 21st September at his home in Brighton. He worked his whole life for the YMCA leaving them, on his retirement, as National General Secretary. He is survived by his wife Erica, two sons Geoffrey and Richard and five grandchildren, Thomas, Hannah, Jack, Sam & Tom. A funeral service was held at the Ascension Church, Westdene, Brighton at 12:00 noon on Wednesday, 7th October 2015.

I attended the funeral of Gordon Wickens on October 7th. Sadly his widow, Erica, was not able to be present as, that day, she dislocated her hip and was in hospital.

Members of the congregation were invited to give a tribute to Gordon and I made an impromptu tribute on behalf of the YMCA - this was filmed to show Erica in hospital.

I told the congregation that Gordon had been a great man of the YMCA and part of a generation of good Christian men who had served the Movement so well. I said that Gordon's office had been about fifty feet from mine for eight years at the National Council in the 80s and I said just how much he and the other life long servants of the YMCA of his generation, there at the time, had influenced me and taught me about the YMCA Movement.

(In the offices alongside me were Roy Weaver, Ron Harkness and Reg Wake and, although slightly younger (!) Sam Johnston who was downstairs towards the end of my time, so I had truly wonderful men alongside me).

Gordon was indeed a quiet, gentle servant of His Lord who influenced many lives and I am grateful I knew him.

The funeral was well attended.



David Bedford with Mother Teresa

Director Public Affairs, National Council 1982-90
Founder Director Y Care International 1984 - 90
Chairman Y Care International 1995 - 2005
Chairman National Council of YMCAs 2005 - 2008
Vice Chair YMCA West London 2009 - present



Those pictured at the South of England Y's Retired of UK gathering in September are Linda Voysey, Geoff & Margaret Havers, Maureen and Sam Johnston, Derek and Margaret Shepherd, Norman Owen and Janet Hopkins, Vic and Mary Hills, Blair Crawford, Brian Rowcliffe and Fred Daldry

Next Gathering will be in Bournemouth arranged by Blair. There is a possibility the group may be received by the Mayor of Bournemouth. We will have to wait and see.

REUNION OF Y'S RETIRED (southern area)

Fourteen of us got together for a very happy reunion on September 24th at The Beach House in Milford-on-Sea, a pleasing village in Hampshire.

Until taken over recently and renamed The Beach House by Hall and Woodhouse (Blandford Brewers) this venue was known as Westover Hall.

It is a Grade 11 listed Victorian mansion built in 1897 for the German Industrialist, Alexander Siemens who with his brother, is credited with introducing electricity to England.

It is close to the sea with excellent views of the Isle of Wight and the Needles. It has many unusual internal features including oak panelling, stained glass windows and a minstrels' gallery. It proved very suitable for our meeting.

Both food and service were good enabling us to enjoy a relaxed, informal get-together with plenty of time to catch up on the news.

We remembered with affection and deep respect our two former friends and colleagues Gordon Wickens and Brian Pears both of whom served the YMCA Movement so faithfully.

A few of the more energetic stayed on for a local walk guided by Geoff and Margaret Havers who kindly volunteered their services.

All credit to Maureen & Sam Johnston whose energy, determination and commitment to the YMCA led to the start and continuation of Re-unions of the Y's retired folk in Southern area since they came down here to live beside one of their daughters and her family.

Before we left Beach House we decided to meet again in about six months and this time the convenor will be Blair Crawford who should be contacted regarding that meeting.

His email address is: jblaircrawford@aol.com

Derek (Sheppard)

MEMORIES OF LES YEATES

Tony Gratton writes:-

Les was mainly responsible for me joining the YMCA, as I was living at Farnborough Hostel when he took over from Viv Cardell, when I was an apprentice at the RAE.

Also to add further background Phil Willerton was his assistant and when Phil moved to takeover Dunston Hall, I became his next assistant Warden.

Thus the beginning of my YMCA career. Les was initially involved in BBBF, but he also ran the GEC/English Electric Engineer Training Hostel which was Dunston Hall before it was bought by North Staffs Polytechnic as 1st year Hall of residence.

After Farnborough Les and Doff his wife did move to Bournemouth YMCA and I believe it was when Bob McConkey moved there from Grimsby. Les retired to Derby and lived in Littleover where I visited him a couple of times. Not sure if all my bits are perfectly correct, I'm sure Phil should be able to add more.

That's the bit on Les' career - as a boss, friend and Mentor, Les was a great person. I basically became one of the family when I worked as his assistant. Nothing was too much; he taught me a lot about how to manage people and get the best out of them.

He loved having dinner parties and Doff his wife was an excellent hostess. He had a narrow boat moored on the Thames near Kennet and let us use it for holidays. He was well respected by all the apprentices at the hostel.

Phil Willerton recalls:- Farnborough was my first YMCA job and Les made sure I had a good induction! At that time Tony was Chairman of the resident's committee and when I was moved on, he took over my job.

I remember Les saying that of the original intake of Royal Marine Commandos, he was one of only 18 to survive the whole war.

Forwarded by Vic Hills

My personal memories of Fritz Pawelzik by Mary Mc Ginty

I was saddened to hear about the passing of Fritz and have some very fond memories of him during my time with YMCA BAOR in Germany during the late 80's, just before the Berlin Wall came down.

On one occasion Fritz came to a staff conference I was organising. As well as business matters I aimed to bring some YMCA perspective to these gatherings, as many of our Centre Leaders had little understanding or knowledge of the YMCA and the work it was involved in. Most years someone came over from UK to help with this and build relationships including such illustrious characters as Tony Miles, Noel Vallely and Sam Johnston.

One year Fritz joined us. We were meeting at a British Army Chaplaincy centre and he began by sharing how he first came into contact with the British Army immediately after the end of the war, whilst still a young man.

Fritz told us he joined the German Army as a young man and that after the surrender his life was in tatters. He said that at that time Hitler had been his god. He used to run miles, often in the rain, trying to get his head around what he would now do with his life. He said he had nothing in the way of clothes or food.

One day a British army vehicle stopped, soldiers got out and signalled for him to get into the back of the truck. He spoke no English in those days and assumed that he was being arrested so was very scared.

The soldiers took him to an army barracks and down into a cellar – so he was pretty panicked by this time. They opened a door and invited him to help himself to some clothing that was stored there and they also gave him food. Then one soldier put a small book into the pocket of the coat they'd given him.

So, in appreciation, he thought he ought to try and read this book but it was in English. He asked someone he knew if they would help him to read it and that person said "Why are you reading this in English? Why not read it in German?" And gave him a German version – it was the New Testament. That was the beginning of Fritz's new life as a Christian.

He also shared some of his time as a YMCA secretary in Ghana. He described how he used to let the boys play football and in return they would then sit down and listen to his 'Jesus stories'. After one story a boy said they were starving and why didn't Jesus feed them. Fritz said it brought him up sharp.

He realised that he talking about God being an answer to prayer in a more abstract way yet they had none of their basic needs being met. (I'm not sure whether Fritz mentioned Maslow's hierarchy of needs at this point or if it was just in my head – it was a very long time ago now!)

Anyway, Fritz then decided to set up a vocational training centre to give the boys practical skills which would enable them to earn money to buy food. A very clear example of YMCA love in action.

As a result of his visit, one of our staff working near Dusseldorf got involved with Fritz and a local CVJM group going on a work camp to Ghana. She joined in the planning and preparation before travelling as part of the group to Ghana, which provided her with very real insights into very different aspects of the YMCA – in both Germany and Ghana – which she really appreciated.

One of my other memories of Fritz was about a year later. Eckard Geisler invited me to join a CVJM regional staff conference in Wuppertal. Eckard and Fritz agreed to share the translation of the main sessions, leaving me to fend for myself and practice my German in the small group sessions and social times. It was a great experience.

During these key sessions Eckard and Fritz took it in turns to sit at the back of the room with me, so that we didn't distract anyone else, as they translated quietly into my ear. Eckard translated everything very religiously and accurately.

Fritz however provided a personal commentary as well as a more general translation. It went along the lines of 'Well, he (the speaker) says, but I think that what he should be saying is' Occasionally Fritz shared even stronger views on the speaker's input!

I remembered this conference recently whilst watching Michael Portillo take a trip along the unique suspended railway which runs above the river in the Wuppertal valley, as Eckard had taken me on that.

My 3 years in Germany were not always easy but Fritz was one of the people that helped make it meaningful and he provided a strong YMCA link. I feel very blessed to have spent just a little time with him listening to his endless supply of stories.

ALBRECHT KAUL



Dear President Jim, Dear David,
Warm greetings from Germany. I'm Albrecht Kaul, from the board of retirees of the YMCA of Germany. Since five years I'm a member of the WFYR and last year in Estes Park elected as vice chair for Europe. I receive your News Letter regularly and give you my best thank you for this. As vice chair I have interest to know you and your retirees work in the Y of England. Have you in the next year a meeting or conference what I can visit? I like to come for a better partnership into Europe.

With best regards - Albrecht Kaul