



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

JANUARY 2017

www.yretired.co.uk



GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Dear friends
and colleagues
greetings**

At the time of writing this letter I am aware that the purpose of the Newsletter is not to politicise ones opinions such as speaking to the subject of Brexit, a word not yet in the dictionary, nor the surprise election of the new President of the USA. I will but venture to say on the subject my sincerely held belief that common-sense must prevail in whatever the voting public decide by majority decision!

In this issue I share a concern I hold that so few members provide articles through the Newsletter on relevant subjects of their choice. Relevant to what we learned and understood affecting our lifestyles since retiring from paid or voluntary service, in a Movement second to none historically, yet shaping our lives in varying degrees to the present day, it gives ample time to reflect! (Contained within our membership of 135 members and friends is 11,000 years of life's experience of which some, average 15 years retirement, amount to say 2,100 years! E&OE (Errors and Omissions Excepted)!

I can 'hear' you all saying "Gosh our President must have his 'tongue in his cheek'! Yes, you are right and yet I am surprised by joy when renewing friendship with retirees and reminiscing without fear or favour on stories of past experiences! Out of interest there follows brief true stories I am aware of from colleagues.

- *"I experienced the world and the work internationally of the YMCA through my own eyes affecting the quality of my service."*
- *"From being a young member of SYMCA I am nearing retirement as a businessman and served on the Board of a Local YMCA."*
- *"One young member grew to become a Bishop and thanks the YMCA for the opportunity to gain his faith."*
- *"I was taking drugs but through a YMCA (Youth Leader) gave them up and later gave public service as a city councillor"*.

- *"In 30 minutes conversation with a YMCA staff member learned more than 6 months with a Probation Officer – it affected my life!"*
- *"Through a YMCA Drama Group I eventually gained work with the BBC."*
- *"Partly due to the YMCA and my professional work I now hold an important job influencing countless people."*

There are many such stories, these are but a few paraphrased in order to protect identity and using the first person singular where necessary. Do put pen to paper and send a contribution to David Smith our Editor – no not money but an article!

There are four Area Reunion Meetings holding Annual Lunches or a Residential welcoming all members with open arms who wish to attend.

Information is regularly published in the Newsletter on dates and times. The Y's Retired of the UK Annual General Meeting is held electronically during February and March. If you wish to volunteer service on the committee, organise an area Reunion (Area Address lists are available from the Secretary) please write in the first place to Vic Hills, Executive Secretary - address below.

Warm regards and good health to all,
Jim Lamb

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MEMBER CORRESPONDENCE

Hi Stephen, Hanna and David,

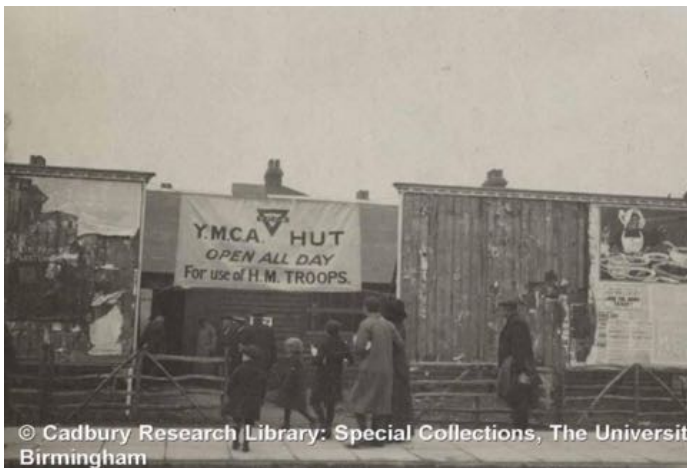
British Boys for British Farms.

First thank you Stephen for an excellent article in the latest Retired Newsletter, I'm sure it will be enjoyed by many, showing there is still life left in many who experienced this excellent apprenticeship before going on into many walks of life. It's hard to believe how fast the years have flown!

As you say I'm sure there are those who would have enjoyed another visit to Park Hill, but because of distance, and perhaps poor health had to give it a miss. When I left my home in Edwinstowe near Mansfield to become an Assistant Warden I was just 21 yrs. of age that was 55 yrs. ago. Makes one think!

Whilst writing thank you David for the time and effort you put in helping us to remember the good times, the hard work, and the many rewards having been involved in the work of the YMCA.

Best wishes to all - David Tipping.



Picture found within Facebook

Thank you for prompt info. Re: passing of Peter Robertson. Terribly sad. Makes me feel positively ancient! I first met Peter as an active member of the Young Members Assembly then I think coming from Carlisle and much influenced by the late Keith Wells, very much in the evangelical tradition.

Peter's entry to training course an event of much personal pleasure. I watched his progress with much interest. His move to Scotland obviously opened wider horizons for him and his subsequent record speaks volumes for his commitment and capacity in all things YM. A good lad! Will certainly have a word with 'The Boss' for His comfort of Alison and family in their bereavement.

Reg (Wake).

Dear David,
Many thanks for the sad news. I only have good memories of Peter Robertson as we served in different areas of the UK but do recall meeting him, I think when he was at Ambleside YMCA.

Jim (Lamb)

So sorry to hear the news. I never had the privilege of meeting Peter who was obviously a great guy doing a fantastic job, he must have followed me a few years after at the YMCA Training College.

Kind regards David (Tipping)



Martin Houghton-Brown is Chair of the National Council of YMCAs.

Martin was elected in November 2016 after serving five years as a Trustee. Earlier this year, he was also elected on to the Executive of YMCA Europe, which serves to strengthen YMCA National Councils across the continent. His early career began in teaching and then church-based youth work, supporting young people affected by substance use, mental and sexual health issues as well as homelessness. He was ordained in 1996 and went on to lead daily devotions at YMCA Cheltenham.

He performs his current role as Chair alongside his position as Chief Executive of youth homelessness charity, Depaul UK. He began this role following a similar Chief Executive position at Missing People, a charity that provides support for missing and runaway children and vulnerable adults, and a Deputy Director role at The Children's Society.

Through his youth sector roles, Martin has engaged regularly with Government on policy matters while also contributing towards statutory guidance on children who go missing. He was a founder member of the Prime Ministerial taskforce on missing persons and served as a member of the Office for the Children's Commissioners' Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups.



Ayub is Vice-Chair of YMCA England.

He also serves on the Board of YMCA Thames Gateway where he is Chair of the Audit Committee. Ayub is the Chief Executive of the Further Education Trust for Leadership, a Think Tank for the FE and Skills sector. Prior to this, he was the CEO of a Multi Academy Trust.

Over a 20 year period, Ayub has gained extensive experience of strategic leadership and operational management, large-scale commissioning and contract management of education, training, advice, and support services. He has worked for North West London TEC where he led and managed adult and youth based programmes. He was involved in raising standards by working with the then Training Standards Council piloting the first public inspection regime in the TEC movement. He also worked for the Learning and Skills Council where as part of a successful Executive Team in Essex he led the Post 16 Learning Directorate. In 2003 as the Interim Chief Executive of Connexions South London he led the Partnership through a period of change resulting in significant improvements including the first successful OFSTED Inspection of a sub contracted Connexions Partnership in London. In 2008, he set up the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Sub-Regional Unit.

Ayub was a member of the Governments Careers Profession Task Force helping to shape its recommendations as detailed in the 2010 published report "Towards a Strong Careers Profession". Ayub is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a Member of the Chartered Management Institute.

What a shock, just spoken to Ali and Jonathan. Not sure if you knew but I was Peter and Ali's best man at their wedding in Henley. We were up staying with them both in January this year celebrating Peter's 70th birthday.

Will speak to Ali again in a few days and can send you funeral details when we get them from Ali'.

A sense of numbness and disbelief here in Reading.

Vic (Hills)

Dear David,
I had just finished emailing all the Y's retired Scottish group and was about to email you when your email arrived. Peter often attended our group meetings and wrote to me in September to say that he had the early stages of Alzheimer's disease and would not manage to attend. He was not allowed to drive and his wife had hoped to bring him to Edinburgh but she was having difficulties with her elderly mother. He will certainly be missed by all who knew him in the Scottish movement.

Kind regards, Keith (Rennie)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all

More than two thousand years ago a little baby was born in a manger; an event that changed the world. This boy-child, [Jesus](#), is the promised Messiah who stepped down from [Heaven](#) to be born as a babe, live a sinless life and willingly give His life as the Perfect Lamb of God to pay a [sin](#) debt that He did not owe.

As foretold in the Scriptures, He did this for you; He did this for me; He did this for the whole world. When we believe this simple truth, Jesus' payment for sin is accounted to us and we are promised eternal [life](#). Since that first [Christmas](#) morn much has been said about Christmas.

"Christmas is based on an exchange of gifts, the gift of God to man – His unspeakable gift of His Son, and the gift of man to God – when we present our bodies a living sacrifice." ~Vance Havner

"There is no connection between the worship of idols and the use of Christmas trees. We should not be anxious about baseless arguments against Christmas decorations. Rather, we should be focused on the Christ of Christmas and giving all diligence to remembering the real reason for the season." ~ John MacArthur

"The Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as this truth of the Incarnation." ~J.I. Packer

"You can never truly enjoy Christmas until you can look up into the Father's face and tell him you have received his Christmas gift." ~John R. Rice

"The greatest and most momentous fact which the history of the world records is the fact of Christ's birth." ~Charles H. Spurgeon

"Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born king." Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" ~Charles Wesley

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the sudden death of Peter Robertson. Peter was out playing walking football this morning, which he loved, when he suffered a fatal heart attack.

Helen Turner shared the news with me and I know that you will all hold Peter's wife Alison, sons Simon and Jonathan and wider family in your thoughts and prayers at this time.

At our recent YMCA Scotland Awards Dinner, Peter was awarded the Sir George Williams Medal. This is the highest award available within the YMCA in Scotland and is for distinguished and outstanding service to the YMCA in Scotland. Below is an extract from his nomination, which gives you an insight into the significant contribution that Peter made over many years.

'Peter started his Scottish YMCA involvement when he became General Secretary of Dumfries YMCA in the 1970s having trained at the YMCA College in London and worked at Ambleside YMCA and Henley YMCA and having been a member of Carlisle YMCA as a teenager.

After some years Peter moved to work for a local funder, The Holywood Trust, and he became a YMCA volunteer. He was so committed to the YMCA Movement that there was no suggestion of not continuing to be involved. He eventually became Chairman of Dumfries YMCA and was also supported the development of YMCAs in Stranraer and Gatehouse of Fleet, regularly travelling across the region to attend meetings and negotiate with officials on behalf of the YMCA.

Peter also became involved in things nationally, on the National Executive and various committees. He chaired the Personnel Committee in the late 1980s and early 1990s. He was Vice Chair of YMCA Scotland from 1992 to 2004 and Chairman from 2004 to 2008.

There is a saying 'if you cut them in half they would read...' For Peter that would definitely be- YMCA. '

In deep sadness - Kerry Reilly
Chief Executive – National General Secretary
YMCA Scotland 0131 228 1464

www.ymcascotland.org

If anyone would like to write to Alison and the family
Alison's address is:-
Cairn View, 4 Ryedale Court, Dumfries, DH2 7EW

His loss will be great to the whole YMCA family, especially those in Scotland, by his family and all those at Dumfries YMCA. I went to college with Peter, 1969-70 as did Vic Hills, Bob Sadler, Geoff Cooper, Mike Wilkinson, David Hurford and John Newton. I know it will be a shock to them all. Our love and prayers to Alison and the boys,
David (Smith)

Hi David

Very sad to receive this news about Peter. Whilst only occasionally in touch with him over the years since college I still have fond memories of him. We shared a youth work placement in the Mile End whilst at college so I got to know him quite well.

He certainly made a significant contribution to the Scottish YMCA and will be missed by many.

Do hope you and Sue are well and continuing to enjoy life in the West Country.

Regards
Geoff (Cooper)

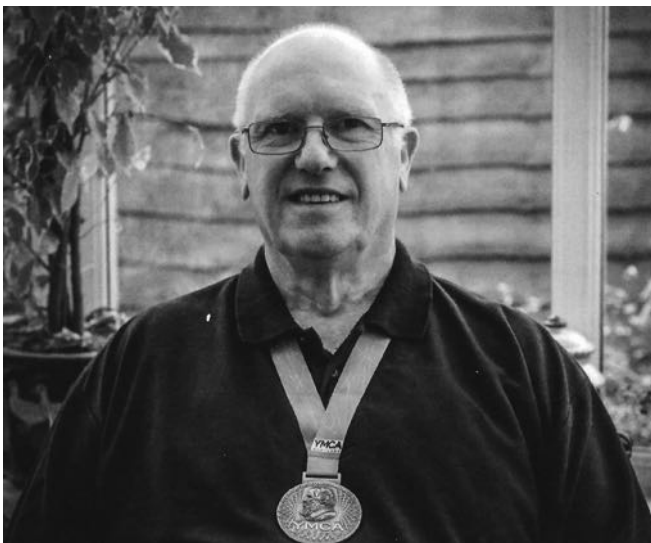
EULOGY OF PETER ROBERTSON



A close up of the Bust (made by his youngest son Jonathan) and medal which shows the detail of the medal better than the B & W photo below .



The table at the service with, The YMCA Triangle Wreath, and some of Peter's planes and wood working tools, with a white bust of him with the George Williams Medal



Peter Robertson

“Those of us who knew him well will miss him, those who benefitted from his vision, persistence, perseverance, concern, support, care, and love have lots to be grateful for.”

Peter started as a young full member volunteer in Carlisle YMCA and died having been a YMCA volunteer serving YMCA Scotland. In between he participated in Young Members' Assemblies (led by Reg' Wake). Trained at YMCA National College in its transition year 69/70 from Stockwell to Waltham Forest. Youth Worker at Ambleside YMCA, then Henley YMCA where he met and married Ali' his wife of 38 years, moving to Dumfries (as YMCA General Secretary), where they raised their two sons Simon and Jonathan, where they their wife and partner and grandchildren live.

Peter left employment with the YMCA to follow a vision of a wider opportunity to serve the YMCA and young people with the Holywood Trust. Kerry Reilly {YMCA Scotland CEO} says “Peter had an enormous impact on the YMCA in Scotland and locally in the South West (Dumfries & Galloway). As Director of the Holywood Trust he had a strategic responsibility for funding and networking across D&G and really used that to the advantage of the YMCA. I think it fair to say that YMCA work and the local associations of Stranraer and Gatehouse of Fleet would not have been established, had it not been for the vision and determination of Peter”.

In his spare time - Peter later became Chairman of Dumfries YMCA, where Kerry (then a young student) recalled, “I remember heading to Butlins in Ayr with him to run a Princes Trust 'Work Sport and Leisure' programme and how great it was learning from him as we delivered training to unemployed young people from across Dumfries and Galloway”. Peter served as Vice Chair of YMCA Scotland from 1992 until 2004 - 12 years! Becoming Chair of YMCA Scotland from 2004 - 2008. Peter spent many many hours in his car driving up and down to YMCA Scotland meetings and his location in Dumfries was never a hindrance to him attending. As well as YMCA Scotland Executive meetings he chaired the Personnel Committee and the Wiston Lodge Management Committee for many years”.

All of the YMCA Scotland staff attended the service of celebration of Peter's life. Kerry wrote “We are so pleased that YMCA Scotland was able to honour Peter's contribution to the YMCA by awarding him the Sir George William's Medal just one month ago at our ABM”. The Sir George William's Medal is the highest award in the YMCA Movement in Scotland and is for distinguished and outstanding service to the YMCA in Scotland. Peter is one of only 14 people to have been awarded the Medal.

The theme of the Celebration of Peter's life service, held at Crichton Church was wood to celebrate Peter's love of wood following in his father's (a ship's carpenter) footsteps. The family service that preceded at the beautiful crematorium had a theme of water in recognition of Peter's later fascination and enjoyment with sailing ships. Rev' Barrie Thomas – Peter's brother in law shared some amusing exploits of harbours never reached and “man over board” incidents. At the conclusion of the “public service,” the more than 200 who attended were invited to take an acorn, plant it and email Ali' a photograph of where it was planted and growing. Mighty Oaks spring to mind!

A young English colleague said” Peter was ‘another of the great YMCA staff gone’ . . . YMCA through and through . . . a YMCA Youth worker at heart; one of the ‘old school’ YMCA college youth workers who was interested in the development of young people, growing and nurturing their aspirations and giving them opportunity to reach their fullest potential”. Those of us who knew him well will miss him, those who benefitted from his vision, persistence, perseverance, concern, support, care, and love have lots to be grateful for. But what a fine legacy.

Vic Hills