



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

JANUARY 2018

www.yretired.co.uk



GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Dear friends
and colleagues.
Greetings**

Members and friends of the Y's Retired of the UK, (a member of the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees (WFYR) have one thing in common - RETIREMENT!

Not a surprising statement for it also enters us into a world different from engagement in regular working hours and routines which on retirement no longer apply.

The majority of us have or are coming to terms with the demands of retirement some cope extremely well whilst others experience problems which can be all consuming.

Related to the ageing process are the constant reminders of maintaining good health as doctors and hospital appointments become all too familiar and we become quite obsessive in social conversation about ailments!

Such is the case with an elderly gentleman I meet for the 9am bus each Sunday morning. He shares 'ad nauseam' his past surgical operations before travelling into Cambridge simply to sit in Addenbrooke's Hospital beautiful gardens just to "get out of the house and find company"! Circumstances have caused his loneliness not least the death of his wife.

I have become aware of how little I have understood about the effects of 'real loneliness' experienced with all ages but in particular the 50plus with emphasis on retirees. A casual stroll through the local country park led to my encounter with a respected professional man whose demeanour was such to cause me to utter a quiet 'good morning' resulting in his sharing in depth his personal condition.

Never had I encountered such a deep loneliness becoming despair and tendency to suicide. I have since taken a more serious look into loneliness not fully appreciating the various training courses on counselling and suicide with the YMCA in the past!

The Collins English Dictionary offers no less than nine expressions of loneliness, for the purpose of this article I mention just three, isolation, friendless and 'no one to turn to'.

A recent statement in a national newspaper reported, quote, "Loneliness is as dangerous as high blood pressure, diabetes and depression doctors say".

Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard, chair of the Royal College of GPs (RCGP) is quoted as saying, "Social isolation and loneliness are akin to a chronic long-term condition, in terms of the impact on one patients' health and well-being many of whom are widowed, have multiple health problems like diabetes, hypertension and depression, but often their main problem isn't medical – they're lonely what these patients really need is someone to listen to them and to find purpose in life".

According to the Campaign to End Loneliness an estimated 1.1 million over-65s in the UK are chronically lonely and more likely to develop heart disease, depression and dementia!

I appreciate this letter is more of an article than a letter but relevant in the sense that it leads to asking what we can do personally within a retired caring community to help colleagues or others in need of a listening ear?

I have to acknowledge the greatest trauma in my life above that of the death of my parents and a brother was that of my wife Eve after 56 years of a very happy marriage. The empty chair to which I still turn to share a comment in the press or on TV three years after her death can awaken a sense of loneliness, but nothing compared to that shared by the man in the country park who simply needed a listening ear as it turned out.

Colleagues, friends and strangers irrespective of social or educational background are vulnerable in times of need. Are we sensitive to offering the hand of friendship or above all to be a 'good listener' when the need arises as no doubt many of you do by post, telephone, email and through the spoken word.

The Y's Retired of the UK letterhead 'strap line' simply states, "Keeping Retired YMCA staff (and Lay Workers) in contact with each other".

In closing I draw attention to the four Annual Reunions held in Cambridge, South West, South East and Scotland. Dates are publicised in the Newsletter.

Keep as well as you are able and in good spirits, may Christmas be a time of blessing and New Year a time of peace to the whole world.

Warm regards,
Jim

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MEMBERSHIP CORRESPONDENCE

Dear David

It was delightful to read Beryl & Mervyn's letter of their trip back home. My wife Linda started Bangor YMCA's pre-school play group when Mervyn was the first General Secretary there. I took up post in Bangor, moving from Carrickfergus YMCA, after covering for Ken Montgomery while he was at the YMCA college.

The memories Linda and I have of Beryl & Mervyn, their daughter Ruth, who also organised the play group, and their son are full of joy. They are a lovely family. It was great reading of their news.

Blessings - John (McMurray)

Having a happy retirement?



One in five retirees struggles to adjust to life without work. They worry about money, feeling bored and missing their colleagues. This is sad news when retirement is supposed to be a time to enjoy the fruits of a lifetime's hard work.

These findings are a lesson to younger people about the importance of saving early and getting their pension affairs in order ahead of time. With good planning, financial problems can at least be lessened.

Some retirees just want to put their feet up. But others want to carry on working part-time, volunteer, undertake an educational course or begin a new hobby.

What is important is that government, business and charities ensure that older people have the opportunity to do these things and make the most of their retirement.

Sent in by Jim (Lamb)

I Am the New Year

I am the new year. I am an unspoiled page in your book of time.

I am your next chance at the art of living.

I am your opportunity to practice what you have learned about life during the last twelve months.

All that you sought and didn't find is hidden in me, waiting for you to search it out with more determination. All the good that you tried for and didn't achieve is mine to grant when you have fewer conflicting desires.

All that you dreamed but didn't dare to do, all that you hoped but did not will, all the faith that you claimed but did not have -- these slumber lightly, waiting to be awakened by the touch of a strong purpose.

I am your opportunity to renew your allegiance to Him who said, "Behold, I make all things new." ~ Anon

South West Y's Retired of UK Annual get together at Treloyhan Manor, St Ives, Cornwall

Date 16 - 20 April 2018

Cost:- ensuite half board £214.00
non ensuite half board £184.00

Daily morning and evening devotions, evening activities and a full day coach trip exploring parts of beautiful Cornwall.

Deposit of £40 per person required asap with balance in February 2018.

Contact:-
Margaret Libby
1 Lyndrick Road Hartley Plymouth PL3 5TA

That they all may be one:

Insights into Churches Together in England
and contemporary ecumenism

Theos

The ecumenical movement in England has been on a significant journey over the past few decades. The number of Churches and denominations engaged in the area has grown remarkably, reflecting shifting trends in English Christianity.

That, combined with major changes in the ecumenical bodies, and changing perceptions of ecumenism among Churches, has given rise to a complex and vibrant ecumenical scene.

This report provides a snapshot of contemporary ecumenism in England. It tells the story of how ecumenism has changed and describes a movement that is now sitting at a critical juncture as it looks to the future.

The report focuses primarily on Churches Together in England, the main ecumenical body operating in England. It identifies the strengths of the organisation and discusses the challenges it now faces.

The report concludes with some suggested possibilities for the future, making some tentative recommendations for Churches Together in England as an organisation. It is our hope that this report will serve to provoke fresh debate about the purpose, focus, and direction of ecumenism as it develops over the coming years.

Natan Mladin, Rachel Fidler, and Ben Ryan, Theos 2017

"We are grateful to Theos for its work in compiling this Report. We hope that, with widespread study and discussion, it will help us grow closer to each other in our shared pathways of discipleship and in the mission we hold in common."

Archbishop Justin Welby

The Archbishop of Canterbury

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster

Revd Dr Hugh Osgood

The Free Churches Moderator

The Revd Canon Billy Kennedy

The President nominated by the New Churches, the Religious Society of Friends (the Quakers) and the Lutheran and German-speaking Churches

Bishop Angaelos

The President for the Orthodox Churches

Bishop Dr Eric Brown

The Pentecostal President

The Presidents of Churches Together in England

Members correspondence

Dear friends

I tried to phone Margaret Peebles but the line was disconnected, so I phoned Joan Lomas. Joan's daughter-in-law Carol, told me that Margaret had moved and gave me the phone number. I expected it to be the switchboard of the home, but it went directly to Margaret's room! Joan Lomas is keeping well.

Margaret Peebles has very recently moved to a care home having had two falls and a period of time in hospital. I spoke to her yesterday and she was in good spirits.

Margaret likes the care home, the staff and the food, and also, in her words "I have all my marbles". Margaret thinks that it very unlikely that she will be able to return to her own house, but she is living in the same area and has good links with St Andrew's Methodist Church at Forest Hall and the Revd Gavin Hugh who is the minister.

Margaret will be 96 on 13 December 2017!!

Margaret asked me to let you know her new address.

Margaret's new address is:

Springfield Park Care Home, 2 Eastern Villas, Station Road North, Forest Hall, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE12 9AE
Margaret own phone no is: 0191-233-9757.

With best wishes – Stephen (Milner)

Well done Lenny – the YMCA presence at the Cenotaph is important to so many of us and for the remembrance of those that have gone before.



**YMCA Volunteer Workers at Crystal Palace, London
1914 – 1919.**



Dear President and committee members



How very kind of you to write to me about the trust fund. It is indeed a pleasure to know that our aim has been achieved.

One thinks back to the time when it was suggested that Y's Retired should be folded and the funds given to the National Council!

I asked you, Jim, to become President and, thank the Lord, you accepted. What a success you have been, with tremendous support from Reg, David and other members of the Executive Committee.

One hopes and prays that this success continues indefinitely!

You mentioned my health- it's not good. Basically, I'm housebound, and spend most of my time in a Riser Recliner. Although I've a scooter, I don't use it much and have hardly driven it for 3 years. I sold my car at the end of August 2017. Bet, now 90, is doing well and drives me around when required. My Doctor and other medical people now visit me and I'm well cared for! Also, I have what she calls a Carer who comes in 6 times a week for 2 hours, cooks our lunch and generally looks after me. She's a Gem! I have no complaints!

I read the Newsletter with great interest, thank you David. I'm so pleased you are attending the Conference in Thailand and look forward to reading your report, remembering well the one you wrote following the last one. I also read with interest the International letter and think of all my friends from the past. What a wonderful life I had within the YMCA.

Blessings on all of you who receive this missive and continue to have a happy and healthy life.

Warm Regards, **Col (Mawby)**

Dear Col

It's a grey and drizzly day now brightened on receipt of your nice letter to Jim and other Y's Retired friends! Sorry to hear of your health problems and glad you are being well cared for. My mobility is also restricted and I too have a scooter - not much use in our present locality but we are in process of moving! Hoping to get an apartment in a retirement village near two sons and families down in Sussex.

Y's Retired is my only effective remaining YMCA connection which I greatly value. I did not know of your role in its conception but not surprised. You always were a great innovator! Regrettably we have not been able to get to the Cambridge reunions recently which we enjoyed. Like you I am so pleased we are able to help friends from less affluent countries to attend the world conference.

Glad to know Bet is doing well. Wendy is too and very concerned for my every need! Our family has grown even more - now our four offspring and spouses plus 10 grandchildren, aged 3 to 26!! All are very attentive to our needs and give us cause for much gratitude and admiration.

You and I share many good memories of our YMCA ventures. Would love to meet up but guess not now feasible. But we send you and Bet our love and best wishes and warm regards to all other friends in receipt of this letter.

David (Professor David Miller)

The role of the Women's Auxiliary in the YMCA during the First World War has long been overlooked. But it deserves greater recognition, an historian tells Chris Bond.

THE STORY of the YMCA and its female volunteers during the Great War has become little more than a footnote in the retelling of that terrible conflict. But it is a story that deserves a closer look and is one that features in a programme of talks - entitled 'Lest we forget' - which examine the impact of the Great War on communities in Yorkshire, hosted by the National Coal Mining Museum for England, near Wakefield.

Among the speakers is Sue McGeever, a social historian who has spent time researching the role of the Women's Auxiliary in the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) during the war. Within days of the start of the conflict, the YMCA had established 250 recreation centres across the country.

Many were set up close to railway stations where men would be passing through, providing cups of tea, sandwiches and a welcome respite from their journey to France and beyond. With men of military age called into active service it was down to women to step up to the plate, which they did - in their thousands. By the end of 1914 the Women's Auxiliary of the YMCA had been established with 40,000 people answering the call for civilian volunteers to come forward.

YMCA "huts", as they were known, were also set up across the Channel in France, chiefly at ports such as Le Havre and Calais but also close to certain points near the Western Front as the war dragged on.

McGeever points out that the volunteers didn't have qualifications enabling them to work as nurses and says this was a way for them to support the troops. "When the men were away from the front, which they often were, they could go to these huts where could get a drink, write letters and unwind. It was like a home from home for the men," she says. "They were all volunteers so they didn't get paid. They had to have independent means and they're what you might call 'ladies that lunch' today, though they came from all walks of life."

Among them were inspirational figures like Jessie Millar Wilson, from Otley. "She was a suffragette who felt she was doing her bit for the war effort."

Jessie, who was 44 at the time, travelled to France early in 1915. "She thought she might be away for six months but in the end she stayed six years because there was still a lot of work that needed doing after the war ended."

Another Yorkshire woman who worked for the YMCA in France was Bertha 'Betty' Stevenson. She was born in York and came from a well-off family - her grandfather was an MP - and she was desperate to help. "She was just 19 years and begged to go to France and her parents eventually let her," says McGeever.

She was posted to Etaples as a YMCA driver, responsible for transporting relatives from England visiting the wounded in hospital. However, in May 1918 she was killed during an air raid while helping French refugees, she was doing her bit for the war effort." Betty, who was just 21 when she died, was given a military funeral and posthumously awarded the *Croix tie Guerre avec Palme* by General Petain, for courage and devotion to duty.

McGeever believes that the role of women like Betty and Jessie has been unjustly overlooked until now. "Because they were volunteers they have disappeared from history and I think they deserve to be remembered, because every fighting man in the war would have come across the YMCA at some point and been extremely grateful to those women."



A significant moment in YMCA's history at St Paul's Cathedral.

On Wednesday evening in November, in a significant moment in YMCA's history we returned to our roots at St Paul's Cathedral.

The event celebrated our work, paid homage to supporters, staff and volunteers and gave thanks for the life and pioneering work of our founder.

St Paul's Cathedral has played a continuing pivotal role in YMCA's 173 - year long history.

Founded by Sir George Williams in its Church Tard in 1844, at just 22 years old, he would later be laid to rest in the crypt following his funeral there in 1905.



Christmas Quotes

"A hug is a great gift at Christmas - one size fits all"

Jesus is the reason for the Season

"The birth of Jesus is the sunrise in the Bible." ~ [Henry van Dyke](#)

'Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas.' ~ [Calvin Coolidge](#)

'Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love.' ~ [Hamilton Wright Mabie](#)

'The whole concept of God taking human shape had never made much sense to me. That was because, I realised one wonderful day, it was so simple. For people with bodies, important things like love have to be embodied. That's all. God had to be embodied, or else people with bodies would never in a trillion years understand about love.' ~ Jane Vonnegut Yarmolinsky

"Let us remember that the Christmas heart is a giving heart, a wide-open heart that thinks of others first.

The birth of the baby Jesus stands as the most significant event in all history, because it has meant the pouring into a sick world of the healing medicine of love which has transformed all manner of hearts for almost two thousand years...

Underneath all the bulging bundles is this beating Christmas heart." ~ George Matthew Adams

"The Son of God became the Son of man so that the sons of men might become the sons of God." ~ Terry Fullam

A very merry Christmas to you all and a happy and blessed New Year when it comes.