

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

**JULY 2018**

[www.yretired.co.uk](http://www.yretired.co.uk)



## Dear friends and colleagues. Greetings

Within circles of understanding there are some people who would voice the opinion that 'Religion & Politics' should not invade such publications as the much valued Y's Retired of the UK Newsletter.

However, I would suggest that there are issues of importance relating to our personal faith and involvement in the YMCA, a Movement born and matured in the Christian Faith. History shares that the YMCA was 'born in prayer' as revealed so clearly in the play, 'The Life of Sir George Williams'.

There are times throughout our lives when our faith is tested and challenged in light of history, changing patterns with Inter-Faith relationships, 'science meets faith' that we question long cherished beliefs.

I have in mind and quote "Time makes ancient truths uncouth" attributed to which can be reasonable questioning of our basic beliefs and such changes in the YMCA over time such as our present declaration that we welcome quite rightly into the YMCA people of all Faiths and of none'.

Society and with it the Church are changing.

Engraved on the wall of a prominent Methodist Church is a quotation attributed authentically to Rev John Wesley from his death bed. It is understood that he was raised by family and friends from his bed and said, "The best of all is God is with us!"

There is no reference to his name, that he was born in 1703 and died in 1791 at the age of 88 (227 years ago!) giving perspective to the reader. Does a 'passer-by' respond by saying "So what?" or the student travelling to his class at the local Theological College retort, "Give me 5 years and I will respond!"

Personal faith is just that 'personal' due to influences in our individual lives from birth to death.

For most of retired staff I suspect it was the YMCA we turned to whether a 'vocation' or a 'calling' for we would not have applied but for the fact that it was a Christian Movement.

We have to agree with the words of Bob Dylan that 'the times are rapidly changing', 'change' is the only true reality as shared with me by a prominent Roman Catholic Priest.

Personally, I have noted that colleagues and friends I have known throughout the years, some 'evangelists for their Faith', others held moderate views of Christian service, a few became 'academics' in the process of time, others continue to be Christian Agnostics!!

Consequently, a suggestion I made when approached for a subject for the agenda for the WFYR Conference later this year in Chiang Mai, Thailand was 'The 'C' in the YMCA objective rather than subjective view' - in discussion groups. The report after the event might be published in 'Bridges' to widen debate internationally!

Closing! A hymn I recall sung with much fervour at YMCA Conferences over the years was, 'My faith it is an oaken staff the travellers well-loved aid ....' are words I can still relate to apart perhaps from the last line of the second verse, "As all true saints have been"! It is not without significance that this hymn has been removed from modern church hymn books! Too militant?

Keep as well as you are able and in good spirits,  
Warm regards, Jim

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## CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Jim

It was good to read that you have been well supported during your surgery and afterwards. Margery and I were impressed by your uplifting article in Ys Retired. Congratulations on such a positive perspective at such a challenging time.

We are only too aware of the demands made by cancer treatment as our 43 year-old daughter-in-law has just completed almost 18 months on treatment. We hope and pray that your recovery continues.

The newsletter was uplifting and brought back very happy memories. Peter Clarke was an outstanding Treasurer for the National Council- quietly effective. Nothing was ever too much trouble. He was master of detail, which he combined with great wisdom. He was always modest. We knew he had been a brave soldier but until I read the article did not know the story. We used to link up each Christmas through our Christmas cards with short messages about the Movement today and of yesteryear.

The other memory was of Chris Batten, who joined the Movement when I was National Secretary and proved a stalwart hard working member of the team. He was one of those who joined later in life and really did identify with the YMCA and its values. I was really sorry to learn of his passing.

As you know I still retain contact with Movement through Y's Retired and also as President of YMCA Scotland. With the latter hat, I am looking forward to meeting colleagues and friends throughout the world at the World Council at Chiang Mai.

Coincidentally our youngest son, Robert, spent time before university with the Togo YMCA, when Carlos was on the staff there. Small world!

With warmest good wishes and all the very best for the future. God bless

**John (Naylor)**

**CORRECTION – PASSING OF CHRIS BATTEN**  
In the last newsletter issue, it was mentioned that Chris Batten passed away on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018. This date was incorrect. The correct date should have been reported as 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018 (my apologies to Mary his wife and all other relatives)

Dear David  
Thank you for the article in the last newsletter relating to the life of Peter Clarke. Eric had the privilege of succeeding him as Chairman of the YMCA Movement Trust Fund in 2003 and is still doing the job.

Thank you for the work you do for Y's Retired. We are always pleased to receive the newsletters.

**Best wishes – Eric and Brenda (Moore)**

Hi folks

As discussed at the AGM!! of SW Y's Retired held at Treloyhan, I confirm the date for our 2019 get together is

Monday 1 – Friday 5 April  
and the cost will be half board  
en-suite £218pp and non en-suite £180.00.  
Deposits as always please  
£40 by mid-October and balance February 2019.  
Looking forward to seeing you all again  
**Margaret and David (Libby)**

Dear Friends

Thank you all for all the AGM reports and the recent Newsletter. These give admirable accounts of our recent and current activities of which we can be proud. For some they may bring sadness or concern while for others it will be thanks or admiration. Hopefully they will give encouragement to all!

Who says the Report (and/or Newsletter) are too long? It's always a pleasure to read about successful and enjoyable activities our splendid members are up to (or can recall from their long careers) which might usefully be replicated and enjoyed by others - I'm sure we are not all just sitting around 'waiting for God'!

Maybe we could also include brief accounts of exciting initiatives being launched by some of our imaginative and energetic successors. It seems a shame that some new projects that could inspire and encourage others often remain unknown outside local beneficiaries. When Regional President I saw many wonderful local initiatives that deserved to be more widely known and maybe replicated.

Jim...I was very sorry to learn that your hospital encounter led to loss of some of your respiratory apparatus - a fair excuse for dodging last Sunday's marathon! - but I hope you will soon find you can manage perfectly well with a little less puffing capacity. Good to know your family are at hand to help speed full recovery. I know all your friends and erstwhile colleagues are cheering you on !!

I was very sorry to learn that our dear friend Peter Clarke has passed away. His indomitable Christian faith and devotion to the YMCA were an inspiration to us all. I shall always remember with pleasure his company on many special Regional and National occasions. I have a copy of a talk he gave to Croydon schoolchildren describing his experiences at Arnhem when he was a glider pilot and then as a POW, walking for six weeks over 300 miles before being released by American forces.

I particularly enjoyed Vic's account of his travels in Singapore. I had several 'stopovers' there. In fact, during my professional travels around the globe, like Vic, if I could I used to drop in on local Y's - Jerusalem, Delhi, Lucknow, Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Tokyo, Australia, several in USA and always enjoyed a friendly welcome. And always impressed to see the ways in which Y's the world over serve their local communities.

Thanks again for compiling these reports.

Very best wishes  
**Professor David (Miller)**

## 10 WAYS TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



Hi David

Hope you and Sue are keeping well? I have completed the data request below, hope it works.

Just a quick up-date on me. As you probably remember I have always played a lot of sports, well even the fittest have heart attacks, which happened to me at the beginning of the year. It turns out my main artery was seriously restricted and getting a limited supply of blood to the body. I was scheduled for emergency by-pass surgery five days after the attack, which would of been open heart surgery.

Somehow, I developed a chest infection and it was cancelled. We now move to the bizarre, I am sent home with a course of antibiotics. Then, after completing the next communication, I receive from Stoke Hospital that I will now be having keyhole surgery.

Whilst having to be careful and waiting 3 months, this happened just over 4 weeks ago and I went swimming and played tennis last week.

God is amazing. Where the infection came from I have no idea. How did I suddenly become one of 1% to receive by-pass surgery by keyhole surgery.

The operation was done through parting the ribs on the left-hand side, and the graft was done on a beating heart, so none of the intrusive procedures usually associated with by-pass surgery.

I now feel fitter, have a regular heart beat of 75 and warm hands, which I can't remember having for year, always been cold.

I am hoping to get down to the reunion in Cambridge, just looking at dates, will you and Sue make it, it is a long way for you?

Anyway thanks for all the work you do in keeping us all in touch.

Love to all

**Tony (Gratton) and Kathy**

Dear David,

I was saddened to hear of the death of Peter Clarke. Peter, who was Hon Treasurer of the English National Council for over a decade in the eighties and nineties was a true gentleman.

He formed a wonderful partnership with the then Chairman Gerald Ward and was always enthusiastically supportive of the staff team.

The National Secretary at the time, John Naylor and I tended to come up with big plans for national programmes(!) and when we needed seed corn money John would invariably say "See if Peter Clarke can help".

Peter would nearly always turn up trumps and dip into a private trust he ran as a solicitor at the time to support us as people and to give the YMCA he loved a way forward.

When Peter and Gerald Ward retired they held a farewell dinner attended by John, Sam Johnston, Graeme Angus, Gordon Wickens and myself amongst others. It was a great occasion and the love and warmth shown to Peter on the night was so very moving and an appropriate response to his years of voluntary service.

Peter was above all a humble man and over the years I never once heard him talk about his War years when, according to others, he was a hero saving lives as a medic especially at the Battle of Arnhem.

Peter has joined the other YMCA saints of that generation and I thank God for him.

**David (Bedford)**

Dear David

I hope that you and Sue stay well.

We are still in Co. Durham and expect to stay here now. Our son, Matthew, lives in Edinburgh and is a Sergeant in Police Scotland. He has two daughters.

Our daughter, Emily, lives with her family in Saudi Arabia. Her husband works for the MOD. They have 3 boys. We have been able to get visas to visit them for the past two years.

Saudi was not on my bucket list of places to visit, but I am glad that I have. They are due to return to the UK a year in August but are talking of a further posting somewhere else in the world.

I am kept busy as a Lay Reader in the Parish. We have five churches and we are in vacancy for one clergy post, with our second vicar retiring in July (much fun). I lead worship on a regular basis and conduct funerals, all too often!

Judith works part time supporting children too ill to attend school.

I see **Ken (Allinson)** quite regularly, he is now living in Darlington with his wife Debbie.

Best wishes, **Michael (King)**

Dear David,  
Many thanks for the invitation for **Kathleen Akrill** (YMCA retiree) to join you all at a reunion lunch on 4 July.

As an update, I am Kathleen's next of kin and Power of Attorney and take care of all her administrative, care and social arrangements.

Kathleen is nearly 93 years of age, she has dementia and is now living in a residential home just four miles from my husband and I, following a move just over a year ago. I am pleased to say that she is doing very well in her new environment and enjoys interacting with the lovely staff and some of the residents. We see her frequently and take her out on little local trips at least once a week, which she enjoys.

However, I think the 2/2+ hrs journey each way to Cambridge and the fact that she struggles to remember people (including the fact that I am her niece) would make the day quite stressful for her and possibly others, so sadly, we won't be coming. However, I do hope you all have a lovely reunion.

Kind regards - **Pamela (Gelder)**

Dear David  
All well with Marjorie and me, getting out and about a bit while this fine weather and the energy lasts. Enjoyed daytrip by coach to Sidmouth (glad to say Sid was in good form). Tomorrow day trip to Swanage by shank's pony, train and breezer bus - maybe fish and chip lunch!!

As ever **Derek (Sheppard)**

Dear David,  
Thanks for the copy of 'Bridges'.

I was particularly interested in the last sentence at the bottom of the first column of The Chalice Letter. I was in Israel some years ago and there were two YMCAs in Jerusalem. One was West Jerusalem 'Jewish Christian' YMCA which was comparatively well off being supported by American money.

The other was East Jerusalem 'Palestinian Christian' YMCA which was comparatively poor and was not supported by American money!! My YMCA (Reading) gave some support to EJMCA by sending a group of young people out for a summer work camp there. I took a cheque out to them and a load of toys for the children of a Coptic Christian School where our young people had done some work.

I was taken out by EJMCA's programme secretary and told a few home truths about the way they were treated by the Israel system - I won't go into detail, but I could if you would like me to. Our young people incidentally came back very pro-Palestinian.

Since this all happened some years ago I don't know what the YMCA organisation in Jerusalem is now, but I would hate to think that the 'Jerusalem International YMCA' is the West Jerusalem one and that the two Jerusalem YMCAs don't now work together. I suspect it is and they don't however.

Kind Regards - **Geoff (Havers)**

## **BBBF Reunion at Askham Bryan College, York, on Tuesday 31 July 2018**

I am writing to let you know that I will be holding the 5th YMCA British Boys for British Farms Reunion at Askham Bryan (Agricultural / Rural Studies) College near York on Tuesday 31 July 2018. A few of the BBBF boys attended courses or worked at the College.

It is hoped that a member of YMCA staff could join us on that day.

Details from **Stephen Milner**, 22 Ellerslie Close, Charminster, Dorchester DT2 9QQ.  
Tel: 01305 - 266197.  
Email: [stephenmilner222@btinternet.com](mailto:stephenmilner222@btinternet.com)

Dear Friends

Sorry to have to send my apologies again for this year's Cambridge reunion but my mobility is still very restricted. We are hoping soon to move to Sussex where we shall be near two of our sons and their families but further from Girton! However, our daughter will remain in Cambridge, so occasional visits there will still be possible.

We send our very best wishes for a happy 'get together'.

Warm regards to all

**David (Professor David Miller)**



Dear friends,

**Tuesday 12 June 2018 - 7am** - A very strange 'surreal' morning.

I have just witnessed Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump shaking hands and signing agreements averting, at least for the time being, a catastrophic war - and at the same time looking out from my lounge seat over Mount's Bay Penzance, where HMS Queen Elizabeth, newest and largest aircraft carrier Britain has ever built, is undergoing sea trials with 42 F-35 aircraft, with 24 being front-line fighters and a mix of RAF Chinooks, Army Apaches, Merlin and Wildcat helicopters.

I wonder what the rest of the day will hold besides our haircuts and a trip to Tesco?

Best wishes - **David and Sue (Smith)**

## Mary and Vic Hill continue their exploration of New Zealand

As I write, Trump & Kim have arrived at Singapore. I wonder if their time will be as enjoyable as ours was there, but more importantly can they arrive at a non-nuclear agreement for the Korean peninsula?

Auckland at the beginning of March was less humid than Singapore but still in the low 20's. After an afternoon and evening "acclimatising", the conducted tour started after an early breakfast with a drive north, for 2 days in the Bay of Islands. Visiting the 1840 treaty lands; Governor's house museum and traditional Waka Tawa canoes.



Begun in 1937 to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1940, of the signing of the treaty, were all accomplished on the walk from the coach to the hotel.

Our incredibly knowledgeable (about their migrations and seamanship) Maori guide was hoarse from having "captained" the Waka Tawa celebratory races at the weekend. The six options of the excursions here made for difficult choices (selected while in the UK)



Day 1: swimming with Dolphins,  
Day 2: - the Hole in the Rock on a choppy day. Other's took a long day excursion North via 60 miles of beach to the most Northernly point and lighthouse of New Zealand.  
Back to Auckland – up the Tower for incredible views and sailing around the harbour.



South to Rotorua - greeted by the Sulphur odour in the atmosphere. With two other couples we were met by one of our host for an optional one night only homestay on a rural small holding, feeding goats, a BBQ in the twilight sharing stories. Fascinating and illuminating. Our early morning departure facilitated a sunrise photo.



Back in Rotorua the Geysers, [Guy sers]; Mud Pools and Craft Museum; wood carving, jade carving, flax reed weaving, were enthralling.

The Maori guide was informative and amusing – probably his Irish roots!

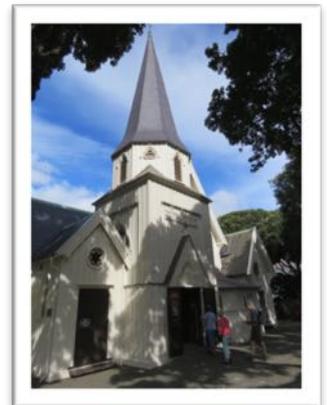
That evening a vintage Maori coach arrived to collect us. On the journey to the tribal village we were warmed up by our lady driver teaching us:- some simple words – chants – songs – electing a Chief and the etiquette necessary when meeting the other "tribes" and Maori Warriors



An amusing – highly entertaining cultural Maori experience in our "tribes". Culminating in a meal for around a hundred visitors; slow cooked in the huge pit oven heated by thermal steam. It reminded me of my scouting days and backwoods cooking... The journey back to the hotel was no less entertaining, culminating in singing "she will be coming round the island", continuously as our Maori lady driver circumnavigated the same traffic island 4 times.

The following morning – we were heading South once more, for two nights in Wellington. Visits to attractions en-route were all part of the package. Although we were told Kiwi's inhabited the woods next to our hotel in the Bay of Islands, being nocturnal creatures, we had left them in peace.

One of our stops was to a wild life sanctuary, where the enclosures were dark and Kiwis were being bred. One of my "must sees" achieved. A guided excursion was included at each city. However, our free time visit to the Parliament building, especially the basement areas, to see and learn how the building had been earthquake proofed – some incredible engineering.



Followed by the old wooden Anglican Cathedral were probably the highlights of Wellington for us. Next stop South Island – next time.



Dear Norris,  
Have just received my copy of Bridges and hasten to send you congratulations on behalf of the Y's Retired of the UK committee and members for the very fine manner in which you have executed your responsibilities as Chairman of the WFYR over the past four years. It has been of the best.

Hand over to Phil with due ceremony at the Chiang Mai conference and relax for at least an hour as you seek new pastures in which to volunteer!

Very warm regards and thanks for a job well done, it has been appreciated.

Jim  
President  
Y's Retired of the UK



Dear Phil,

I write on behalf of the Committee and members of the Y's Retired of the UK to congratulate you as you assume the Chairmanship of the WFYR at the Conference of the WFYR to be held in Chiang Mai. Look forward to the next four years in anticipation of our support.

We only hope you can wrest the 'gavel' from Norris at the handing over ceremony before taking over!

Warm regards,  
Jim  
President  
Y's Retired of the UK

## **Y'S RETIRED - SOUTHERN RE-UNION**

**The next southern re-union will be on Thursday July 19th although the venue is yet to be confirmed.**

**All members wishing to attend should email Blair Crawford at**

**[jblaircrawford@aol.com](mailto:jblaircrawford@aol.com)**

**and he will send the relevant information when it becomes available.**

**This is an opportunity not to be missed.**

## **John Brown Bygate - RIP**

I have today received an email from Australia, and it seems strange that someone on the other side of the world will have our local news quicker than we do.

The email was of course, from Jan and Allen Isaac, giving me news that John Brown (Bygate) has died at 76 years of age.

This apparently happened last month (May), but no other information is available. The message came from a lady called Lynda which is the name of John's sister. I met Lynda when visiting John when he was in Liverpool.

Sorry to be passing on such unfortunate news.

### **Peter (Brookes)**

Dear Peter,  
Thanks for passing the information on so I can notify the membership. I know that John was the youngest of those students on the one year training course in London, for those qualifying as full time youth workers affectionately known as 'the class of 1960/1961.'

As a student I remember being allocated by Joan Tash to do my concentrated month's practical "youth work" training at Islington YMCA. John was the Gen Sec and after the first week and knowing that I had been working full-time in youth work since that age of 16, he went on holiday and left me to run the community centre, which I successfully did, but what a learning curve.

The work he achieved in bringing young people from different ethnic backgrounds together in a London borough struggling with Greek Cypriots, Irish migrants and youth from Caribbean islands was well documented at the time and became a successful model in itself.

I also remember his volunteering at Eurocross which he was heavily involved with assisting folk like Phil Heath and Andy Winter.

At one stage he was Gen Sec of Hereford YMCA

John left the YMCA in the early 80's to work for the Ockenden Venture fulfilling refugee work in Thailand.

The Ockenden Venture was founded to help refugee children of any nationality. It was formally registered as a charity in 1955. By the early 1960s, the organisation had 16 reception centres looking after people from many different countries.

Although its work in the UK continued, for example housing Vietnamese 'boat people' in the late 1970s, Ockenden's focus increasingly shifted to working in other countries, and the final UK project was closed in 1988. The organisation changed its name to Ockenden International in 1999.

**David H Smith (Editor)**

In your hands, O Lord,  
we humbly entrust our brothers and sisters.  
In this life you embraced them with your tender love;  
deliver them now from every evil  
and bid them eternal rest.