



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

JULY 2011

www.yretired.co.uk



GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear colleagues and friends,

First may I offer a very warm welcome to members and readers of the Newsletter. Again it is a most newsworthy edition.

A query? How many, *or should I say, most* of us experience memories, many nostalgic, as we endeavour to recall 'happenings and people' we have known in the past – no doubt the recent successful South West Reunion attendees can vouch for that from their meeting together in St Ives.

In the last few months I have formed the habit of late night listening on headphones to my many CDs collected over the years and am amazed when rediscovering my varied tastes in music/songs! From 'Mule Train' (C&W) and 'The Shrimp Boats are a Coming (their sails are in sight)' to the classics and some light opera to of course the West End Shows not least 'Cats' with that prominent haunting number 'Memory'!

Memories can be or are most significant signposts in the 'journey of life' whether through music, events, conversations or religious experience. As retired members of society we recall our indebtedness to people who have influenced us – parents, teachers, tutors, orators, YMCA colleagues and many more. Holiday memories both good and bad come into our reckoning also.

There is however a counterbalance for many of us also encounter loved ones, colleagues and friends mainly ageing who suffer from 'short term memory loss' such as in Alzheimer's Disease (dementia) and with them to limited degrees the depth of sadness in 'memory loss' as 'they' no longer recall events happening even during that day. To some extent they are compensated through a good long term memory drawing on vast treasures of memory which prove most enlightening to the 'listener'.

I recall my mother-in-law with affection who in a Home shared with me and my wife wonderful memories of her childhood and youth which I quietly taped for posterity – to my horror I accidentally taped over her memories, stories never to be recovered, I lost her memories!

Let us value our memories for they are part of the stuff we are made of and have a rightful place in experience of life!

Now I must remember to cut short this letter but not before drawing attention to your committee's progress in encouraging Lay Membership of the Y's Retired of the UK. This is one of our most important developments in recent years. Accordingly I draw your attention to our Editor's article on the subject in this Newsletter.

David Smith and Reg Wake have spent many hours on behalf of the committee formulating the correct procedures to ensure a smooth operation. Also to share the need for increasing our membership and invite any readers who qualify to call Reg Wake on 01372 275402 or email: regwake@aol.com

A note of wonderment! – Some colleagues have shared with me that each day of retirement is like a Bank Holiday or Sunday – I WISH!!!

Enjoy the summer season and keep as well as you are able in health and spirits!

Warm regards, Jim Lamb
xx

SNIPPETS AND NEWS FROM MEMBERS

David Bellotti

New email address: dbellotti@btinternet.com Jo and I are making new home arrangements for telephones and computers because we recently took control of the Council and I'm now in the Council Cabinet looking after the Resources portfolio! - Best wishes - David

Roy Weaver – Recently undergone a number of medical checks but has been pleased to receive many calls from his friends. Roy will be undertaking chemotherapy shortly.

Sam Johnston – "When I phone YMCA England and say 'Sam Johnston speaking', I always get the reply WHO ? I suppose its understandable after being retired for so many years, but I still feel peeved. So this morning when I rang up and they said 'Who is speaking'? I said, 'Prince Charles'. What do you think they said? - 'WHO'!!? SO THAT MAKES ME FEEL BETTER." Sam

Mike King - We became grandparents on 16th April. Our daughter gave birth to a boy 7lb 6oz. We are very proud and happy grandparents. Our son, Matthew, gets married on June 11th in Edinburgh, where he is a policeman. Life changes all the time, but is very good.

David and Sue Smith – we are both proud to announce that our son Matthew will be getting married to Anna on 6th August in Cambridge. We wish them well in their future life together.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL REUNION IN ST IVES

It was a delightful and joyous occasion to be amongst 25 Y's Retired of UK friends at the South West reunion held in St Ives, Cornwall between the 12th and 15th April 2011.

After attendees had eaten a hearty evening meal, they gathered for a Monday session on "Invitations to Lay People" in Y's Retired of UK, the Minutes of the AGM and Secours Speciaux, all reported by Reg Wake, Secretary and Ray Allen, Treasurer.

On Tuesday 16th April, after morning devotions led by Margaret Libby and accompanied by piano player Des Willcox, those that had brought their travel free passes sent off on the local buses, for a gloriously warm cloudless day in Falmouth, whilst others made their way to Marazion via Lands End. A cream tea was the order of the day, enjoying the sunshine on the Smith's balcony.

The evening session was delivered by Angela Hall, YMCA Regional Officer for the South West who described the present day work of the YMCA Nationally, Regionally and locally.

Wednesday morning, the 29 seater coach arrived ideal for the small Cornish roads. The tour, organized by the Libbys, went up the North Coast. During the trip Margaret shared with us the legend of the giant and his eventual downfall over a young maiden's wishes (think I've heard this story many times before!!!)

Reverend Ian Haile spoke folklore to us about every Methodist Chapel we passed. We had our daily prayers in St Agnes, when the Reverend Joe Ridholls stated that we should not be concerned with what seems to be the demise of Christianity – it had happened before in the 15th Century and it would happen again. This Chapel had been well converted in order to service requirements of the present day demands. Then off to Crantock, near Newquay to a very pleasant tea room where lunch was served to all.

The evening session was entertainment from a local choir.

Thursday was a free day up till just after the evening meal when Liz Harper, quiz mistress extraordinaire, tested all our brains. Evening devotions were given by David Smith followed by the AGM at which all existing officers were re-elected – Mervyn Moorehead as President and Margaret Libby as Honorary Secretary.

Before departure to all points East, all came together for a moving Friday morning communion service led by Reverend Ian Haile. It was very fitting to share bread and wine together in this way – and so farewells and departures came and went and folks journeyed back to the busy lives of the urban dwellers, having taken time out to be with old friends and to declare their intention to return again to St Ives in twelve months time.

Our deepest thanks to Mervyn and Margaret who, year after year, make this successful gathering of colleagues an occasion not to be missed.



**AMERICA'S YMCA'S HAVE BEEN CELEBRATING FATHERS SINCE 1910 -
WHEN THEY INVENTED THE NATIONAL HOLIDAY**

National YMCA parenting study reveals one of the best Father's Day gifts is a heartfelt compliment

In 1909, Sonora Louise Smart heard a Mother's Day sermon and puzzled over why there was no holiday honoring fathers. So she shared her idea with local ministers at a meeting at the Spokane, Wash. YMCA. The first Father's Day celebration took place at the Spokane YMCA in June, William Smart's birth month - on June 19, 1910.

In 1972, President Nixon signed Father's Day into law, and eventually this day dedicated to Dads became an opportunity to lavish gifts and loving gestures on one's father. But according to findings from a national parenting study from YMCA of the USA and Search Institute, one of the best ways to honor fathers isn't by giving them ties or golf balls. The "Building Strong Families" survey of 1,005 parents reveals that lending an ear, telling a father he's doing a good job would mean more than we think.

To celebrate the first Father's Day in 1910, Sonora Smart suggested that fathers be honored through religious services, special meals, small gifts and wearing roses: red for living fathers and white for deceased. A monument to Sonora Smart Dodd, to her father and to all fathers stands at the Spokane YMCA, where today thousands of families enjoy a wide range of family programs.

"Fathers are enormously involved in their children's lives, as coaches, teachers, role models and confidants, but they often feel very isolated while doing so." said Kenneth L. Gladish, Ph.D., national executive director, YMCA of the USA, the national resource office for America's 2,575 YMCAs.

"As a leading community service organization, YMCAs are committed to identifying what resources parents need, providing family-friendly programming and reassuring them that reaching out for support is a sign of strength, not weakness."

Programs like YMCA Adventure Guides foster understanding and companionship between children and their Dads- and Moms.

It features parent-and-child activities like camping, service-learning projects, arts and crafts, music, and storytelling, and emphasizes the role of parents as guides in their child's life. Currently 380 YMCAs offer Adventure Guides programs.

This Father's Day, reach out to the fathers in your life with a pat on the back and an offer to take their children to a baseball game, the zoo or the Y.

"When we support parents, we begin to build strong kids and families, strong communities and a strong nation," said Gladish.

Sonora Louise Smart-Dodd died at the age of 96 but her legacy lives on. A monument to Ms. Smart's holiday stands at the Spokane YMCA where today thousands of fathers and their children enjoy a wide range of family programs.

The "Building Strong Families" survey was shaped by a panel of outside experts on family and conducted by the Global Strategy Group of New York. Findings were borne out by related Search interviews with many other families of different types, across the U-S. It involved a telephone interview in May 2002 with 1,005 parents with children under 18, margin of error +/-3.1%. Findings follow Search Institute's landmark work on developmental assets for children and set the stage for an ongoing exploration of parents and families. Complete survey findings available at www.abundantassets.org.

The YMCA of the USA is the national resource office for the nation's 2,575 YMCAs, collectively the nation's largest community service organization and largest providers of child care. YMCAs serve 18.9 million people, including 9 million children through a broad range of programs. YMCAs are for people of all faiths, races, ages, abilities and incomes. Many YMCAs offer financial assistance. To learn more visit www.ymca.net.

A TOUCH OF HUMOUR!

Subject: Radio conflict.

This was a conversation between a US naval ship and Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland in late 1995.

Canadians: Please divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.

Americans: Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees to the north to avoid a collision.

Canadians: Negative. You will have to divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision.

Americans: This is the captain of a US Navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course.

Canadians: No, I say again, you divert YOUR course.

Americans: This is the Aircraft Carrier US LINCOLN, the second largest ship in the United States Atlantic Fleet. We are accompanied with three Destroyers, three Cruisers and numerous support vessels. I DEMAND that you change your course 15 degrees north. I say again, that's one-five degrees north, or counter-measures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship.

Canadians: This is a lighthouse. Your call.



Whatever is Sam Johnston writing to me about? Well it is not just an appeal for financial support rather an opportunity for you to be included in creating a permanent YMCA Memorial at the National Arboretum near Stafford recognizing the service the YMCA has given for nearly two centuries to the Armed Forces.

In World War I and World War II, thousands of YMCA volunteers helped to bring comfort and hope to countless young service men and women. The YMCA was the lead organization involved but it is one of a few voluntary organizations not to be recognized at the Arboretum. We must rectify this situation in tribute to all our people who served in such difficult circumstances and to those who gave their lives.

The sum required to design, create and erect the stone Memorial (which will incorporate the YMCA Triangle and appropriate inscription) to our predecessors is in the region of £15,000. I'm pleased to be able to inform you that two thirds of this sum has already been secured.

To raise the remaining sum I am depending on the contribution from you as part of Y's Retired of UK – say £50 or whatever you feel is appropriate. I am hoping that, as someone who served the YMCA so well you will wish to support this effort to honour other YMCA workers whose efforts have gone unrecognised for so long.

I will be writing to the wider YMCA family, including Local Associations for support. The National Movements of England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland have already indicated they wish to be involved. It is hoped to have a list of donors compiled into a leather bound book, kept in the Chapel at the Arboretum. All donors' amounts will be treated with anonymity.

I feel the YMCA Memorial at the Arboretum will have many benefits not least in recognizing the extraordinary efforts of those who went before us to bring Christian love to young service men and women in time of war. We will remember them.

I hope you will support this project.

Yours Sincerely - Sam Johnston

PS. Please print off the attached Gift Aid form so that every £1 you give becomes reclaimed and worth 25% to us.

Please send both the form and your cheque made payable to "YMCA England" to my home address:- The Maples, Park Lane, Dry Drayton, Cambridge, CB3 8DB Tel:01954 781107 – Thank you for your help.

Dear Retired Colleagues

There is no doubt that throughout our YMCA careers as serving YMCA Secretaries, we have been assisted, supported and governed by Lay people, many of whom have given valuable years of service to our YMCA Movement. In very many cases, when they retire, their involvement, not only with their local Association, but in many cases, with the Movement as a whole, comes to an abrupt end.

Present members of Y's Retired of UK have unanimously agreed that this situation should be changed and that Laypersons be invited into membership of Y's Retired of UK.

In Hong Kong last July, at the World Conference of WFYR (World Fellowship of Y's Retired) our representative, David H Smith returned with new membership ideas.

The concept of inviting long-standing 'Lay People' into membership was first introduced to WFYR by the Canadian Y's Retired. Our Y's Retired of UK membership have also now agreed that Lay persons, who have given a minimum of seven years voluntary service/leadership at local, regional or national levels, should now receive an invitation to membership of the Y's Retired of the UK, but we will need your help to embrace the idea and help us identify who these retiring laypersons might be.

With this in mind an application form has been designed and created and with your help, we would hope to invite into membership those who may have already moved on and retired from their Association or those that will do so in the coming years ahead.

The YMCA is often in debt to such people and this is an opportunity for Lay people not to be forgotten, but to be part of that important sense of belonging to our YMCA Movement.

I sincerely hope you will help us bring this open invitation to the knowledge of those retiring Chairpersons, Directors and Board members now and in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jim

Jim Lamb
President of Y's Retired of UK

With this July 2011 edition of the newsletter, comes an application form. If you know of Lay persons who would enjoy the opportunity of being part of Y's Retired of UK and all it has to offer, do please give them a copy of the form attached, which they can then complete and send to our Secretary Reg Wake. Thank you for your support and help.

SCOTLAND YMCA RETIREES GROUP

The seventh of the six monthly meeting of Scotland based YMCA retirees (plus one from Ireland!) was held on 5 May at Kirkcaldy YMCA. This is the second time we have managed to clash with Westminster elections, the first time being on the day of a by-election. Despite this, and having at least two active party political members, there were nine who managed to attend. As well as the usual sharing of news and gossip, we had three highly interesting inputs.

Liz Easton, the General Secretary of Kirkcaldy YMCA shared with us information about the work of the Association including

- a range of youth clubs
- "Plus One", a mentoring programme which provides intervention with vulnerable young people
- a major emphasis on the use of music as a way for young people to transform their community
- a small community studio which is an invaluable resource for the local community
- an online radio station.

Ted Milburn brought the group up to speed with the Volunteering Programme he has initiated with YMCA Scotland. This links the expertise of an interesting range of people from, YMCA and non YMCA backgrounds with the needs of Local Associations including volunteers from a Community Education background in Strathclyde University, the university of which Ted is an Emeritus Professor.

Jim Thomson told the group of progress on the work he is currently undertaking since the UK retirees conference at Birmingham in September 2010. This is about the work of the YMCA at world level with work with civilian victims of violence at national and international level since 1907. He shared his finding from study of archives in Geneva as well as from his own personal experiences. He showed the group a preliminary copy of this work which is now nearing completion and we look forward to its publication.

There is too much to share in this short note, but suffice it to say that the group agreed to an eighth meeting in October. At that meeting Mike Will, Chairman of Aberdeen YMCA and of YMCA Scotland Chairman as well as an Executive Committee member of the World Alliance will share with the retirees his perspective on the YMCA today.

John Knox



From left: Keith Rennie, Jim Cooper, Andrew Haig, Gilbert Dickson, John Knox, Liz Easton, Bob McConkey, Ted Milburn, Jim Thomson, John Naylor

THE ZEN OF SARCASM

Don't be irreplaceable. If you can't be replaced, you can't be promoted.

Always remember that you're unique. Just like everyone else.

Never test the depth of the water with both feet.

If you think nobody cares if you're alive, try missing a couple of mortgage payments.

If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is probably not for you.

Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish, and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day.

If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably a wise investment.

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

Everyone seems normal until you get to know them.

The quickest way to double your money is to fold it in half and put it back in your pocket.

There are two theories to arguing with women. Neither one works.

Generally speaking, you aren't learning much when your lips are moving.

Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.

Never miss a good chance to shut up.

You know when people see a cat's litter box, they always say, "Oh, have you got a cat?" Just once I wanted to say, "No, it's for company!"

PLEASE – CAN YOU HELP

Do you have any YMCA wartime experiences you would be able to share?

In November this year, YMCA England will be holding a very special event for their high-profile supporters.

The evening will celebrate the YMCA's work during the First and Second World Wars, from manning 'YM' tea vans and 'Red Triangle' huts on the frontlines, to providing 24-hour rest and refreshments for tired troops travelling home on leave. On the evening, this coming November, YMCA England hope to raise substantial funds for the YMCA's work today.

To ensure the evening is a success, YMCA England are looking to speak with individuals who either worked for the YMCA during this time, and in particular, those who were supported by the YMCA.

Do you have any memories or experiences you would like to share? If so, YMCA England would very much appreciate the opportunity to speak with you.

Please contact Susan Anderson on 020 7070 2151 or susan.anderson@england.ymca.org.uk