

**GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT**



**Dear colleagues and friends, - greetings.**

How good it is to introduce my bi-monthly 'greetings' confirming that following recent publicity we have introduced our first Layperson into membership of the Y's Retired of the UK. Most appropriately it is a layman who has given sterling service to the YMCA mainly through London Central YMCA, the London Metropolitan Region (that was!) and YMCA England. Professor David Miller joined as a student of 17years in 1952, lived in the London Central Hostel and was soon elevated as a Governor in 1954! Later he became President of the Metropolitan YMCA. He says, quote, "I for one will greatly appreciate the ongoing fellowship with professional colleagues with whom I have shared so much over many years!"

It is important that I draw your attention to the outstanding effort being made to raise sufficient funds for a YMCA Monument such as is being promoted by Sam Johnston. Many of us have been made aware of the absurd situation presently prevailing at the National Arboretum near Stafford where no sign is present recognising the service the YMCA has given for over a century to the Armed Forces. Sam has given much time and effort to having the situation remedied by an appropriate 'memorial'. The 'appeal' deserves the support of all who have served in the YMCA whilst recognising colleagues who may not favour 'memorials' in general. An explanatory article written by Sam is to be found in this issue of the Newsletter.

I share a different but important theme. Your committee would be interested to learn of any members who would wish it to be known of their interest in giving voluntary service through the Y's Retired of the UK! A letter, email or telephone call to our executive secretary Reg Wake would be welcomed. The contact details are referenced in each issue of the Newsletter.

Enjoy the hot summer promised by the weather forecaster whether you are holidaying in Skegness where the air is very bracing or Bermuda where it is very warm and return home refreshed. Those who suffer from ill health restricting movement accept prayerful thoughts as you cope each and every day with fortitude.

Sincere good wishes,  
Yours, Jim Lamb



Dear Adelheid

It is with horror and deep sadness that we have heard of the terrible events in Oslo and on Utøya. The scenes in Oslo and the senseless deaths were so sad but a special sense of horror and disbelief floods us as we hear of the shootings of the young people on Utøya.

You and the Norwegian people will be in the thoughts and prayers of YMCA friends and colleagues around the world, but we pray especially for the tragically bereaved families and friends, the traumatised young people and all those who are injured and in hospital. On behalf of many YMCA retirees around Europe may I assure you that you are in our thoughts and prayers.

Living in Scotland we have a very strong feeling of empathy towards Norway as our neighbours across the water. Last year my wife and I visited several of the west coast museums of Norway and heard again of the spirit of the Norwegian people in the 1940's and how they found strength to cope with those tragic days. May you all be given the strength you need in the days and months ahead.

John Knox (Vice-chair World Federation of YMCA retirees)

**Our congratulations and good wishes are due to Philip and Hazel Cheal who celebrate their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on 8th September 2011 - REG**

**Request for to your prayers for Adrian and Linda Sharpe. Adrian unfortunately has had a heart attack whilst at their home in France with Linda. He is now out of hospital and still recuperating. This was totally unexpected as Adrian has always been in good health. - ANGELA HALL**

**It is with great sadness that I send details of the sad passing of Bill Bates who died on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2011 having worked for Nottingham YMCA for a period of 35 years - ARTHUR BENNETT**

**A fuller tribute to Bill will appear in the November edition of the Newsletter. Editor**

# VICTORIA HOSPITAL NEDLEY, SOUTHAMPTON



What is now an idyllic country park was once the scene of a bustling military hospital. As the British Army's first purpose-built hospital, Royal Victoria was a unique and ambitious project which would help change the face of the medical world.

To begin this fascinating story we must step back over one hundred and fifty years, to the Crimean War. In the midst of a devastating conflict, which saw the deaths of as many as 18,000 British troops, the army began to collapse. With no transport, poor shelter, and insufficient clothing and food, the fate of a wounded soldier was hopeless. A complete lack of medical supplies on the field, and no structure for removing wounded from the front, meant many did not receive much-needed medical attention. And for those that made it as far as a hospital bed, the scene was little better.

Conditions were terrible, hygiene poor, and filth inescapable: indeed, a soldier may well have had a higher chance of survival outside these appalling hospitals. Into this horror stepped a young Florence Nightingale, and she swiftly set to work improving cleanliness and restoring hygiene.

When reports of her success reached the ears of Queen Victoria, she was inspired. Visiting Fort Pitt - the primary hospital for wounded military - she was shocked by the foul overcrowded conditions being suffered by patients. She quickly set to work rallying support for a new hospital, and in January 1856 the site on Southampton Water was purchased and design work commenced.

On 19 May 1856 - above a sealed box containing building plans, coins and the first Victoria Cross medal - the queen laid the foundation stone before a crowd of 11,000 people who turned up to witness the event. The build for Royal Victoria Hospital began.

Florence Nightingale was keen to be involved with the hospital's design, but she was severely concerned by what she saw. The building's corridors were to be a quarter of a mile in length, an open route for the spread of disease, and the cramped wards had few windows to let in natural light. There were certainly those who agreed with her concerns, but with insufficient time for a redesign only minor changes were made.

The hospital finally began functioning in March 1863, its 138 wards and 1000 beds steadily filling with wounded British troops from across the globe. Whilst the majority were returning from India, there were those from as far as New Zealand, Canada and China, to name but a few. It truly was a hospital to serve an Empire.

With patients from across the globe, tropical diseases were in abundance. This made for interesting medical research and part of the large building was soon converted into laboratories, the scene of many an interesting scientific breakthrough. The most notable of these was the discovery by Sir Almroth Wright of a vaccine for typhoid.

The hospital was once more mobilised for service when World War Two commenced in 1939, dealing with the more severe cases that could not be treated by the increasingly specialised facilities on the war front. Netley became ever more involved in psychiatric care and the asylum building, erected in 1870, treated numerous patients including Hitler's deputy Rudolph Hess.

The site was handed to the US Forces in 1944, both their Army and Navy doctors moving into the main building and hutting hospital in the grounds. An estimated 68,000 casualties were treated before the Americans returned the hospital to the British Army in July 1945, including some 10,000 Germans who would later become prisoners of war.

With the awful conditions on the war front, everything was done to make patients at Netley as comfortable and content as possible during the two world wars. From outdoor entertainments and concerts, to crafts, to pony and carriage rides, there was something to keep patients active and amused. A large YMCA building was erected in 1940 to offer indoor activities in its large billiard room and entertainment hall.

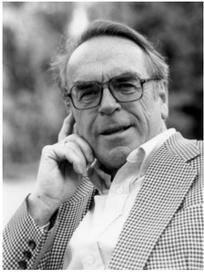
Following the war, the hutting hospital became the primary site for patient treatment, and the grand main building became increasingly run down. A large fire in 1963 damaged vast sections of the building and in 1966 the decision was made to demolish the derelict hospital, retaining only the Chapel. The asylum remained in use until 1978 when the final patient left Netley. A parade through the village, followed by a ball and firework display at the Officers' mess, marked the closure.

The site was purchased by Hampshire County Council and in 1980 Royal Victoria Country Park opened its gates to the public. To this day, the park is a popular site offering stunning views, enchanting woodland, and a relaxing atmosphere. Grassy fields and tall trees now cover the land once occupied by the stunning hospital, but where its physical presence no longer exists its history still remains.

Royal Victoria was the largest military hospital of its time and, despite being demolished after just a little over a century, its service to the British Empire was undeniably of great value. Within the Chapel, the last remaining piece of this vast building, you can discover for yourself its dramatic history in our Heritage Centre.

The old YMCA building now accommodates the Park Office, tea rooms and a large function room. Sections of the railway can still be seen, embedded in the ground of our Chapel car park. The hospital cemetery, opened in 1864, reminds us of the military men who tragically lost their lives when the care of Netley's doctors and nurses was not enough to repair the wounds of war.

Our Heritage Centre and a special History Trail through the park give light to the fascinating account of this site. And when you walk its charming woodland or enjoy its sensational views across the water, take a moment to remember its surprising past, this history of a hospital.



He is most noted as a proponent of the 'theology of hope' and for his incorporation of insights from liberation theology and ecology into mainstream trinitarian theology.

In 1944 Jürgen Moltmann's secular education was interrupted when he was drafted by the German army. He was sent to the front lines in the Belgian forest where, in 1945, he surrendered to the first British soldier he met. For the next few years (1945-47) he was confined as a prisoner of war and moved from camp to camp. His experience as a POW had a powerful impact on his life, as it was in the camps that he had time to reflect upon the devastating nature of the Second World War, developing a great sense of remorse. It was also in the camps that Moltmann met Christian chaplains, was given the New Testament and Psalms to read, and had his first introduction to Christian theology. He gradually felt more and more identification with and reliance on the Christian faith. Moltmann later claimed, 'I didn't find Christ, he found me.'

In July of 1946, he was transferred for the last time to Norton Camp, a British prison located near Nottingham, UK. The camp was operated by the YMCA and here Moltmann met many students of theology. At Norton Camp, he discovered Reinhold Niebuhr's Nature and Destiny of Man - it was the first book of theology he had ever read, and Moltmann claimed it had a huge impact on his life. In 1947, he and a group of other POWs attended the first post war Student Christian Movement in Swanwick, a conference centre near Derby. What happened there affected him very deeply. Moltmann returned to Germany in 1948 at the age of 22 to pursue theological training. He received his doctorate from the University of Göttingen, under the direction of Otto Weber in 1952. From 1952 to 1957 Moltmann was the pastor of the Evangelical Church of Bremen-Wasserhorst. As a prisoner of war in a British camp during World War II, Moltmann observed that his fellow prisoners who had hope fared the best.

After the war, it seemed to him that Christianity was ignoring the hope offered in its promise of a future life. Moltmann is known as one of the leading proponents of the theology of hope. He believes that God's promise to act in the future is more important than the fact that he has acted in the past. What is implied by this focus on the future, however, is not withdrawal from the world in the hope that a better world will somehow evolve, but active participation in the world in order to aid in the coming of that better world.

The most influential work by Moltmann is his Theology of Hope, published in English in 1967. Moltmann proposes that Christian hope should be the central motivating factor in the life and thought of the Church and of each Christian. For Moltmann, the whole creation longs for the renewal by the 'God of Hope'. Empowered by hope, the Christian's response should therefore involve: mission of the Church to all nations, the hunger for righteousness in the world, and love for the true life of the imperiled and impaired creation.

Although Moltmann is perhaps most conspicuous, he is not the only theologian of hope. His theology is in concert with that of Lutheran theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg, in whose essay 'Dogmatic Theses on the Doctrine of Revelation' is found a similar emphasis on understanding of all reality in terms of the eschaton.



During the start of my YMCA career at Ipswich with Ray Onions and Arthur Bennett, I first came across several posters that contain a face of Jesus and the following poem, which influenced my life during those early years. I feel sure many of you will remember it and have been equally moved.

***He was born in an obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop until he was about thirty. He then became an itinerant preacher. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He had no credentials but Himself.***

***After preaching three years, the public turned against Him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to His enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for His clothing, the only property He had on earth. He was laid in a borrowed grave.***

***Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure of the human race. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned have not affected the life of man on the earth as much as that ONE SOLITARY LIFE.***  
***("One Solitary Life," Author Unknown)***

A recent narrative that accompanied this poem added:-

I've known about Jesus for as long as I can recall. I have loved him since I first heard his name. I have imagined what he would be like and read the accounts of his life in Scripture again and again. And I believe that when I depart from this life I shall see him face-to-face.

The central thesis of the Bible seems to be that God chose to reveal himself to and through Israel. He was "Israel's God." But this God promised to become a king and in Jesus his kingdom was revealed in "these last days." The God who could not be seen was to be seen in a human person who became like us, yet without sin.

Where did this Jesus get his authority? The biblical answer is that he got it from his Father, the God of Israel. The earliest creed of the church seems to have been three words: "Jesus is Lord." The good news of this announcement has changed the world. It still does.

Jesus of Nazareth lived that one solitary life and is the one great central person in all of human history. If you stake your whole life on this truth, and by the Spirit see and love him above all else, you are his disciple. Make this your priority each day and you will age and die with few regrets.

## RETIRES OF THE SOUTH WEST ENJOY SUMMER CREAM TEAS IN POLPERRO



How we wished you could have been with us for a most enjoyable day, which the South West retirees enjoyed on Wednesday June 29th. Visiting Polperro which was David Libby and Joyce Finnemore's birthplace, we couldn't help but think 'what an enviable spot to be born and brought up in!'

After a substantial lunch kindly provided by Margaret Libby and Pearl Willcox at the Methodist church Hall, we sat on the harbour wall and watched the world go by! We felt like the characters of 'last of the Summer's wine!'. Compo (alias Ray Onions) sat under the shelter on one side of the harbour and Foggy (alias Mervyn Moorehead) sat opposite. The only one with a figure to equal Marina was Joyce Finnemore, who is slim and lithe as she must have been at twenty! Some of the rest of us are of more ample proportions!

We waved at each other across the great divide. We had our 'Pearl', who is nothing remotely like that Pearl and our own 'Smiler'! Who is always smiling? I leave you to guess, but I think it is David Libby

The highlight of the occasion was Ray Onions 84th birthday and Margaret had produced the most delicious cake, complete with candles and needless to say, Ray was President for the day! We heard his reminiscences of the day he was born which coincided with a total eclipse of the sun! Imagine that! His father went outside with some others to witness that event. Dads' didn't cheer their wives on at the sidelines in those days did they? But I expect mum was too busy concentrating on bringing this 10.5 lb baby into the world anyway!

Polperro is a most beautiful spot, something like I imagine the Garden of Eden to be. A beautiful rippling stream cascades down the main street and the senses are dazzled by the colourful display of flowers (begonias). The shops tempt one with local goodies and we came home with locally made fudge and granary bread and cherry shortcake. There is one shop, the smallest one in England, the proprietor who is German is a craftsman in the making of cuckoo clocks and one market specialises in hand made soaps.

The Libby family are mentioned in the church and commemorated on the war memorial and especially so in the fishing museum I believe.

We next plan to meet 19<sup>th</sup> October at the Central Hall, Plymouth, when Roy Beaumont plans to tell us of his experiences in 'Healing on the Streets'. Margaret Libby would like the deposit for next year's Y Retired visit to Treloyhan Manor at the Plymouth meeting.

Anyone wishing to park in the Methodist Hall car park, please let the office staff know in advance.

## NATIONAL ARBORETUM YMCA MONUMENT PROGRESS

Since Sam's 'round robin' letter I am pleased to report that the amount required to purchase the stone called, 'Caithness Slate,' the concrete base, the intrinsic work undertaken by "The Cardozo Kindersley Workshop" in Cambridge which includes the writing, painting, materials and delivery, the placing within the National Arboretum etc has been achieved and to this end the YMCA will at last, have the recognition it deserves over the next fifty years going forward.

### Progress report on YMCA Memorial The National Memorial Arboretum - Cost £20,000

#### The good news -

Due to the generosity of the YMCA family of England Ireland Scotland & Wales the sum of £18,000 has now been reached.

#### The Memorial wording -

**THE YMCA IS AN INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN  
MOVEMENT HELPING PEOPLE TO DEVELOP IN  
MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT, SUPPORTING FAMILIES  
AND STRENGTHENING COMUNITIES, WELCOMING  
THOSE OF ALL FAITH AND THOSE OF NONE.**

#### The concern -

still £2000 to raise to ensure the Monument will be completed in a manner in which the YMCA will be proud and give respect and thanks to all those who served the armed forces in war and peace, some of whom gave their lives in the service of others.

#### Can you Help ?

Yes (if you have not yet donated) by sending a cheque made payable to 'YMCA England' to Sam Johnston, The Maples, Park Lane, Dry Drayton, Cambs. CB3 8DB With your help the project cannot fail.

It is expected that all donators will be acknowledged personally for their contribution in the near future.

#### Best Wishes Sam (Johnston)



PS - The next time I meet any of you golfers, be prepared for me to bore you.

I will tell how I talked my way into Holywood Golf Club on the occasion when Rory Mc Ilroy was welcomed back to Northern Ireland after his great victory in USA Open.

It was very exciting---giving me nearly as much pleasure as I have had by the response to enable the YMCA memorial to be erected at the National Arboretum.

## "DICK" MARTIN



"Dick" Martin died on 22<sup>nd</sup> June at the age of 91 years. He entered professional YMCA service in 1960 after his career as a regular serviceman in the Royal Marines.

His first appointment was as Physical Director with Manchester YMCA and after ten years in that post, he moved to a similar appointment with Romford YMCA where he served for fifteen years prior to retirement in 1985.

Dick was first and foremost an enthusiast, delighting in his own marked physical fitness and a zest for encouraging others to achieve personal fitness and acquire related skills. He was much respected by all who had the privilege of coming under his influence and enjoying his great capacity for friendship.

In later years and until his death, Dick was a resident in the Royal Star and Garter Home at Richmond where he received the utmost kindness and care and doubtless enjoyed the company and repartee of ex-service friends.

**The photo above shows Dick being presented to Princess Alexandra on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2011.**

Ted Ewing (ex – Romford CEO during Dick's service) was able to attend his funeral at Teddington and has remarked on the gathering of Dick's family, including grand children in whom Dick delighted.

The Royal British Legion representatives attended the funeral complete with their flags and ceremony and together with his friends from the Royal Star & Garter Home combined to give Dick the sort of "send off" which he would much have enjoyed! A great character sadly missed but with thanks for having known him.

### **RESEARCH COMPLETED BY JIM THOMSON**

Jim has recently completed the research he was undertaking into more than forty years of work of the former World Alliance Committee for Refugees and Migrants (later Refugees and Rehabilitation) into one single dossier.

Keep an eye open in future newsletters for knowledge of where copies might be obtainable.

## **DOES ANYONE CARE?**



### **The Plaque says -**

HERE IN 1844 GEORGE WILLIAMS WITH ELEVEN OTHER YOUNG MEN EMPLOYED IN THE CITY OF LONDON WHO SHARED HIS ZEAL AND VISION FOUNDED THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION IN A DRAPERY HOUSE ON THIS SITE IN WHICH HE WORKED AND LIVED. FROM ITS BEGINNING IN THIS PLACE INSPIRED OF GOD THE ASSOCIATION GREW TO ENCOMPASS THE WORLD.

One day, whilst living at the Barbican YMCA and close to the building of London City YMCA, I was sightseeing around St. Paul's Cathedral. I arrived in Paternoster Square, where I saw a Plaque on the wall of a bank.

The plaque was in a dreadful condition, almost black and badly weathered as if it had not been maintained or cleaned for many years. I invited my son Jonathan, who was a student in Birmingham, to spend a few days of his summer break to travel to London and generally give the plaque some TLC and re-paint the lettering on it.

As it was summer and very hot the local bank staff brought him soft drinks and coffee to refresh himself.

He carefully repainted the lettering, polished and brightened up the plaque leaving it almost in its original condition.

That was in 1984 and the plaque is again in need of TLC and some maintenance.

Is there a large London YMCA who would maintain the plaque as it is an important part of our YMCA history and heritage?

Perhaps YMCA England would like to contract a suitable firm to carry out the maintenance every year?

### **Brian Barratt – Ex CEO London City YMCA**

If there are any takers – please let the editor know so we all know what has befallen the YMCA plaque dedicated to George Williams and the birth of the Young Men's Christian Association. Difficult to believe that a plaque depicting the founding history of our great movement is not being appropriately looked after as part of our YMCA history and for international visitors to our country and for all others to observe.

**TEACHER:** Maria, go to the map and find North America.

**MARIA:** Here it is.

**TEACHER:** Correct. Now class, who discovered America ?

**CLASS:** Maria.

**TEACHER:** John, why are you doing your math multiplication on the floor?

**JOHN:** You told me to do it without using tables.