



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



JULY 2009

www.yretired.co.uk

Message from our President



Dear Colleagues,
Warm greetings! I suspect that the majority of our members are glad we have come safely through another winter to experience the warmth of a summer competing with the best of the tropics!

Different months bring memories of important occasions or celebrations such as the birth of a grandchild, marriages, death of a loved one. Such has been my experience as I have recalled with both sadness and joy the loss of my dear mother some years ago.

She led together with my father a good life through war and peace raising a family of three sons but one of the most poignant memories for me was sitting on her bed shortly before her death and for her to utter words that went to the very heart of my being, "Eh! Our Jimmy what has it all been about?! She was referring to 'life', I hardly recall my response for I was so taken aback!

The theme I raise as follows:
Whether we are respected theologians or/and followers of Darwin it is the universal question employing the minds of all who would claim to have developed their 'philosophy of life' in the Christian Faith or a gentle agnosticism. I am reminded of the saying, "I am packing my bags for eternity and it is amazing what I am throwing out!"

The Y's Retired of the UK consists of individual members who can all relate to such thoughts. Many of us would claim to be religious, to be Christians – nominal or otherwise, certainly my experience working for over 40 years for the YMCA is of colleagues who would claim one or the other of the above but a 'Christian agnosticism' played a great part in some lives too!

What is amazing is the sense of 'cohesion of purpose' in working for the YMCA in many different departments with youth, physical education, education, residential, Government schemes, finance and so on.

One thing is certain, that is the sense of identity we experience in the Y's Retired of the UK and the World Federation of YMCA Retirees. What has LIFE been all about asked my mother? Certainly parts for me have been found in the depth of fellowship, the sharing of our humanity through our YMCA experience and what is

referred to as the Christian ethos generated over the years through our contribution to the YMCA, now the Y's Retired!

Neatly following on the above! Such sharing will be played out, I suspect, at the Reunion set for 21st to 24th September 2009 where a varied programme (including free time and a visit to the YMCA Archives at Birmingham University) together with local, regional and national YMCA input and brief devotions from none other than Rev. Tony Malcolm one time Christian Education Officer for YMCA England.

There are 20 persons registered at present with an option to increase the number should the venue, Woodbrooke Conference Centre, Selly Oak, Birmingham have vacancies.

Interested members should 'phone or email me as follows at your earliest please:

01223 440228
Email: j.lamb22@btinternet.com NOW!

Enjoy the summer and for those of you holidaying come back refreshed to your life routines. Keep well and in good spirits. - Warm regards,
Jim

Contribution from Philip Cheal on Governmentium – The Facts

Lawrence Livermore Laboratories has discovered the heaviest element yet known to science. The new element, Governmentium (Gv) has one neutron, 25 assistant neutrons, 88 deputy neutrons, and 198 assistant deputy neutrons, giving it an atomic mass of 312.

These 312 particles are held together by forces called morons, which are surrounded by vast quantities of lepton-like particles called peons.

Since Governmentium has a normal half-life of 2-6 years; It does not decay, but instead undergoes a reorganisation in which a portion of the assistant neutrons and deputy neutrons exchange places.

In fact, Governmentium's mass will actually increase over time, since each reorganisation will cause more morons to become neutrons, forming isodopes.

This characteristic of moron promotion leads some scientists to believe that Governmentium is formed whenever morons reach a critical concentration. This hypothetical quantity is referred to as critical mass.

When catalysed with money, Governmentium becomes Administratium, an element that radiates just as much energy as Governmentium since it has half as many peons but twice as many morons.



RETIREES RESIDENT IN SCOTLAND

A meeting of eight YMCA retirees resident in Scotland was held at the end of April. This is the third such meeting since the group was first set up in May 2008.

This time we were glad to welcome Tom Lawrie, ex-Motherwell YMCA and John Naylor, a past National General Secretary of YMCA England. By enthusiastic agreement the meetings are rapidly becoming established as a twice yearly event.

As well as catching up with one another, we also focus on some aspect of local YMCA work. This time we were hosted by one of the newest Associations in Scotland, Leith Acorn Centre YMCA.

Its base is in the Leith premises of the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church and builds on work with young people and the community that has been going on for the past twenty years.

The work became a YMCA in 2006 but is already making an increasing impact in the community and has developed interesting partnerships including major corporate business involvement.

At the retirees meeting the idea was floated of attempting to see whether it might be helpful for individual members to be able to share something of their expertise with others at local YMCA level.

Considering that among the group of eight we have several long serving local association and National Council staff, one ex-YMCA World Alliance staff member, one Emeritus Professor of Community Education, three ex National General Secretaries, one of whom, John Naylor, is also Chair of OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) we felt that there might be opportunities to be of more use to the wider movement. This is to be followed up with YMCA Scotland, hopefully leading to action.

What impresses most of all is that the group is such a happy, relaxed and enthusiastic bunch – and the next meeting is already being planned for 3 November 2009 at Bellshill YMCA, once the home base of James Love, World Alliance President from 1981 – 1985.



John Knox
8 May 2009

PAUL HARPER SHARES THIS NOTICE HE READ OUTSIDE A CHURCH

SERMONS : This week "Jesus walks on water"
Next Week "Search for Jesus"

BRITISH BOYS FOR BRITISH FARM

I was part of the BBBF for 6 week from January 1959. I was based at Wilderwick House near East Grimstead, Sussex.

The staff at the time were:

Warden: Mr E Carter and his wife was Matron

Lecturers: Mr Perrier Smith, Mr Peter Close, Mr Henderson, and Chef in the kitchens

Wilderwick House was an old, large, country house and part of a large estate with dairy farms (pedigree Airedales), a pig farm and arable. There were also tenant farms.

I worked on one of the tenant farms - usually two of the boys were on it. The farmer was Mr G C Gayford, Old Lodge Farm, Lingfield. This was a mixed farm which employed two workers – Fred Hard, the foreman and dairyman, and George Weley, who was tractor driver and stockman.

When we arrived at Wilderwick House, we spent the first week in the house cleaning and helping in the kitchens. Then you were selected to work on either the estate or tenant farm. If you worked on the estate farm you would spend a week on each enterprise e.g. pigs, beef, dairy, arable and others.

A weekday was usually breakfast, walk to work and then after the morning session walk back for lunch; we then walked back to work and home again at the end of the working day. After the evening meal there would be lectures, films about farming, a drink and then prayers and bed. We worked on Saturday mornings with the afternoon off. On Sundays, breakfast was later and we then went to church and after lunch had games and sports and after tea, lectures and then prayers and bed.

There were approximately 20 – 30 boys during the time I was there.

Upon finishing your stay of 6 – 7 weeks a farm was selected for you to go to. On leaving you were presented with a Bible signed by all the staff and boys. I still have mine.

David Buchan
April 2009

Young campaigners make their mark on UN resolution

By Ross Watson

Children & Young People Now

Five young campaigners from YMCAs around the world have managed to influence a resolution on juvenile justice at the latest UN Human Rights Council meeting.

The campaigners, from UK charity Y Care International, lobbied the Human Rights Council at its Tenth Session in Geneva last month. Their participation was rewarded when an entire paragraph written by the young people, on the rehabilitation and reintegration of former young offenders, was included in the latest resolution on juvenile justice.

The young people, part of Y Care International's Youth Justice in Action Campaign, originate from England, Ireland, Honduras, Sierra Leone and South Africa. They all have direct experience of youth justice systems.

One member of the group, Daniella Abbate from London, said: "Putting young people in prison should be a last resort. When young offenders are released, it's our responsibility to reach out to them, and help them to make them whole again." She called for local authorities in England to be better trained in speaking to young people, understanding them, and treating them with humanity and respect.

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS

ARTHUR HEATH – Sadly, Arthur passed away at the beginning of April 09 and his funeral service was held on Wednesday 8th April at Penmount Crematorium, Truro. The service was conducted by Reverend Liz Greene. Arthur had transferred from his house in St Just to the Nursing home of Poltaire, just outside Penzance. Arthur's YMCA career was featured in an article in the Ys Retired March 09 Newsletter.

Stewart Page (ex CEO of Wimbledon) serves as churchwarden at his Parish Church in Wells.

David Pendle (ex National Council) serves as Chairman for "Churches Together" in Bath.

David Bellotti, is shortly completing his term of office as Chair of City Council in Bath. He kindly extended an official invitation to a number of Ys Retired folk living in the area, to join him for a tour of the Guildhall and Roman Baths, lunch being organised by Mike Fairbeard, CEO of Bath YMCA. David re-married and now has two sons aged 6 and 2!!



David tells that the first 24 members of Bath YMCA accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour at the Guildhall in 1846 when George Williams stopped over on his way from London to set up the YMCA in Taunton. David's email is ...

bellotti@cix.co.uk

A sad story from Ron Lane ex Croydon YMCA Hostel

Ron Lane was widowed but remarried to Marguerite 94. He made several moves after retirement but eventually to Swanage where he enjoyed the 'open spaces.' But ill health (especially arthritis) has caused Ron to move to sheltered housing near Coventry.

In earlier letters Ron was very enthusiastic to develop 'community' with fellow residents - coffee mornings, 'Thought for the Day' etc. Ron now writes:

"I had hoped that moving into this retirement home would enable me to share in things, but the residents are all self-centred and willing to accept what is done for them without wanting to be personally involved. I would advise anyone not to come into one of these places unless FORCED to do so! Sorry if this (sounds) all gloom and gloom. On the good side, I still am in touch with a dozen or so ex-Croydon residents, so the Y obviously made its mark.

Ron sends regards to any Y folk who may remember him. Very sad that Ron, the former bright extrovert should appear so unhappy? Let's give thanks that retirement can be otherwise for so many of us.

Reg.

John Newton asks, "Has there ever been any attempt to organise a reunion event for students 69/70? We were the last one year group of 36 students and it would be interesting to know what happened to former colleagues from those heady days of 1969-70 - Stockwell, Waltham Forest, Lakeside et al.

Rupert George and myself (Together with others in India) are organising an Old Boys Reunion at YMCA Boys Division, Tirupattur on 23rd July- this will coincide with the meeting of the IFYR at YMCA Yellagiri Camp at which we hope that colleagues from UK will also be in attendance.

The accommodation in the new building is very comfortable (En-suite rooms). The site is bordered by Reserve Forest and there is also a tribal village near to the entrance. It all makes the site a unique one and well worth a visit. There are some reasonable fares available from London, Birmingham or Manchester to either Chennai or Bangalore. I have booked on Emirates from Birmingham to Bangalore for £491.

Now I am busy packing out from here - selling up and getting ready for "good byes" after an association with Kalmunai/Sri Lanka of seven years.

My Son, Steve marries his Czech Fiancé - Radka in Czech in June, so I shall have a busy Summer. Now weather is getting hot here but still get the afternoon sea breezes. Our Montessori School building is up to roof level. Alongside other projects we are working towards peaceful coexistence between Tamil, Muslim and Sinhala communities. I am watching how the security situation develops before possibly returning in August.

With all good wishes
Yours ever - John

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Invitation of Applications for the Position of Secretary General for the World Alliance of YMCAs



I wish to inform you that the second term of our Secretary General, Dr. Bartholomew Shaha, will end in December 2010, and he has decided not to seek another term.

We are thankful to him for all his accomplishments during his two terms of office.

It is our hope and prayer that the best person will be found to serve as Secretary General in order to fulfil the mission of the World Alliance of YMCAs.

Yours sincerely,
Martin Meißner
President, World Alliance of YMCAs

YMCA NORFOLK NAMES NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE



YMCA Norfolk will have a new Chief Executive Officer when John Drake steps down in July after completing 30 years of distinguished service.

John Drake is stepping down from his YMCA Norfolk post which he has held since January 1, 1979. Since then he has overseen a massive expansion in its size and scope, culminating in the opening of a new £3m Central Norwich YMCA on January 5.

The organisation now employs over 100 staff and works not only to support and house homeless young men and women, but also in pastoral care in schools, prison work, a furniture warehouse, NightStop and Y-Life schemes and providing advice for asylum seekers.

John said: "Barbara and I have been privileged to see the transformation of the YMCA over the last 30 years. Although we are now inundated with policies, procedures and professionalism, the YMCA's core DNA remains unchanged. The commitment of local people to respond to the challenges of local need as their faith gives them motivation and courage to do so. Now is the opportune time for a successor to come and take the Association forward into this new century."

The new CEO is **Tim Sweeting**, currently Development and Partnership Manager at **West London YMCA**, where his post covers a range of activities including supported housing, children's and youth work. He also holds several national posts within the YMCA movement.

Tim, aged 32, already knows and loves Norwich, as he is a graduate of the **University of East Anglia**.

YMCA Norfolk Chairman, **David Ingham**, said "We are delighted to have appointed Tim from a very strong field of candidates. He has spent all of his working life with the YMCA movement, starting as a housing support worker in Bishop's Stortford, then moving to **Forest YMCA** in 2000 to manage a multi-disciplinary team delivering housing support. He has been in his current post since 2004.

For the full story click on the link below:-

http://www.ymca-norfolk.co.uk/Articles/147940/YMCA_Norfolk/News/YMCA_Norfolk_names.aspx

Geoffrey, our Treasurer reports that as from 1st January to 16th May:

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Subscriptions | £175 from 23 members |
| Donations to Secours Speciaux | £115 from 14 members |

An improvement on previous performances at this stage of financial year and we may hope for better things as promotion takes effect.



Secours Speciaux Fund

"We are pleased to receive letters from members on a variety of subjects. One such letter has been received from Arthur Bennett, raising some useful points worthy of consideration and responses by the whole membership.

Arthur raises the subject of our giving to Secours Speciaux, a fund which supports YMCA retirees in developing countries, especially those who have no pension facility. Your consideration and comments are requested on the two points below:-

1. A suggestion that the annual subscription payable in January each year be raised to £10, which would include a donation of £5 to Secours Speciaux. (**obviously if folks wished to donate more they could**)
2. That consideration be given to the annual payment being received by Standing Order as an **option** helping member's ensure that their annual dues of £5 membership are paid automatically!" Any amount paid over the £5 membership fee will be sent to support colleagues through Secours Speciaux

Arthur adds his sincere appreciation of Reg for enabling him to receive the quarterly issue of 'Bridges,' which he finds impossible to read without feeling privileged to be part of a great Christian movement and fellowship.

Arthur comments that implicit in Don Anderson's article in the April 09 copy of 'Bridges' is a challenge for each one of us - to examine our own lifestyles and values as well as sharing our many many blessings.

Please send your comments and thoughts on this proposal to Reg Wake, The Secretary, Ys Retired of UK, 8 Chaffers Mead, Ashtead, KT21 1NG – Tel: 01372 275402

Email: regwake@aol.com **Thank you – the Editor**

DICK MARTIN. Has been resident in Richmond Star & Garter Home for a long time. Having received no news of him and because he must be 'knocking on' (early 90's I guess) I contacted the Home for confirmation that he is 'still with us', recognising it most unlikely that we would be informed if otherwise. Happily, now have confirmation that he is well and that Welfare Officer has conveyed our greetings.

Friends of Dick Martin, ex Physical Director for Manchester and Romford YMCAs, may welcome confirmation that he is well and still happily living in The Star & Garter Home in Richmond. His address is: Room 36, Battle of Britain Suite, The Star & Garter Home, Richmond Hill, TW10 6RR.

From Reg.

The Life and Times of Mervyn Moorehead



Before you start reading this article don't be alarmed. Rest assured that Mervyn is very much alive and well and still President of the South West Group. Many will tell you how he commands our attention at the AGM!!

Beryl has kindly written this contribution about her husband of whom she is truly proud. Mervyn is equally devoted to Beryl as the story shows – read on.....

David Mervyn Moorehead was born the sixth of seven children on Christmas Eve 1927, to Mary Anne and John Moorehead of Londonderry. Johnnie wanted him to be called Joe after a favourite brother. John might have been the head of the family, but Mary Anne was the neck and seeing their Presbyterian Minister walking past the house, she summoned him in and arranged for the baby to be called David, after her favourite Christmas Carol and Mervyn after the hero of a periodical, who incidentally was a Minister too.

She was a godly woman and the children were strictly, but lovingly brought up in a Christian home. The Sabbath was strictly adhered to, and she would walk the children over the field to the mission hall for hymn singing and gospel teaching, in addition to the Presbyterian church to which they belonged. There are still little mission halls like this in Northern Ireland.

The school attached to the church was pretty gospel orientated and the catechism and psalms were part of the curriculum. He learnt early that 'the chief end of man was to glorify God and enjoy Him forever!' He learnt the psalms by rote, then he learnt songs like 'Uncle Tom Cobble and all!'

At eleven years old in the Guildhall in Londonderry he made his decision to follow Christ, following an evangelical appeal.

During his teen years and after the sad loss of his father at eleven years old, he attended the Londonderry Technical college, where he learnt secretarial skills. He joined the Londonderry Boy's club and also the Boy's Brigade, becoming captain of both. He worked for the Londonderry Temperance council, and a man called Bill Stirling, who was ex YMCA personnel became a great influence on his life, a wonderful role model and a fatherly figure.

He was also President of the Ebrington branch of the Boys Auxiliary, and a leading member of the Glendermott Table Tennis club. He was very athletic in those days and has a screw in his ankle to this day through a fall vaulting over a horse, in the gym.

It was the latter who persuaded him to join the YMCA and with letters of reference he applied and was

accepted as Assistant Secretary of Swansea YMCA, which he served from 1952 to 1954.

From Swansea he later moved on to Liverpool YMCA under the guidance of the late Les Adams, from 1954 to 1957, and one night at a barn dance which he had arranged, who should he do the 'Doh see Doh' with, but a nineteen year old trainee Occupational Therapist, from the Liverpool school of Occupational Therapy. As far as he is concerned she has been leading him a dance ever since, and they celebrated fifty one years together in February this year!!!

The next experience was in Osmondthorpe, Leeds, a satellite youth club, one of four under the umbrella of Leeds YMCA. Beryl worked at the St James hospital Leeds and Ruth, their daughter was born in 1959. The next baby John, was born in 1963, by which time they had moved on to Cambridge YMCA of which he was General Secretary until a move to York in 1967.

1967 to 1979 there was a move back to Yorkshire, as he was seconded by the YMCA to work in the Catacombs youth project under the auspices of the York Diocese. This period stands out vividly in our memory, as not only did we witness the dynamism of the Holy Spirit, in our church membership under the late Canon David Watson, a lead evangelist at that time, but also in our personal lives, not the least in the recovery of our daughter Ruth.

Having received one of Mervyn's kidneys in 1976, which initially failed but later bounced back, we were enabled to contemplate a move, and once again we uprooted ourselves to Bangor, Northern Ireland, where a seafront youth project was planned under the auspices of the YMCA there.

Alas one cannot stay a youth leader forever, and, being in his fifties, the time had come to hand over to someone younger. We left in 1983.

A move to Dartford YMCA, Kent, to become Programme Director, also serving on the AOS committee for ten years and on the London and National Personnel Committee the last period of his service, prior to retirement proved fulfilling and happy. We were welcomed and supported there. The community and committee there were great and the churches ecumenical in outlook, especially so following a Mission to Dartford, held in the Orchard theatre by the late Canon Watson, prior to his premature death in 1984.

On the home front Mervyn survived a heart attack and triple bypass, shortly after his retirement, His skills latterly have been honed in the area of intercession, and he serves as steward in the Woodford community church.

And so life goes on, and we think it has possibly and hopefully been very fruitful in more ways than one! and to God be the Glory!

Beryl Moorehead

BBBF FROM PETER PARFITT

Dear Editor,

Having enjoyed the BBBF saga in the recently received March 09 edition of Ys Retired I cannot resist sending you my small contribution.

My wife and I landed at Tilbury off a Union Castle Liner on a Sunday; the next Friday we were interviewed by **Mr Naylor** in London and offered the post of warden and matron at Wilderwich House. We were to start the next day at the princely joint salary of £300 per annum.

I had been farming for 20 years by 1959 and felt like a change from animals to human beings, so as our 3 year contract to manage St Matthews Midian farm in the Lishei Reserve in South Africa was coming to an end I wrote to the YMCA. We spent a very happy, if very busy 2 years at Wilderwich with Mr Wilcocks as our boss or Area Secretary.

The horticultural scheme started at Wilderwich during that time and was aimed at being helpful to youngsters with some handicap and then trying to find them some work, in no way similar to the apprenticeship scheme at Wisley (where I covered for a couple of weeks when in retirement).

Mr Naylor had just taken over at Community Services coming back to London from Newcastle and was very keen on expanding BBBF. We appeared in two films on ITV and BBC which was exciting for us and of course "our boys".

The Ministry of Agriculture killed the scheme by withdrawing funding saying they were going to start an apprenticeship scheme which, of course, never got off the ground. **Willy Beaumont** may be remembered by some old hands. We also had an assistant warden whose surname was Percy. We thought he belonged to the Northumberland family but could not prove a connection.

Being a farmer meant I was very keen on BBBF – I thought it was a wonderful way of giving youngsters a start in farming, especially 'townies who had no other way of making a start in the industry.

I have rambled on, please edit as you see fit
Yours sincerely

Peter Parfitt - PS It was **Ralph Elsdon** who was responsible for me coming to Morden College, where I have been for 18 years - unfortunately he died before I arrived.

The Editor received an Easter phone call from Mrs Bill Collier to advise that there was a Kathleen Ackrill in charge of Wisley Gardens Hostel which had boys working in the gardens under the auspices of British Boys for British Horticulture.



PETER ROBERT CODY AND HIS WIFE, ROSE CODY

Peter Robert Cody, died on 30th March, aged 93 years, followed nine days later by his wife Rose (Ray) who died on the 8th April 2009 aged 95 years, both peacefully at the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital.

Mervyn and Beryl represented the 'Y' at the funerals of Ray and Peter Robert Cody at All Saints Sidmouth. The service was conducted by the Rev Kenneth Crooks, who obviously knew them well, and was able to give a really interesting eulogy.

Both had humble origins, born in London's South East. Rose was of Jewish descent, being born Rose Cohen and both had mothers in the tailoring trade. There must have been an impact in Ray's life by the London Mission to the Jews, and they actually met each other in a mission hall. I believe Wapping was the venue mentioned. Ray did some work for the Mission, during that time.

The war years saw Peter as a navigator in the RAF. According to the vicar it wasn't one of his strengths. Peter was 'demobbed' in 1946 and joined the YMCA soon afterwards.

1947-1957. Peter was General Secretary of Norwich YMCA being responsible for the new building programme.

1957-1962. saw Peter as Assistant Divisional Secretary, based in the North East at Newcastle upon Tyne.

1962-1979. Peter was General Secretary of Sheffield YMCA in its new premises to which he was responsible for the new building programme. Ray was an invaluable support in Peter's efforts to fund raise and provide new hostel accommodation.

They had one son Andrew and have two beautiful granddaughters and four great grandchildren. Peter obtained a degree from Newcastle and Ray went to art college, developing talents in all media, water colour and oils including sculpture. On a visit to their home, we saw the head of Peter she had modelled in clay successfully, about the time of her ninetieth birthday. The 'Y' retirees went West for a day trip so that Peter might have a bit of a reunion with old colleagues he had met during thirty two years service.

The deeply moving prelude for the service had been specially requested by Peter. 'Firmly I believe and Truly', from 'the Dream of Gerontius', by Elgar. Peter had good taste in music! The opening hymn was 'Thine be the Glory', likewise, I suspect chosen by Peter. Ray's choice of poem read by granddaughter Ruth, was 'Lord, when Thou see'st my work is done'

A truly Christian 'send off' for a truly Christian couple. It was fitting that they were able to depart together.

Peter was widely recognised and respected by colleagues as an active evangelical. (I believe he was a licensed Reader in the Anglican Church). He started the National Prayer Fellowship leading to Secretary for Christian work. Peter was responsible for the annual conference of Prayer Fellowship and in this connection, he travelled widely in various countries of Europe prior to EEC.

Peter was a very serious minded chap, well read and much involved with many other Christian agencies. Peter always had my personal admiration and his friendship. He served his Lord through YMCA service with great devotion.

Eulogies sent in by Beryl Moorhead and Reg Wake combined by the Editor.

British Boys for British Farms.

I arrived at Egginton Station on the 17th of October 1960 having caught a train at Leicester station some two hours before, there to meet me was one of the staff at Park Hill whose surname was Lance, I never knew him as anything other than Lance, he was one of the instructors, another was Perrier Smith who I corresponded with after leaving; he later left and took up a position at Repton School.

My arrival at Park Hill was quite daunting for a fifteen year old but I was made to feel at home and was introduced to some other inmates. Two that stand out was Chippy Woods and a lad we called Beatnic from the West Midlands who looked very much like a gangster with very short cropped hair. We three instantly hit it off and decided to stick together.

After settling in we were given tasks for the next week, mine was to 'skivvey' to the Weavers, Mr Weavers was warden with his wife and two small daughters. My duties were straight after breakfast to clean out their sitting room fire, relay it for the evening and tidy up. After they had had breakfast I cleared away and washed up in my own scullery. Then it was break time, jam sandwich and a mug of cocoa which burnt the mouth and furred the teeth but was nectar.

After break I had a corridor that seemed a mile long with a parquet floor to scrub, all very backbreaking but necessary to introduce us to the world of work. During this first week we all got to know each other. One lad in particular, who took pleasure in throwing his considerable weight about, ran away before the end of the week. I took pride in the fact that though he made mincemeat of me, I had the guts to stick it out; this was a valuable experience to me and gave me a lifelong loathing of bullies and set me a standard to live by.

My placement was with a retired policeman on a small dairy farm, as soon as I got there in the morning it was straight into the milking parlour as general dog's body. After a few days I was allowed to milk a few of the older more placid cows, I was as pleased as punch to be given the responsibility.

When milking was over the farmer went in for his breakfast and his wife brought me out a double egg and bacon sandwich and a mug of tea, just to sit there on a hay bale in the warmth of the shed and devour this feast is etched on my memory even after some 50 years.

Mucking out followed and the place made spick and span before we went off to the kale field with the tractor and trailer for the days rations. This was the downside, picture eighteen inches of cloying mud, kale that seemed twenty feet high, absolutely wet through. The first slash with the hedge knife released a shower of water droplets, ice cold, that soon penetrated the home made sack hood and ran down the back of your neck. This was reinforced by frozen fingers, a biting wind straight from Siberia and liquid mud that ran over the top of your wellies as you tried to extricate them from the mire. But then to compensate the sun would come out, the farmer would say "A good job done lad, fancy a cup of tea"? Sometimes the sun didn't come out but the tea was always there.

On November the 5th we had a bonfire and fireworks at Park Hill and roasted potatoes in the embers, a welcome visitor was a local mobile shop that came on a Friday evening where we could spend our "wages", I got 10 shillings from my farmer. Top of the spending list - sweets, stamps, note paper and envelopes.

My Mum and Dad were having a rough time as Dad was ill quite a lot so some of my money went home. They scrimped and saved and paid for my time at Park Hill even though it took them a year to do it; my parents had this thing about charity. They, with the help of BBBF, gave me the best start a lad could have, I must close this article as it now runs to a full page which is enough for anyone. To any former BBBF staff, my sincere thanks for your dedication to this unique organization.

This contribution was kindly written by Nigel Allsopp who found the BBBF connection through the Ys Retired website whilst searching the internet – thanks Nigel – from Editor - David.

***FRIENDS – PLEASE NOTE:
Reg Wake is always delighted to act as postbox for subscriptions and Secours Speciaux contributions as they come as reminders of friendships shared.***

However! Some cheques arrive made payable to Reg personally which means a per contra cheque from Reg in order that our Treasurer, Geoffrey Harris can make bank deposit. As preciously confirmed, all cheques should be made payable to "Y's Retired A/c" and sent direct to Geoffrey Harris, 60 Homemanor House, Cassio Road, Watford. WD18 0QS. Please Note:- All cheques for Secours Speciaux are welcomed and valued.

"Dear David and Sue,
We are so excited as we became grandparents to a baby girl Naomi Ruth Moorehead born at 8.04pm Friday 1st May.

She weighed in at 8lb 6oz. Much cause for rejoicing after such an interminable wait."

**Beryl and
Mervyn Moorehead**



Good to hear from **Dr. Winfried Fischer** in Germany and to receive his subscription and generous donation toward Secours Speciaux. Colleagues who now have memories of Castle Mainau will now be few in number but participation in courses held there were for many quite life changing experiences. More than this, the friendship of Winfried Fischer as the director of studies were long lasting and warmly appreciated by all involved and none more so than by our dear friend, the late **Geoffrey Palmer**. Their close friendship led to many exchanges visit of groups from Germany for Geoffrey's wonderful "London Tours" and to fairly regular personal visits of Winfried to London and of Geoffrey to various events in Germany. **Castle Mainau** represented a significant chapter in YMCA history.

A 'newsy' letter received from **Jim Grey** (Stamford) confirms that while he does not enjoy the best of health, he retains his sense of humour! He tells that his **wife Margaret** continues "watch over me". Jim enjoys the N/L and speaks of the many friends whose names are prompted in the process. He sends greetings to all Y's Retired folk and congratulates **Jim Lamb** on his work as President/

Sadly, we learn that **Egon Slopianka** has felt obliged to withdraw as European vice chair for WFYR and from membership of the committee for Secours Speciaux because of failing eyesight. Thankfully, the **Revd. John Knox** has agreed to accept the task as European chair for WFYR and the German Movement has proposed **Eckhart Geisler** to replace Egon as a member of Secours Speciaux committee. Thankfully, Egon has agreed to be available as consultant in any WFYR matters and in particular, the difficult issues on unsecured retirement. It is difficult to think of anyone who has done more than Egon in the interests of the Movement worldwide. He will be sorely missed by his many friends, not least by those of Y's Retired.

In a cover note to her subscription and Secours Speciaux donation, **Kathleen Akrill** tells her 'rheumatics' have caught up with her and that her movements are now somewhat limited. She is another who expresses appreciation of the N/L.

Barry and Dorothy Ward regrets that holiday arrangements prevent their attendance at the Birmingham 'gathering' but perhaps next year?

Philip Cheal reports "My health is quite good apart from the fact that I am quite unable to walk without the aid of two sticks. However I can well get out and about on my very trusty scooter." Typical of his cheery approach to life!

John and Margery Naylor have been spoiling themselves with a long holiday in New Zealand. "We are both fortunate to have a range of interests so are leading enjoyable (but not too hectic) lives at present." Such are the joys of retirement!



MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

'THE FORGOTTEN ANGELS'

Dear Colleagues – over a period of nearly ten years, I have sought to complete a history of the Women's Auxiliary of the YMCA and this task has now been completed.

Unfortunately I have not been able to obtain funding for the 130 paged document to be printed and turned into a book, so I have split the history into three parts and downloaded onto the Ys Retired of UK website under the heading – Women's Auxiliary.

I have also placed a Women's Auxiliary historic photo album on the same website. It has its own heading and 75 photos to date.



This action should make it accessible to as many people as are interested - to as many people as possible, **for free**. As time goes by and more archive information comes to hand, it will be added to.

Do please visit www.yretired.co.uk for the full WA story, which is added to on a monthly basis.

Reg's kind contribution to this launch is as follows:-

The North East Regional WA used to bring a couple of coach loads for an annual day out and tea at "Lakeside" during my time - circa 50's.

The "Queen Bee" (actually Divisional President) was Mrs. Coatup, wife of the General Secretary of North Shields YMCA - both of them considerable 'powers in the land'.

I now recall being invited to speak at their AGM at North Shields. A goodly muster of somewhat matronly ladies. Mrs Coatup prefaced her introduction "Of course, many of us will not recognize Reg with clothes on!"

She of course meant as distinct from my usual "Lakeside" garb of shorts and shirt but her remark caused a few titters and some blushes! Memories are made of this!

David H Smith - Editor