



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



NOVEMBER 2014

www.yretired.co.uk

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear friends and colleagues greetings

There is no doubting the priority of the day is for me to confirm the inevitable has happened! Our long-serving Executive Secretary Reg Wake 'Mr Ys' Retired of the UK' has retired after 30 years of devoted exceptional service!



Reg was a founder member of Y's Retired of the UK, well known in YMCA circles throughout the UK and internationally through the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees. During his employment with the National Council of YMCAs - as it was then, he was awarded the MBE and after retirement with over 20 years as a Layman was awarded the "Order of the Red Triangle" for his services through the Y's Retired.

As a member of the Anglican Church (C of E) Reg will not know this but the founder of the Methodist Church Rev John Wesley must have had Reg in mind some 250 years ago when he penned the words:-

*"Do all the good you can
 By all the means you can
 To all the people you can
 In all the ways you can
 At all the times you can
 As long as ever you can"*

Individual members of the committee when achieving some worthy action would receive from Reg a note saying "Well done that man!"

*With the committee - let us all respond:-
WELL DONE THAT MAN!*

When we have a member of the committee retiring from office we are faced with the appointment of a successor!

I am pleased to report on behalf of the committee that following an invitation and careful perusal of the 'Job Description' VIC HILLS retired CEO of the Reading YMCA has accepted the invitation and will take up the appointment as from October 2014. On present members behalf I express all good wishes to Vic with the full support of the committee as we enter a new era in the history of the Y's Retired of the UK.

Finally! A reminder that the financial year of the Y's Retired of the UK ends 31st December 2014 - membership subscriptions and donations to Secours Speciaux together with voluntary contributions are due January 2015.

Also we invite members to advise The Executive Secretary of any person they know meeting the criteria of seven years service in the YMCA whether professionally as a staff member or lay- person to apply for membership with your support.

*Warm regards,
 Jim Lamb, President*

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WELCOME TO OUR NEW SECRETARY - VIC HILLS



(Grandson Ethan helping construct granddad's garage drain)

who writes

I first discovered the YMCA as a 15 year old when my school took a group of us to Lakeside for a fortnight's holiday. I returned the following year by cycling solo over two days to reach South Camp and those big old green tents. Some were still there when we visited in the 90's. Although there was a YMCA in Maidstone and several of my friends played table tennis there I didn't frequent it. It was the new Y Sports Centre and my brother's invitation to visit that raised my curiosity. Roy Holgate and Val' Wallis were instrumental in encouraging me and Mary (now my wife) to become involved. Phillip Wragg and Ted Milburn built on that "Good News" of Jesus love that drew us in and we met Him in prayer on the floor of the Y with Roy at our sides.

Our lives and purpose changed. In September 1969 you (David Smith) Peter Robertson, Bob Sadler, Geoff Cooper, Bob Stewart, Colin Burlton, John Newton, Lawrie?, Ken Gibbons & Paddy Estall ; (where are the last three now?), who went on to work with the YMCA and one young woman Pat Algy, who all started the last one year Youth Work Training at Stockwell YMCA. The course transitioned in January 1970 to Waltham Forest under the tutelage of Ms Joan Tash and Phillip Wragg with visiting lectures from Norman Ingle, Ronnie Howe, Reg Wake, Bob Brunswick and towards the end of the "year" Will Steel encouraging us to join the APS.

I began my professional YMCA adventure in August 1970 at Reading YMCA under the direction of Tony Miles and Cyril Briggs. Following a large YMCA assault on the Great Western Express Pop festival in Lincolnshire in 1972 (I think) Phil Heath and I later led several sorties using the Brown WW2 tea vans with a variety of volunteers and YM students, to raise the profiles of The YMCA; by establishing Left Luggage, Lost Property and Children Services to build relationships with "punters" at several other pop festivals, including Knebworth and the Windsor Free Festival.

In August 1976 we took our two young sons to the unknown of big city life in Birmingham, where I spent six years as North Birmingham Programme Director, developing the work Bill Sargison and Bob Stewart had instigated in Erdington & Perry Common. The six weeks summer schemes with 400 children a day and some 100 volunteers each 6 weeks of the school holidays have left happy memories for us and the boys - who were willing and joyful participants of the programme.

In spring 1981 we joined the huge volunteer team and Roy Holgate at Maidstone as Youth Worker to continue the work of Phil Heath. We still talk of:- over 400 young people a night at skating and up to 800 youngsters enjoying disco's, supervised by a team of around 60 late teenage/early 20 year olds learning about door/floor and behaviour management led by half a dozen part-time youth workers and the development of village youth clubs transporting loads of youngsters collected from outlying villages to attend the Y.

While I was at Maidstone Ron Ingamells was encouraging the "The Movement" to hold a young people's one week rally as a Christian Music and Arts event at Fairthorpe. I think it was 1982 when Eurocross started.

My involvement was as the Editor/Publisher of the daily news sheet run off using a gestetner duplicator and making stencils. How much easier it became with computers and coloured photocopier/printers. Ron was later followed by Graham Clarke, Carol Walsh and Andy Winter; we continued to serve the event (Mary, Mark and Tim all had various involvements) until the last one was held at Lakeside in 1999.

In 1987 we returned to Reading, where I was appointed as the CEO. We stayed, defying all of our previous moves every 6 years or so. I remember saying to God as I walked the corridors on my first day "why have you brought me back to this old place? He replied - do not be anxious for tomorrow I will show you in good time. Despite various oppositions from National and local government departments we were able to secure substantial sums of money from the Housing Corporation and others to remodel the Housing and admin' base, which I was proud to open at my retirement in February 2012. John & Paddy Martin and Arnold & Iris Merchant from North Cadbury were "oldies" during our first years at Reading and Bob & Jo Sadler and John Berry were colleagues during our second stint.

The very tired old wooden Wychcotes Water Side Centre, burnt down in 2005 was rebuilt in 2011 and provides a magnificent Thameside base for 1st Reading YMCA Sea Scouts, non-uniformed young people and the local community.

Those who knew me well, know that buildings were never things that particularly concerned me - except to make sure they were clean /secure and those who used them, took ownership of them. It was people who interested me. As I have been writing this so many happy thoughts have come to mind. If only my memory was good enough to remember them all.

Last week we were privileged to have an Indian meal with two men (and their wives) who were each the Chairman of The Circle Club (the Youth Club that Tony Miles started at Reading YMCA) (Andy Bliss and his wife Julia send their regards Tony & Jenny Miles....) We had a good time reminiscing about the early 1970's and the youngsters who were around then.

In retirement we (Mary & I) enjoy time with my sons, their wives (Sarah & Carol) and their small families. Mary and I look after our youngest two grandchildren (Chloe & Ethan) from Sunday evenings to Tuesday evenings by staying with them and enjoying their company during school holidays and after school, now that they are both there. Towards the end of August we celebrated our eldest grand daughter Beth's success with her GCSE exams.

I continue to be a Trustee of Christian Community Action Ministries which provides support, furniture, food, bedding; runs a hot meal drop in for the homeless and finances this by running 5 charity shops and a furniture outlet for those wishing to purchase good quality "recycled" items. Looking after the maintenance of the boats and canoes at Wychcotes boathouse keeps my craft skills in use. Mary and I are blessed with reasonable health so we enjoy holidays:- Skiing with a group of friends; in warmer climes in the sun and under canvas in the UK with our family.

In closing I am daunted yet honoured that those of you who have been caring for "Y's Retired" considered that I could continue the work embarked upon and so competently accomplished by Reg' Wake. As the Scout Motto says " I promise to do my best"

Vic Hills

Member's correspondence



(A LETTER OF THANKS TO REG FROM JOHN BEFORE JOHN'S PASSING)

Dear Reg

From those of us on the tartan side of the border a big word of thanks for all you have done for us over the years. It has been a joy for me to have contact with you in recent years, even though by email and the occasional phone call.

May I also wish you every blessing as you have your hospital appointment this Wednesday. God bless you – you will be in our thoughts and prayers.

Yours John (Knox)

Dear Jim and friends

Well, who could deny Reg deserves to 'rest' as our Methodist Ministers denote retirement from full-time commitment! Trouble is it's hard to take on board his true 'anno domini'!! I have not known Reg as long as many of you but have grown to admire him and all he has given to the YMCA and to Y's Retired. Now I salute his successor and sympathise with his problem in following a devoted and admired predecessor. Warm regards to all
David Prof David Miller

Thanks David (S). You are doing a great job. Just back from Scotland (Edinburgh) for family hols. Seeing your mail and ref to John Knox reminded me that I went to Methodist church on Sunday and heard of a great partnership between the Methodist Church in Edinburgh and the YMCA. The Lead worker is a Kerry (nee Knox) who used to go with me to the EAY assemblies. Didn't see her but heard of her work. I hope to make a visit another time to see the work.

Hope you are both well.

Blessings Tony (Malcolm)

I do not recall having met John but may well have done at one of the many Y events I have attended. However I have recently exchanged emails with him over the varying meaning of "retired"!! Sadly he has now 'retired' to eternal rest. All who knew him will thank the Lord for his life and service to the YMCA and his church.
David

Prof David Miller

Rev John Knox

It is with a deep sense of sadness that I learned of the death of John Knox whose friendship at whatever geographical distance over the years of his life measured as the best.

He was a person who on top of his career in the Methodist Church and the YMCA gave everything in 'Service above self'. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him personally, not least the young people he influenced through conversation and example during his life. He was warm and sincere as a practicing Christian gentleman.

A card and note were sent on behalf of the Y's Retired of the UK committee and membership to his wife Patricia and daughter Kerry at the time of his death. We are all better people for having known John and his dedication to humanity.

Our prayerful thoughts continue with his family during this time of sadness.

Jim Lamb

President

Y's Retired of the UK

So sorry to hear of the sudden death of John Knox. Condolences to all his family.

Regards Ray (Allen)

Dear Jim:

Thanks very much for sharing the sad news of the very sudden death of John Knox. Though I do not recall meeting John, from the materials you have been sharing, it is very vivid that he took a very active interest in the Y's Retirees and our World Fellowship. Though very painful for the family to accept the loss, it was certainly a peaceful and blessed end to a very remarkable life.

The members of the IFYR would like you convey our deepest sympathies to those whom John has left behind.

Rupert (George)

Convener, IFYR (UK Chapter)

How absolutely terrible. A sad loss to us all. **Col (Mawby)**

Thanks David.

Sad news indeed. I was so looking forward to renewing contact with him and Kerry after my trip to Scotland. I'll drop Kerry an email. Bless you.

Tony (Malcolm)

Deep regrets for the sudden demise of John Knox. He was very wonderful person during our WFYR meeting in the YMCA of the Rockies.

Cris Caparoso

PFYR - PHILIPPINES

Dear Kerry,

I am sending you a deepest condolence to you and the family. It was very shocking news that your dad have past away. We just had a wonderful reunion at the Y of the Rockies a month ago as you know. He and I are same Methodist minister and the vice chairs of WFYR, and almost the same age, too, I think.

Please give my best regards to your mom.

Although I sent some photos to your parents before, I am sending you same kind of one about your dad.

May the Lord be with you and the family,

Rev. Yukio (Yamasaki)

Woking YMCA closes its doors with 'immediate effect'

Volunteers and councillors said it was a "great shame" the centre had closed down after suffering a "difficult financial period"



YMCA centre in Chobham Road, Woking

The YMCA community and youth centre in [Woking](#) has ceased trading after a "difficult financial period", it was confirmed by the deputy chairman of the branch this week.

Bridget Dean released a statement on Thursday (August 7) listing "ongoing financial difficulties" as the reason.

She said: "It is with considerable regret that Woking YMCA has declared insolvency and, as such, has ceased trading with immediate effect.

"The successful management of the centre-based youth work under contract from [Surrey County Council](#) will continue unchanged, although under a different agency."

The YPod centre, in Chobham Road, offered youth drop-in programmes, counselling sessions and educational courses for young people.

It also owned a recording studio and managed a 24-bed low support needs housing project in nearby Grove Road.

Mrs Dean went on to describe how the remaining services may be affected.

"Other areas of work, which include the drop-in facilities and outreach work will cease for the time being, although other agencies are being approached with a view to re-establishing them as soon as possible," she said.

'Great shame'

And finally there was a statement of appreciation directed at all the people who have helped at the centre. "The directors of Woking YMCA express their heartfelt thanks to staff, volunteers and donors who have steadfastly supported us over the years," said Mrs Dean.

Cllr John Kingsbury, the leader of [Woking Borough Council](#), said the centre will be a great loss to the area.

He added: "Woking Borough Council was very disappointed to hear the news, particularly as the council has been assisting the YMCA during a difficult financial period.

"The council will now be reviewing what action it can take to support the delivery of youth services currently being provided by the YMCA across the borough."

Photographer John Lennie used to volunteer in the YMCA recording studio and said news of the insolvency is "a great shame".

He said: "It really made a big difference to people's lives, helping the youth get off the streets and keeping them from crime. "It's a real surprise that the centre has closed down."

Mr Lennie feels passionately about the organisation and spoke about the 'platform it gave young people'.

"I used to get them to express themselves through the music," he said. "It was great seeing them grow and progress in this way."

The YMCA centre offered a "safe environment", he believes, and Mr Lennie highlighted the crucial role of the staff and volunteers.

"There were people there who would listen and genuinely cared," he said. "And that really mattered to the young people that came in."

Sincere congratulations to Professor David Miller who, at the beginning of the year, was presented by the Vice President of YMCA England, Mr Chris Poulard, the Gold Order of the Red Triangle. As President Jim commented, "a well deserved award."

Hi - This is from Sam and Maureen Johnston. Their new address is:-

Penryn

Hamdown Crescent

East Wellow

Romsey

Hampshire SO51 6BJ

07875 684678

Please also note a new email address -

Johnston.sm@btinternet.com

Y-CUBE



An inventive and affordable housing scheme pioneered by [YMCA London South West](#) has secured planning permission, with construction set to start in November.

Merton Council gave an almost unanimous stamp of approval to [Y:Cube](#), the low cost initiative for single people in need of a place to live. Developed by YMCA London South West with partners, the world renowned architect practice, Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners, 36 self-contained one bedroom flats will be built in Mitcham. Each identical flat contains a living space that includes a galley kitchen, separate double bedroom and an en-suite toilet and shower, taking up a net space of 26sqm.

The first tenants will move in by April 2015, with 50 per cent of residents coming from YMCA Wimbledon and the remaining half being nominated by Merton Council. All tenants are required to be meaningfully engaged in employment, training, education or volunteering.

Andy Redfearn, director of development at YMCA London South West, said: "As a housing charity, we are finding it more and more difficult to find viable move-on solutions for residents who have lived in supported lodgings and who are now ready to move on to independent living. The lack of good quality affordable housing is the number one issue for London and we believe Y:Cube Housing presents a new credible solution with a vision of a scheme in every London borough and beyond."

London Mayor Boris Johnson [visited the Y:Cube prototype in May](#), voicing his support for the scheme. He said: "I think it's lovely. I think it's terrific. The tenant is thrilled with it and that's the most important thing for me."

Shantae Whyte, a resident living at YMCA Wimbledon, was homeless before she came to YMCA. After staying in the Y:Cube prototype [earlier this year](#), she said: "The Y:Cube has everything you can ask for. Every time I walked in, I was reminded about the homely feel of it."

Rev. John D Knox
28th January 1935 – 26th August 2014



It was with a sense of disbelief that friends of John Knox across the world learned of his sudden death for this was a man who had secured a seemingly permanent place in the lives and hearts of thousands in the YMCA world and beyond. A place founded on John's shining commitment to his Christian faith and to young people and youth leadership. To many, John, had a capacity to enter into lasting friendship with a kind of self effacing grace that has created a gap that they will find impossible to fill

John Knox was the third of four brothers born into a loving Methodist family in Larne. Initially he studied pharmacy at Queens University in Belfast but after only one year felt called to the Ministry and moved to Edgehill College. He was keen on badminton and on one occasion he was partnered with a certain Miss Patricia Ringland who stated firmly as she left the court "I am never going to play badminton with that guy again". The rest is family history for Pat and John married on 1st August 1962 and celebrated their Golden Wedding two years ago.

After ordination, John worked at Dublin Central Mission where his work with those in abject poverty was to shape his values and commitment to social justice. Two ministerial charges followed but it was his appointment to the Irish Methodist Youth Department that was the harbinger of a life to come. Secretary of the European Methodist Youth Conference, attendance at the European Youth Council of Churches, organising international Methodist Youth Conferences, work in the deeply divided parts of Belfast and writing peace education materials for use in schools gave a breadth of experience that was welcomed to Scotland in 1982.

Nine years were to follow as Chief Officer of the Scottish Standing Conference of Voluntary Youth Organisations and in 1991 he became National Secretary at YMCA Scotland. The following nine years were said by John to be the happiest of his professional career. He grew to love the YMCA family because it combined his ecumenist values with his passion for young people, youth leadership, youth empowerment and social justice.

John was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award and Fellowship of Youthlink Scotland together with the inaugural Sir George Williams Medal for distinguished and outstanding service to the YMCA in Scotland.

Speaking to a crowded congregation at the Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving for the life of the Rev. John Knox on 5th September, his daughter, Kerry, CEO of YMCA Edinburgh, paid a moving tribute to her father. She spoke of his warmth, his humility, his welcome to strangers, his twinkly eyed humour and his passion and zest for life. He was a people person and had engaged with everyone in the congregation that day.

She recalled a favourite story of John, how when he took funeral services he spoke of the ship sailing out to the horizon. For the family, it is not a great ship but a favourite dingy and as they stand on the shore watching it disappear from view they know that those who had gone before are waiting on the far shore with open arms to welcome their John home and to eternal rest with his Lord and Saviour The Rev Johan Vilhelm Eltvik, Secretary General of the World Alliance of YMCAs spoke of how he had lost a dear friend and how life and joy surrounded their fellowship. He had lived his faith as it should be lived and his influence exceeded even his service to the Methodist Church or the Scottish YMCA. He became a significant leader in the European YMCA family, in the world YMCA family and in retirement to the Scottish and world YMCA retirees. He was a gift to us and he remained that to his last day. He recalled how at the recent World Council Meeting John wore a cap which bore the legend, "I made it to the Top" And to that we all say Amen

Jim Thomson

Editor needed to fill in space and came across this lovely hymn - by Fred Pratt Green - I'm sure he didn't use his middle name much, but by, he could certainly write hymns!! (bet Roy Weaver would have heard of him)

The Church of Christ, in every age
beset by change but Spirit-led,
must claim and test its heritage
and keep on rising from the dead.

Across the world, across the street,
the victims of injustice cry
for shelter and for bread to eat,
and never live until they die.

Then let the servant Church arise,
a caring Church that longs to be
a partner in Christ's sacrifice,
and clothed in Christ's humanity.

For he alone, whose blood was shed,
can cure the fever in our blood,
and teach us how to share our bread
and feed the starving multitude.

We have no mission but to serve
in full obedience to our Lord:
to care for all, without reserve,
and spread his liberating Word.

Fred Pratt Green, StF 415