



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



JANUARY 2010

www.yretired.co.uk

Greetings from our President



**President's
Christmas &
New Year
Message**



Dear colleagues,
Each year Advent reminds us that Christmas is a celebration for all Christians, more or less, celebrating in varying degrees from Christian Worship to Carol Concerts, to presents/cards being given and received. In the homes of many where 'merriment' dominates Christmas there are shades of sadness as memories of loved ones pervade the quieter moments and birth, life and death becomes fact!

We who are retired acknowledge year by year the ageing process either personally or in the lives of others, not least our colleagues and either succumb to the inevitable or become enthused for the future and all that it brings, encouraging us to bring to our community/society the many skills we have developed over years with the YMCA and other sources. So what is Advent?

The word 'advent' is not often used but once was quite common. ADVENT means:-

- The arrival or coming, especially of one which is awaited.
- A time to take stock.
- A time to listen.
- A time to learn.
- A time to look forward
- A time to change.

The word 'advent' comes from the Latin words translated "Towards the coming".

How appropriate it is then not to confine the word 'advent' to the coming of Christ at Christmas but also to the New Year sharing the skills developed in our working lives for the good of society. In volunteering our skills we can give service to others in our retirement – it is my experience that there is a need in our local communities for such action.

A 'session' at the recent Y's Retired of the UK Reunion in Birmingham gave opportunity for retired colleagues present to share the wide scope of their voluntary work – it was truly amazing.

A précis quote from the Report, "some belonged to such organisations as Rotary giving service above self in the local community, some Christian based work such as a Street Pastor, varied social work, a scheme called Accompanied Self-appraisal with Methodist ministers, Safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults, homeless Breakfast Projects, working in education (paid and voluntary), hospital and prison visiting and more!"

The fact that most declared it was due or partly due to their YMCA experience that they could offer such service in various ways was amazing!

My New Year message to all members and readers of the Newsletter is simple:- In all our work whether home-based due to health reasons or in the community when forgotten talents can re-emerge let us continue or commence to give of ourselves in a positive manner to those who need our support.

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!

Jim Lamb

Ys RETIRED - SOUTH WEST REUNION
(ALL INVITED)
An invitation to all Ys Retired Secretaries, wives and friends to 'come on down' to Treloyhan Manor Hotel, St Ives, Cornwall from Monday 12th April 2010 to Friday 16th April 2010
Half Board - £170 per person.
Have a great 4 days in real comfort.
To secure your place with a £40 deposit - contact
Margaret Libby on – 01752 773040



PASSING OF MARY THOMSON
Saturday 28th November.

The day before her death marked 66 years of married life together for Mary and Jim. Mary regularly attended most Y's Retired events, including the recent gathering at Selly Oak.

Jim did want us all to know that Mary died peacefully at home. She was diagnosed with lung cancer only two and a half weeks ago.

Funeral arrangements were at a church service held at Comrie Parish Church, Perthshire, on Friday 4th December.

Jim thanks you all for your prayerful support over recent days and I am sure you will keep Jim in your prayers.

Jim's address is:- 2 Tummel Place, Comrie, Crieff, PH2 2PG

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NEWS FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

We have had a better year this year. Last year Janet had to have her replacement knee removed due to infection and was therefore without a knee for 6 weeks and then recovery etc. so we did very little. This year, although her knee is still painful and she has Parkinsons, we have been out and about – Tenerife, Devon, Isle of Wight, Yorkshire as well as two Proms and Barbican concerts, etc!

I am very well and playing golf once or twice a week and cycling, giving talks about the poet John Clare (and organising the Clare Annual Festival), still supporting Norwich City (I get to a few games), Lords for cricket and of course taking services most weeks in various churches.

Hope all is well with you.
If ever this way do call in!

Best wishes

Ron (Ingamells)

To the people on David's email list:

Thank you for supporting Naomi in her bid to 'win' one of the places with The Vodafone Foundation. Naomi is one of the six people, out of 2000 applicants to be offered the award which is worth £45,000. The following is Naomi's message:

David Pendle

Thank you so, so much for all your voting and vote gathering for the school in South Sudan. I cannot believe how amazing and supportive you've been!

Through fifty years of civil war the people of Marol village (South Sudan) have felt so forgotten for so long. I cannot wait to tell them of the people standing with them to support the building of a school in South Sudan.

And I cannot wait to share the school's journey and stories with you. I just hope and pray that you will keep making a difference to this incredible community in South Sudan. If you would like to receive more information by post, please e-mail your address to naomi.pendle@merton.oxon.org Do also join the facebook group 'A School in South Sudan'.

*Thank you so, so much!
Yours, Naomi (Pendle)*

Dear David,

Hanna and I met up with Helen Knott, daughter of Barbara Vessey, at Bewdley Station on the Seven Valley Railway and collected 80 BBBF books from Helen. What a morning we had together admiring the well kept station and seeing the trains going in and out, with some carriages still running and very well maintained from the turn of the century. Pullman coaches, restaurant cars etc. We didn't have time to go on the trains, but we did have a coffee in the station restaurant.

Three books were sold at the National Y Retired week in September 2009 and one was given to the extensive Quaker's Library. I am also contacting specialist colleges and libraries that have agricultural courses.

I currently have 76 Books and these are being sold at £5 each plus postage. The money will go towards the Y Retired International Secours Speciaux.

If anyone would like a copy, please contact: Stephen J Milner, 22 Ellerslie Close, Charminster, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 9QQ.

Tel:01305-266197. Email: stephen@milner22600.fsnet.co.uk

With best wishes - **Stephen Milner**

Many thanks for the Y's retired Newsletter which I read with great interest. I wonder if you would mind letting me have Tony Malcolm's e mail address. I have lost touch with him and it would be good to renew that friendship.

I understand you visited Ken Allinson recently in Richmond, Yorkshire. I am doing some interim management at Richmond until Christmas as well as some training for a National organisation and a role with Faithworks. So I am being kept more busy than I had expected to be, but will slow down in 2011 when various contracts begin to expire.

Best wishes - **Michael King**

Congratulations on a truly wonderful November edition of Ys Retired news. I always find them interesting but this one surpasses all.

I am still busy working for the Probation service, am due to retire in January but have been allowed to stay on for a year at a time. Whilst I feel able, Why not?

Involvement in church keeps me busy also, preaching more or less every Sunday, sometimes twice a day at one or other of our six churches. Also get invited to others on a fairly regular basis.

Maggie and I have recently returned from another involvement with 'Through Faith Missions' in the National Forest. We were leading a team at a church just outside Burton-on-Trent, which we feel was successful. Next year it is Walk Saint David's, we will probably be in the Aberystwyth area.

Trust you and Sue are well. Maybe we can catch up sometime. When I finally retire it would be good to be involved in Ys Retired fully

Regards - **Mike (Wilkinson)**





An excellent group picture of Ys Retired on a day's outing in Bath at the invitation of the retiring Chairman of the Council David Bellotti

Left to right:-

Mike Fairbeard – CEO of Bath YMCA, Norman Owen; Janet Hopkins, Mervyn and Beryl Moorehead; Paul Harper; David Libby, Mrs Pendle Mrs Bellotti, David Pendle, David Bellotti, Stuart and Hillary Page and Margaret Libby. Hilary Robins and Joyce Finnemore are centre front



The fourth of what has now become established as a twice yearly meeting of YMCA retirees living in Scotland was held in early November 2009 at Bellshill YMCA. Bellshill is a name known to many in world YMCA circles as the home of the late Jim Love, World Alliance President from 1981 – 1985.

We took the opportunity to learn about the work being done there. Colin McFarlane, the General Secretary, told us of the street work, drop-in clubs, health and wellbeing service as well as work with the local mosque.

One of their YMCA staff members, Scotty, is a member of the mosque and it was fascinating to hear Jim Thomson, ex-World Alliance Refugee Secretary, conversing with him in fluent Urdu.

Colin McFarlane also told us of an interesting Video Interactive Referral project, working in the homes of problem families referred to them by social workers.

As well as the usual sharing of personal news, we developed further the idea from the previous meeting of members being able to share something of their expertise with others at local YMCA level.



We also debated the impact of the global and national financial situation on funding for voluntary organisations and regulation of the voluntary sector in Scotland, John Naylor, one of the retirees group being Chair of the Office of Scottish Charity Regulators. We also heard from two of the three Scottish members who had attended the September residential meeting of UK retirees in Birmingham, both paying warm tributes to the value of that time together.

A date was agreed for the next meeting of the Scottish group, 11 May 2010, at a venue yet to be determined. John Knox 9 November 2009



Front row from left: Colin McFarlane (Bellshill YMCA), Bob McConkey (retiree), Laura Campbell and Smithy Ifthkare Yaqoob (Bellshill YMCA)
Back row from left: Andrew Haig, Keith Rennie, Tom Lawrie, John Naylor, Jim Thomson, Gilbert Dickson, John Knox

A poem written by Katie Grey, Jim Grey's grand-daughter in memory of a wonderful grandfather – read at Jim's funeral service

At this moment I could cry
To deal with how I feel inside
But to cry would be to grieve
And that would just make it real, - you really did leave.

A lifetime with a Grand-dad so sweet
Now a lifetime gone and without you I weep
A star could never shine so bright
As the light you shone into our lives.



A man so strong, so positively tuned
Now all my sadness is to be brewed
To never see your loving smile
Just makes nothing seem anymore – worthwhile.

The miles of distance in between
But the closeness to my heart, you could always be seen
You were a hero and you made us proud
Now you sit in peace upon your cloud.

I will forever more, now look up to the sky
And I will always be wondering why?
But you made a difference to so many around
And you'll forever be the hero that we all found.

Katie Grey

Spiritual leader - Ian Green, Chief Executive, YMCA England

By Janaki Mahadevan
Children & Young People Now
November 2009



Sitting in a local YMCA in West London, Ian Green is brimming with energy. He is three months into his reign as Chief Executive of the national charity.

His hectic working life - he is a Conservative councillor in his native Ealing, chair of the board of the Ealing Hospitals Trust and a magistrate - does beg the question: how does he have time to lead such an organisation? But Ian appears undaunted by the challenge. Last year, as mayor of Ealing, he attended more than 500 events. He has already visited more than 85 local YMCAs across the country since taking the job.

"By seeing the work on the ground, meeting staff and the young people themselves I feel I can speak with some authority about the range of challenges that young people are facing today and relay these to the key decision makers," he says.

Ian's experience of the YMCA spans more than two decades. He started his work with the movement as housing manager in Ealing YMCA in 1987.

Inclusive organisation

"I was going to be a vicar originally," he reveals. "One of the strengths of the YMCA is that it is an inclusive Christian organisation but accepts people where they are and welcomes everybody. So regardless of whether they have a faith or no faith it is completely irrelevant to the services a young person receives.

"But I believe all of us are spiritual beings and we shouldn't forget the importance of spirituality in the development of young people. We can bring that strength to our work."

After the acrimonious departure last year of Angela Sarkis, the first female national secretary of the YMCA, it faced a leadership crisis. Ian, then Chief Executive of Kingston and Wimbledon YMCA, was brought in as interim national secretary in July 2008. A year later, the organisation opted to create the chief executive position. Following a rigorous selection process, Ian was awarded the job.

With experience in both politics and the third sector, Green maintains he has a realistic take on the challenges facing those who work with children.

"I understand the sort of thought processes that local politicians go through and so I am aware of some of the outcomes that councils want to see delivered," he says. "This will help me ensure the YMCA is positioned in a way that can meet those outcomes but also challenge decision makers to rethink how they deliver services."

More innovation

Green lauds the increased focus on youth participation and recent funding for youth services. "This has enabled organisations to be far more innovative in the work they are doing," says Green. The YMCA has secured £30m from the government's Myplace programme to develop world-class youth centres in eight areas.

But Ian is all too weary of what he terms the "contract culture". He warns that pressure to prove the value of work can lead to prescribed ways of dealing with young people. "While I understand we need to provide evidence, we need to change our systems to capture that information without losing sight of the fact that this is a young person we are talking about, not a statistic." Tightened budgets coupled with political uncertainty pose even more pressing challenges. He has met ministers and the shadow front bench to ensure that good work that has been done will not be reversed.

"We now need to ensure that revenue funding for continuing work is maintained and that we can rely on central and local government to fund that. I am realistic but I believe that if we don't invest in our young people it is going to leave loads of problems for the future."

Despite these wider headaches, Green remains devoted to getting the best for young people. He cites a recent encounter with a clutch of students studying for a degree in youth and community work. Six of them had lived in a YMCA. He says: "To see young people who had previously been down on their luck now training to be youth workers gives me the motivation to keep going."

Dear David

Lots and lots of congrats on producing such a first rate publication. I can assure you that it is very much appreciated, so much news and the very interesting historical stuff! Apart from the emailed version, I also received a mail copy of the November edition courtesy of Welwyn. I would be quite happy not to have a copy mailed; I also downloaded the standing order form, which I have completed and lodged with my bank.

Since standing down from the Pension Trustee Board, I have been able to spend more time enjoying my little grand -daughters starting and enjoying progress at school, and being a proper "Gang-gang". I have also had a replacement plastic lens for my left eye, which means greatly improved vision and no need for distance glasses. This means night driving is much pleasanter, without the bothersome reflections. Full marks to the staff at the Royal Berks hospital in Reading, who made it so simple and painless.

Mary and I are off on a five-week trip later this month to see our children and grandchildren in the USA and Australia which will take us through Thanksgiving, Christmas and the New Year. We return via Hong Kong early in January in time for the worst of the English winter!

Best wishes to you all in Cornwall and keep up the good work. Kindest regards - **Chris Batten**