



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

**MARCH 2022**

[www.yretired.co.uk](http://www.yretired.co.uk)



## President's ponderings

What is the similarity between Marmite and Jig Saw Puzzles? The answer I think is that they both elicit a love or hate response! Personally, I hate any Marmite which is not on a Twiglet but get engrossed in jigsaws. Paradoxically, Julia is a keen Marmite on toast eater but steers clear of any jigsaw puzzle that might be on going!!!

At our church we had jigsaw festivals. Members of the congregation completed jigsaws during the winter and stored them on boards which were then displayed in the church art gallery scale (albeit horizontally not vertically!). The community then came into look at the wide variety of pictures and bought the puzzles which were broken down and re-boxed for them. It was quite a good fund raising and social event, drawing passers -by into the church!

Like many past times, the real joy of jigsaw puzzles is the actual doing of them more than the final result which nearly always has to be eventually broken up.

The perceived wisdom is to complete the corners and edges first! However, my impatience always makes me work from the centre outwards. Currently I have a stylised map of London on the go, so I am happy placing buildings and land marks on the board roughly in relationship to each other and will come back later to the linking spaces and the pesky and boring edges!!!

The fascination thing about these puzzles is how each individual piece can often be ambiguous, difficult to decipher or understand on its own. But then, when it is put into its place, it becomes a crucial part of the completed picture!

For the whole picture to be seen as the artist intended requires all the pieces in all the correct places! All the right pieces in the wrong places just doesn't work!

I am sure that jigsaw puzzles are an analogy for life. Our lives are full of individual experiences like individual jigsaw pieces which sometimes apparently seem unconnected and out of place.

We may struggle to understand how they all fit together. But, with time and patience and with God's grace, we see how these experiences, these pieces, link together to form a complete picture of our lives; lives which God the creator has designed in his perfect wisdom to live and cherish.

To complete the picture on the jigsaw box takes time and cannot be done quickly, and neither can our understanding of the picture of our lives be completed quickly, for every new day, every experience whether good or bad is a new piece that must be added to the whole! May your picture continue to grow in colour and depth and meaning!

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## MEMBERS CORRESPONDENCE

Many thanks for the sad news of Anne Barratt's 'passing'.

Anne and Brian were two of the finest people to know personally, who together and later gave fine service to the YMCA. We will remember with respect the way Anne coped with her loss of Brian and continued to give that service second to none.

Our collegueship will be remembered as we pass on to Jonathan our sincere condolences.

Warm regards,  
**Jim (Lamb)**

Just to share with all the sad news that **Brian Ridsdale** passed away in September 2021.

For those who knew Brian and wish to send their condolences to his wife Christina, the family address is:-

10, CURRENGATE MEWS, SKIPTON ROAD,  
STEETON, KEIGHLEY  
BD20 6PE

Notification of Brian's passing was received from his wife Christina who he had been married to for over 60 years.

Brian spent eighteen years at YMCA Lakeside, from 1970 until he retired in 1998. Brian mentioned in an earlier contribution that he registered two learning curves – the teamwork created and the personal development skills which he learnt and used at Lakeside, plus his training and licensing as a Reader in the Anglican church. He was able to dovetail both those aspects within the diocesan lay training team, taking courses out to the churches to "prepare God's people for works of service" Eph 4.12. Brian expressed his eternal gratitude to the YMCA and the Anglican Church for those experiences in his development.

**(Editor)**

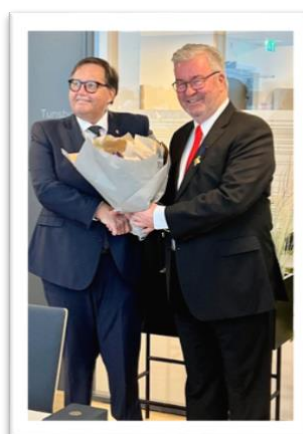
What a wonderful and inspiring Christmas message from **Denise (Hatton)** YMCA England and Wales CEO. With best wishes to all –  
**Mike (Fisher)**

## New Years Prayer for 2022

### The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and princes are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,  
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among others,  
To make music in the heart.

## MAJOR AWARD FOR JOHAN VILHELM ELTVIK Secretary General of World Alliance of YMCAs 2011-2018



His Majesty the King of Norway has appointed me Officer of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit "for outstanding service in the interest of Norway and of Mankind."

The submission was given by the Governor of the State and took place at the Bishop's office following an invitation from Bishop Jan Otto Myrseth.

The Governor of the State, the Bishop and Secretary General Øystein Magelssen in Norway's KFUK-KFUM gave speeches.

**Friends from around the world of YMCA - I share this honour with all of you - thank you!**

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Belated 94<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve happy birthday to Mervyn Moorehead, husband of Beryl. Hope you both had a wonderful celebration the day before we all celebrated the birth of Christ.

Much love and best wishes from all – **David and Sue.**

## MEMBERS CORRESPONDENCE

**Stephen and Hanna (Milner)** share that 2021 seems to have gone by very quickly.

There was not much happening during the first part of the year.

In April the YMCA South West Y's Retired staff had hoped to have their week's get-together at St Ives, Cornwall again but the Christian Guild sold Treloyhan Manor, which we used. We have many happy memories of our gatherings there as well as visiting Cornwall with its incredible coastline and scenery. We will go back to Cornwall on our own sometime.

We were unable to have a Reunion for the former boys who were in the YMCA British Boys for British Farms Farm Training Scheme which ran from 1932 to 1968. I have been following this up since 2009 for the YMCA archives. I am in contact with about 180 people who were in or had connections with this scheme.

In July we had five nights near Cambridge and attended the Cambridge area YMCA Retired Staff Lunch at Girton Golf Course. It is always good to meet up with colleagues who we knew or knew by name from the past.

In August I went up to Scotland to visit my brother David at Letterfearn. It was many years ago since I was last there. I flew from Southampton to Glasgow, staying a couple of nights with a school friend, also Stephen, who lives on the north side outskirts of Glasgow overlooking the Campsie Hills. From there we went to Fort William for the night, by chance, we looked at Fort William Station to find that the steam hauled Jacobite West Coast Train standing in the station.

We also had time to see the Glen Finnan Viaduct and the same Jacobite train going over the viaduct. We made a quick turn-around at Mallaig before going up to Kintail for 5 nights and visiting David and his friends at the same time. David took us on two boat trips, the first one was from Loch Alsh turning right past Eilean Donan Castle up Loch Long. The Second from Loch Alsh turning left down Kyle Rhea and then left into Loch Hourn. Both trips gave us spectacular peaceful scenery all the way round including the isle of Skye.

David let both of us take turns at the wheel of his boat. On another day we went with him on a car drive to Skye stopping at The Old Man of Storr rock stack overlooking the Sound of Raasay. The visibility was incredibly clear with views way off to the far distance as far as the eye could see. Stephen and I also did a couple of drives in the area including going across to Skye on the famous Glen Elg turn-table Car Ferry visiting some coastal villages. Stephen is a radio amateur, and he made some contacts while we were up there. Stephen and I went back to Glasgow for one night before my return flight home.

In September brother David came down south visiting family and friends. He took back to Scotland my Halfords Apollo bicycle I had won from a Kellogg's Cornflakes Competition many years ago which I had never used and thought it would be more useful in Scotland than down here in Dorset. Prior to giving it to David, Halfords checked it over, adjusted the brakes, gear cables and put on two new tyres.

In October Hanna and I spent 9 nights near Holsworthy in Devon. We visited the Holsworthy Cattle Market and the Agricultural Machinery Sale. We enjoyed visiting the RHS Rosemoor Garden at Great Torrington.

The Christmas Scout Post is up and running again with a wider area of collections and deliveries across West Dorset with a suggested donation of 30p per card which certainly helps the local Scout groups funds. We are helping with the sorting in Dorchester and delivery in Charminster. Best wishes for 2022.

**Stephen and Hanna (Milner)**

## NOTICE FROM YMCA PENSION PLAN

**Several members of Y's Retired of UK will be in receipt of a YMCA pension, either paid via the Plan's administrators, XPS, or via an annuity provider such as Legal & General or Aviva.**

**Information on the YMCA Pension Plan can be found on the website [www.pensions.ymca.org.uk](http://www.pensions.ymca.org.uk) which does not require any password to access it.**

**To help with the ongoing administration, it is important to let the YMCA Pensions Administrator know of any changes to your circumstances, such as change of address. You can do so by contacting XPS Administration by email: [YMCA@xpsgroup.com](mailto:YMCA@xpsgroup.com) or telephoning 0118 918 5750 and ask for Balbir Sandhu.**

## A NEW YEARS UPDATE

The 12<sup>th</sup> January saw the Moorehead family at Derriford hospital, firstly to the oncology where they saw a lady consultant.

Beryl reports that – “following the pet scan given to Mervyn the consultants think the nodule at the apex of Mervyn's lung is treatable by radiotherapy at this stage. Mervyn has to decide to weigh the possible risk against the benefits as the liver is very nearby and they don't want to fry that! He would have to lie very still and not breathe for a full minute.

He did have a biopsy done in the ultrasound department on his thyroid, so we have to get the verdict of that still. He went initially, a year ago about his throat and has had the most thorough of investigations on everything but his throat, so we have nothing but praise for our NHS. Perhaps Mervyn will end up in 'The Guinness Book of Records 'yet. It is 46 years since he gave his daughter Ruth one of his kidneys. They must have done a lot since then.”

Love **Beryl (Moorehead)**

## SPECIAL REQUEST FROM JONATHON QUEFIO-MEXICO

Jonathon Quefio-Mexico, a retired Ghanaian colleague who trained at The National YMCA College in 1980 and returned to Ghana to become a YMCA Regional Secretary there. That was his last time in England. He will shortly be travelling to World Alliance Conference in Denmark 3-9<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

Jonathon would very much like to come across to England for a two or three short stays and catch up with friends and colleagues and therefore asks for accommodation assistance.

This would involve - hosting and entertaining him - and passing him on to his next hosts.

If you would be willing to explore helping Jonathon in his request, can you email Vic Hills Email: [vic\\_hills@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:vic_hills@yahoo.co.uk) (underscore between Vic & Hills) by the end of February at the latest so he can consider how to proceed.

**Thank you.**





**With permission from Sandra Van Brown from Australia, extracts from her book entitled "Red Cross Rose" which describes her grandmother's involvement of YMCA Women's Auxiliary's and their assistance with soldiers on the front line work during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War**

Last year, I was in correspondence with Sandra Van Brown from Australia, who through our website wanted to gain knowledge for her book entitled "Red Cross Rose" the early involvement of YMCA Women's Auxiliary's and their involvement on the front line work during World War 1. What follows are parts of the content of Sandra's book, which explores the diaries and notes from the journey made by her grandmother Rose, who, as a young Australian woman, was determined to be a volunteer in the First World War.

From a population in Australia of just under 5,000,000, more than 416,000 young men enlisted. 100 years ago, it was unusual for Australians to travel overseas even without considering the difficulty of getting onto a boat for there were no A 380 planes at the turn of the century. So, it was remarkable that a young woman aged 34 came to leave Australia and at her own instigation and expense, travel to the frontline of the Great War

One can only imagine her mother's concern for once Rose had embarked from Sydney, her mother knew it would be months before she would hear whether her daughter had arrived safely, if at all. Travel by boat was arduous, lengthy, and costly. It was almost impossible for a single woman to travel on her own without a chaperone and without access to her own money.

One must remember that women had only secured the vote in Australia some 14 years before Rose's adventure in 1916 and it was not until 1918 that women's suffrage became universal in the United Kingdom. So, emancipated women were a rarity and for this emancipated woman to take a boat to the motherland was astounding, if not absurd.

Rose left Wellington on SS Rotorua, a ship of the New Zealand shipping company, in August 1915. Rose made Plymouth on the afternoon of Tuesday the 20th of October 1915. Ironically, SS Rotorua was indeed sunk by a German submarine as it tried to cross the English Channel on the 22nd of March 1917.

When Rose arrived in England, she was undoubtedly excited, her journal and letters attested to this. From Plymouth she took a train to London arriving about 11:00 pm to a thick pea souper fog. The next day by mid-morning the pea souper fog had cleared and Rose was able to do a bit of sightseeing around London on the top of a bus.

By 1916 the population of London was close to 7 million with the bulk (nearly 4.5 million) living in central London alone. By contrast, Australia was a quiet country with a little over 4 million people mostly crowded around the eastern seaboard - the entire population of Australia was equal to that of central London.

Rose stayed with her uncle, Ernest brown, who worked as a bookkeeper/accountant in a firm near Piccadilly Circus. Sadly, though, her enthusiasm and fortitude were rocked when she was told from all sides that she had been foolish to come to England because there were thousands of women in England who were anxious to do war work. Yet, undeterred, on Friday 22nd of October 1915 she presented herself to the Agent-General of New South Wales, the Honourable Bernard Ringrose Wise, and Sir George Reid the Australian High Commissioner, with her qualifications and interests.

This must have been a fascinating meeting and it is still unclear how Rose obtained a meeting with such important men during a war both Wise and Reid were influential politicians in the early days of Australia's Federation. History tells us that George Reid ended up as Prime Minister of Australia from the 18th of August 1904 until the 5th of July 1905.

Rose still hungered to get to France. In the course of her work at Horseferry Road, she had read in the medical records that several Australians had died in the French seaport of Le Havre, meaning the troops were leaving Gallipoli for France and being treated for their injuries in the hospitals on the Western Front.

With the help of the wife of Sir Bernard New South Wales Agent General, Rose was able to get to France to work amongst both the Australians and the English. There had been a good deal in the papers about the work of the YMCA and what it was doing in France and Rose decided she would try and get out there under their operations. She made application to Lady Mary Bessborough. Lady Mary Bessborough oversaw the recruitment of women to do canteen work for the YMCA.

In its early history, YMCA programmes and services were commonly referred to as 'welfare' work especially during the First World War, but the word is used in a somewhat different context today. Its goals however remain the same today as during the war - to help the spiritual, mental and physical strength of service men and women and military families. The rise of the YMCA and the Red Cross in providing comforts, entertainments and other activities was the beginning of a more humane way of caring for the fighting man.

While the Red Cross mobilised itself for relief work with refugees and prisoners of war, the YMCA became one of the most significant organisations involved in welfare work for the troops and munition workers. As the work gained greater recognition, it became apparent to the officers and politicians, that the need to care for the well-being of soldiers was imperative to a successful war effort. To meet this challenge, the YMCA, like the armaments industry, began to seek women volunteers and workers to sustain their work.

Rose's assessment of the war recognised some criticism by others of the YMCA. She stated, "With regards the activities of the many organisations of which I write I will take this opportunity of saying a few words about the YMCA because I have so often heard it unjustly criticised. I have repeatedly heard it said that they charge for all they gave, and nothing was free.

People forget that the vast organising of concerts, cinemas, plays etc, given at the bases and as close up to the lines as GHQ would allow, the sports equipment of every description, writing paper, cocoa for the wounded as they came away from the line. There was no charge for any of these".

In the early phases of the war the YMCA was responsible for managing canteens and huts across France, which provided comforts, entertainment and spiritual guidance. Within the first fortnight of war being declared, 250 social centres or huts for troops were operating.

The first of the YMCA huts in France appeared in November 1914. By 1916, when Rose was considering her move to France, the total number of huts had grown to 1500. These huts were training camps, in Garrison and transit towns such as Sanvic, Harfleur and La Havre, at railway stations and wherever British troops were serving abroad. In addition to these static huts by the end of the war, the YMCA reported over 300 huts along the line of the Western Front.

Many of these huts came under shellfire - but continued to serve hot drinks, provide cigarettes, biscuits and companionship. Some of these huts were in dugouts in the trenches. The huts that Rose managed appeared to be more substantial and, being erected in the Army base, where of the same construction as the hospitals, convalescent huts and storage sheds. Pictures of Le Havre taken during the war show many tents for accommodation but also a large number of robust huts constructed from wood of which several were YMCA huts.

Shortly after the first hut appeared on the front line, in November 1914 the YMCA Auxiliary Committee for Women's Work was formed with Princess Helena Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein, granddaughter of Queen Victoria, as its president and the Countess of Bessborough as its honorary secretary. Up to 1870 women workers passed through the committee's hands for service in and around France. During the war, Lady Bessborough was herself a nurse's aide and was eager to volunteer her contacts and services to the Christian cause through the YMCA Auxiliary Committee. The Countess of Bessborough herself travelled to France in early 1915 with HRH Princess Victoria.

Kate Adie, in her book "**Fighting on the Home Front**", explains in detail about the application process for volunteers who wanted to go to the front. Every volunteer was interviewed by a woman of peerage and if you could get through the interview you were considered to be "made of the right stuff" and given approval to travel abroad under the banner of the YMCA.

All these volunteers were unpaid, saving the YMCA thousands of pounds. Every volunteer brought with her the simple skills of cooking, cleaning and conversing with the men. There was never any consideration that Lady volunteers would be capable of much else. Even though the world was changing in its views on women and women's work, the YMCA was a male entrenched organisation and the Women's Auxiliary, although led by women, was very conscious of the role of the "lady" volunteers would play. Every YMCA had a female Superintendent whose work was overseen by a male leader. All volunteers reported to a man.

Rose was one of those many volunteers who met the Countess of Bessborough. The meeting did not go well. Rose was told there were hundreds of women who wanted to go out and it would be about six months before her term would come. But Rose was adamant she did not want to do canteen work. Her expertise and skills were in administration and she knew, if she persevered, she would convince them to send her to do men's work.

Disgruntled with this meeting Rose called on Mr Drake, the General Secretary of the YMCA at Tottenham Court Road. At first, he was astonished by Rose's suggestion but when Rose told him she was an Australian and had administrative experience in Australia his astonishment turned into interest. However, he did not think his committee would be in favour but as their canteens balance sheets were showing a loss each month, due to the fact that the men were not businessmen but scholars or theologians, he would put Rose's suggestion before his committee the following Thursday when the secretary for La Havre would be over.

By the 11th of April 1916, Rose's permits were cleared; she had received all her inoculations and she crossed to France via Southampton in the midst of a severe storm. The ship was full with officers returning to France from leave and they were packed like sardines for the entire trip. There was not even space to lie down.

As expected, the men working for the YMCA at the front did not appreciate a young woman coming to do administrative work. When it became known, the men called for a meeting to protest Rose's appointment, with the result that Mr Barclay Baron, the General Secretary at the La Havre base had two choices - progress with Rose's appointment as instructed by London or risk the resignation of the men in France.

Thankfully he followed orders and, on the 12th of April 1916 Rose commenced work at the YMCA Hut, reviewing the administration records and assessing the balance sheets. Within a few days Rose discovered the weak links in the administration and identified areas where losses were being experienced. She made suggestions to Mr Baron and he, recognising her talents, moved her sideways to become assistant accountant in the YMCA Headquarters in La Havre.

By September 1917, the YMCA was responsible for 150 munition worker canteens serving around 200,000 workers daily and at one point, canteens were opening at the rate of six per month. In addition, there were ten hostels accommodating more than 3000 men across the Western Front.

Rose was to find her work in France would become far more than simply an administrative worker. She was also proven to be a really valuable addition to the team.

As a coastal city, La Havre was vital for the allied war strategy because it provided an arrival point to ship both men and supplies to France from the United Kingdom. Troops were constantly passing through, some only staying a few hours, some a few days and some four weeks, and it was also the base of several regiments.

If the base happened to be in the area, the men were sent there until they were sent up the line but, if the regiment happened to have their base elsewhere, the men remained in the rest camps at the docks or Sanvic, until there were sufficient trains to take them onto the line.

The human toll from the war was heavy for La Havre. The city suffered about 6000 fatalities, but it did thrive with the extent of bases and hospitals, which brought much needed financial income to the Region.

**Final part two of Rose's WW1 involvement will be in the May 2022 Newsletter with a surprise for Rose meeting a senior International YMCA figure.**

## **Graham Clarke brings News from the Archives!**

The YMCA Archives group is alive and well and not gathering dust! At its January meeting, Professor Michael Snape of Durham University was appointed as Chair in succession to Clyde Binfield. Mike is a lay Canon of Durham Cathedral and The Michael Ramsey Professor of Anglican Studies as well as the Honorary Secretary of the Church of England Record Society and the official historian of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department. He is the editor of the diaries of 1<sup>st</sup> World War YMCA worker Barclay Baron, *The Back Parts of War: The YMCA memoirs and letters of Barclay Baron, 1915 to 1919.*

The group also welcomed its new secretary David Standing, formerly CEO of Downs Group YMCA Sussex, who has taken on responsibility for Heritage Issues for YMCA England and Wales. Other members of the group include Tony Jeffs; Ruth Gilchrist, Graham Clarke and Clyde Binfield.

The group was pleased to know that a range of items had been deposited with the Archive in "The Special Collections" of the Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham including material from the 175 Anniversary Celebration and YMCA Wales records 1913-2014.

Other items include a letter from National Secretary W.E Shipton to T Thorpe dated 10 October 1865 enclosing the YMCA Rules and BBBF Photo Albums. Although the Archive cannot store much by way of memorabilia, a number of items including George Williams' spectacles in their case and numerous badges and medals have been passed on to the Archive from Ken Montgomery.

David Standing was able to report that following the closure of Dunford House, items relating to Richard Cobden and the house have been passed on to the West Sussex County Archive and the records of YMCA custodianship of Dunford including the Visitors Books have all been placed in the Birmingham Archive. Other items including George William's cot and desk are in safe keeping! In addition to this, the library of George Williams College has also lodged with the archive!

The Cadbury Research Library are currently working on a project funded by the Wellcome Trust. This enables the cataloguing of these archives and those of the Youth Hostel Association under the title *'Healthy Minds and Active Bodies: The promotion of health and well-being by UK Youth movements.'*

The project runs until June 2023 and will create easily searchable catalogues using the University's CALM system which will assist in improving the access to the Archives by the public and research community.

Matthew Goodwin is one of the two Archivists who have been employed to work on the project and has special responsibility for YMCA material and is producing a blog which can be followed at: <https://ymcaandyhaarchives.wordpress.com/>

In appropriate YMCA style, the project also includes an opportunity for a student internship for someone seeking to gain work experience in this field. The YMCA is represented on the project via a steering group consisting of Dr Clyde Binfield, David Standing and Graham Clarke.

**If you have any printed material which you may think would be of value in the Archive, why not make a list and send it to Mark Ecclestone at:-**

[M.R.Eccleston@bham.ac.uk](mailto:M.R.Eccleston@bham.ac.uk)

or contact Graham Clarke.  
[Julia-graham@talk21.com](mailto:Julia-graham@talk21.com)



## **CONGRATULATIONS**

To Ron Ingamells and Ann on their recent engagement

"Not only a family weekend and seeing all the grandchildren and the great grandchildren ... not only a lovely meal and day together... not only 2 services on Sunday BUT also Ann and I got engaged!!! Our shadows on the Norfolk beach!!!" Ron.

Dear David,  
Greetings from York! I had intended to reply to your Christmas message, but you know how it is - stuff comes up. Anyway, just in time to wish you both a Happy New Year. Hope all's well with you.

We're pottering along as old age creeps into the mix; playing my 'cello at the moment in a rehearsal orchestra and continuing to sing in a small choir so my life has a bit more musical focus.

Though having resigned as Church Warden after 5 years, I'm now trying raise £80,000 towards a much-needed step access project. Sue is still presiding or preaching or both once a month, currently at least, now interested and sometimes busy focussing on Spiritual direction.

I heard from Jimmy Remnant's wife, that he is now 90, has gentle form of dementia but otherwise is fine. I was delighted to meet Denise Hatton in St Martin in the Field for the 150th service. YMCA England seems to be doing a great job.

Fortunately for you I don't have your postal address because given a chance I prefer to grab a pen; I'm hard if not impossible to read.  
Very best wishes - **Nick (Nightingale)**

## **GRANTS FROM THE BENEVOLENT FUND**

Dear Y's Retired Members.  
Do you remember the days of BSA, AOS, or APS? You will remember that members raised funds to assist colleagues and their spouses in times of hardship and need.

When the APS was sadly wound-up, through lack of members, the responsibility for the money raised in the Benevolent Fund was passed to the Officers of Y's Retired of the UK, to disburse the remaining Fund moneys.

Are you considering or in a situation where you are about to make a significant expenditure on something that will help or improve your condition of life, i.e. stair-lift, mobility scooter, electric chairs, adjustable bed, etc?

If you personally or you know of a Y's Retired member who would benefit from a gift (of up to £500) towards the costs please make an initial contact (by email or in writing) with brief details to our secretary, Vic Hills.

Vic Hills Email: [vic\\_hills@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:vic_hills@yahoo.co.uk) (underscore between Vic & Hills) or 5 Kernham Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6GB

All applications will be quickly assessed by two independent panel members who may contact the applicant for any additional information required to assist consideration of the request.



**PASSING OF DES WILLCOX - MBE  
AGED 91**



Dear friends and colleagues,

It is with great sadness that I write to share with you that our friend and colleague Des Willcox passed away in hospital on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 8.30pm, surrounded by his wife, Pearl and family. I learnt of Des' passing from his dear wife, Pearl. Des had become a regular patient at Plymouth hospital as he was suffering from a troublesome hip replacement from a previous hip replacement, water retention and a weakening heart.

For those of you who knew 91-year-old Des well, of which there were many, I share the address to which your condolences, should you so wish, can be sent.

Pearl Willcox and Family  
35 Wardlow Gardens  
Crownhill, Plymouth  
PL6 5PU  
United Kingdom

Des was a true friend and a faithful Methodist Christian and regular organist at Central Hall, Plymouth. Many of us would never have heard of Ten Sing had it not been through Des' connections with YMCA Norway through his outstanding work at Cheltenham and later at Plymouth YMCA. I believe Plymouth YMCA through Des was the first YMCA that introduced Charity Shops to the Movement.

**A service of Thanksgiving and Celebration of his life will be held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at Plymouth Central Methodist Hall, Eastlake Street, PL1 1BA. Commencing at 12.30pm.**

May dear Des rest in peace now and rise in Glory.  
**David (Editor)**

Sadly, I keep getting these sorts of messages from my various links! I am very sad - he was a great person and much loved and respected. I have a special link with them both because I was with Des and Pearl the night I received the message that my son had died and they were so kind and caring. There will be many tributes I am sure.  
**Ron (Ingamells)**

Hello David,  
Thank you for informing us of the passing of dear Des. He was a lovely Christian man and a stalwart of the YMCA. Such sad news.  
God Bless, - **Ray (Allen)**

Dear David,  
The news that Des has passed away has filled me with great sadness. He was the loveliest of men and had an extremely positive impact on my early career in the YMCA, at Cheltenham. There are so many memories; all of them happy, which are associated with our working together - a view which I know will be echoed by so many other people.

He was in all respects, a wonderful man, whose departing will be widely grieved.  
Regards, **Roger (Hunt)**

Dear David,  
A gentle giant of the YMCA has passed. So sorry to hear about Des. I will make contact with Pearl.  
**Graham (Clarke)**

Dear David and Sue  
Thank you so much for letting us know. Pearl is in our hearts.  
She must have known Des since her teenage years. We got back from hospital and Ivor told us Des was very sick, but then Ivor's wife Sheila rang and said he had passed away.  
We didn't know he was hospitalised. A very fine pair. Mervyn is going for his first (hopefully of only 3) radium treatments on 9<sup>th</sup> Feb.  
**Beryl (Moorehead)**

Dear David.  
We mourn his passing, we celebrate his life, we give thanks for having walked in his way.  
Many, who knew him not, are still impacted by his life.  
**John (Drake)**

Dear David,  
I wouldn't say that I knew Des well, as my contacts with him were at the occasional BUG meetings that I attended. I was always enthralled at his knowledge and wisdom when he spoke.

I recall my days at Maidstone YM as a volunteer and later as a Youth Worker and conversations Mary (my wife) and I had with Roy Holgate who, like Des in the late 60's, were instrumental in running two of the very first voluntary sector leisure and sports centres in the country.

They were both innovators and Roy always came back from his visits to Des in Plymouth full of admiration of what Des was doing, with more ideas for future development. So many young people were able to enjoy the facilities and opportunities that Des initiated. I was sad to read that Des had struggled with his hips in his later life, my condolences to Pearl and their family. May Des rest in peace.  
Warm regards, **Vic (Hills)**

Hi David,  
I received the news of Des Wilcox's death with much sadness although our respective careers in the YMCA were always at a distance, we continued our conversations over the years as if this was not so!

We have lost a fine Christian colleague whose contribution to our fellowship throughout our careers in the YMCA was of the best. His musical talent was a bonus to our many conferences, his knowledge of the Methodist Hymn Book was legendary! A true gentleman.

Warm regards, **Jim (Lamb)**