



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

**JANUARY 2020**

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



**Dear friends  
and colleagues.**

**Greetings**

When the phone rings in The Manse you never quite know what to expect!

It might be about a glove left in the church on the left hand side, back row two weeks ago, it might be someone trying to book a theatre seat ( Our number is one digit different from the local AmDram theatre) or it may be someone in genuine crisis! The least likely caller would be Vic Hills inviting me to take on the role of President of Y's Retired!!!

However, on this occasion it was indeed Vic Hills! Suffice it to say that I was both taken aback and humbled to be asked to follow in the steps of such giants as Reg Wake and Jim Lamb and their vision and hard work for Y's Retired. I still see myself as very much junior to them.!!!

Although I left paid YMCA service to enter the Baptist Ministry in 2000 I have kept 'my hand in' variously as Treasurer at Southampton, Trustee of Welwyn Garden City then West Herts as well as a member of the National Archives group. I have also been known to do talks to church groups on the YMCA Story!

You can take the boy out of the YMCA but not the YMCA out of the boy!!

As a Minister I have served in Eastleigh and Ventnor but since 2003 have been at Marshalswick St Albans.

Here, I have been (among other things) Moderator (Chair) of the Central Baptist Association, Moderator of Churches Together in St Albans, a Governor of a local Primary School, a member of a local Academy Trust and Trustee and volunteer with STEP a Christian charity teaching RE in the secondary schools in St Albans and Harpenden.

One of the many things that I have valued about YMCA life is the sense of fellowship and opportunity to join in the shared Christian purpose undertaken by YMCA people paid and unpaid across the world.

It is with this in mind that I am privileged to take on this role at Ys Retired!

I hope that through Y's Retired of UK, the strength of fellowship that was experienced in our more directly active YMCA years can be continued and enrich our lives, that our prayerful support will encourage those who are working in today's challenging environment, that through our support of Secours Speciaux, colleagues in need will be cared for and encouraged and that we will be able to play a part in passing on the story and values of the movement to successive generations.

I look forward to hearing from you and may be even seeing you in the future.

Graham Clarke

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## AN APPEAL FROM THE EDITOR OF "BRIDGES"

If space permits, Bridges is delighted to feature personal achievements or YMCA connections of individual members.

You need to be aware that WFYR is promoting a worldwide YMCA Retiree Ambassador programme and already has many countries and specific locations identified with a WFYR member willing to host a short meeting with a visiting Y retiree and family to acquaint them with "must see" opportunities as well as YMCA programmes and facilities in their home area.

Perhaps you can promote the concept, sign up yourself and encourage individuals to sign up as Ambassadors.

Individuals interested can enrol with the form in Bridges or send contact information directly to:

Ken White: WYFR Communications Chair, 46 Squirrel road, Doylestown, PA 18901 USA or Email [wfyrmembership@gmail.com](mailto:wfyrmembership@gmail.com).

Look forward to Bridges publicizing and promoting the programme and individuals connected.

Send to [len.wilson@comcast.net](mailto:len.wilson@comcast.net) or mail to Len Wilson at 1101 Washington Ave. #307 Philadelphia PA 19147

As always, thank you for your support and cooperation. Without your help there would be no Bridges connecting WFYR members.

### GET TOGETHER OF Y's RETIRED OF UK COLLEAGUES IN THE SOUTH WEST

### TRELOYHAN CONFERENCE CENTRE ST IVES, CORNWALL

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April to Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Do put the dates in your diary now !!

En-suite, half board £225.00

Non en-suite, half board £185.00

£40 deposit – asap - please

Balance due 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020.

Cheques payable to David or Margaret Libby  
15 The Quarterdeck, Strand Street,  
Plymouth PL1 3RL

Five days of fun, relaxation, exploration and reminiscing.

### YOUR LOVE AND PRAYERS

are requested for many Ys Retired friends and colleagues some with life threatening illnesses, others in recovery and I'm sure there are many not mentioned here.

Prayers please for - Pip Wilson, Jim Lamb, Arthur Bennett, Colin Mawby, Des Wilcox, Paul Harper,

Dear Ken,

I share with you that I find the word 'alumni' is out of context and a misnomer when applied to the YMCA, by no means least the 'World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees'.

I acknowledge the use of the word 'alumni' is common in the USA and Canada but not with the 'rest of the world' RETIREE groups and regretted when related to the World Fellowship of YMCA RETIREES (YFYR).

The Latin word 'ALUMNI' is primarily related to 'education' meaning 'colleges of education' and is 'male' orientated. (Alumnae is female).

Wikipedia makes a very loose reference to the meaning of 'alumni' to all organisations which I maintain does not apply to a worldwide organisation of the nature of YMCA staff on retirement.

Ask Sir George Williams the Founder of the YMCA! Mind you a 'learned professor of distinction' agrees with my sentiments!!

Warm regards, Jim (Lamb)

### Wikipedia says:-

*"An **alumni association** is an association of graduates or, more broadly, of former students (alumni). In the United Kingdom and the United States, alumni of universities, colleges, schools (especially independent schools), fraternities, and sororities often form groups with alumni from the same organization.*

*These associations often organize social events, publish newsletters or magazines, and raise funds for the organization.*

*Many provide a variety of benefits and services that help alumni maintain connections to their educational institution and fellow graduates. In the US, most associations do not require its members to be an alumnus of a university to enjoy membership and privileges.*

*Additionally, such groups often support new alumni, and provide a forum to form new friendships and business relationships with people of similar background.*

*Alumni associations are mainly organized around universities or departments of universities, but may also be organized among students that studied in a certain country.*

*In the past, they were often considered to be the university's or school's old boy society (or old boys network). Today, alumni associations involve graduates of all age groups and demographics. Alumni associations are often organized into chapters by city, region, or country."*

This graduation concept through Alumni Associations is very much American and therefore does not apply itself to YMCA Retirees in all other countries around the world – therefore instead of becoming inclusive, it becomes exclusive, or set apart from.

I don't think it is an interpretation of "who we are" or a term that Y's Retired of UK can or should embrace.

David (Smith) Editor

## MEMBERS CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Jim.

I have read of your retirement as President of Ys Retired in the Newsletter. I just wanted to say that you have served magnificently and have represented to me and all members all that is best in the YMCA fellowship.

I think your decision to take up the YMCA calling in preference to the Methodist Ministry was no doubt both inspired and of God! You have certainly served Him well.

God bless you. You are in my prayers, **David (Bedford)**

## Successful Appeal Result for Secours Speciaux September/October 2019

Dear John,

As fellow signatory to the Appeal Letter! To share that the total raised from all sources including 'Gift Aid' yet to be received from Scotland/Keith is £4,263.

In the circumstances an excellent sum. Need to bear in mind that WFYR work in US dollars, final result therefore reliant on Exchange Rate at the time of transfer from the Y's Retired of the UK Account to the Secours Speciaux Account.

We are pleased to report a total of £4,263 (US dollars based on £1.20\* currency rate \$4,350) was raised and express again thanks to all those who donated.

We have honoured the increased giving requested by the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees (WFYR) at the four yearly Conference held in Thailand July 2018.

### Analysis

England (including one donation from Ireland and one from Wales) -	£1695
Gift Aid	<u>£ 150</u>
	£1845
Scotland	£1575
Gift Aid	<u>£ 343</u>
	£1918
Secours Speciaux Account (Y's Retired Account)	<u>£ 500</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>£4263</u></b>

Signed off by: Jim Lamb, Keith Rennie, John Naylor

Note: \* Currency rate will vary on payment direct to Secours Speciaux Fund.



## WELCOME TO OUR NEW PRESIDENT

Dear Graham,

It gives me much pleasure to congratulate you on accepting the appointment of President of the Y's Retired of the UK and wish you well for the future. If I can be helpful in any way please do not hesitate to contact me. It is the kind of 'job' you develop in your own way - somewhat similar to a certain Branch of the City of Leeds YMCA!!

This may be considered an 'in joke' as I appointed you to a very challenging position at Hawksworth Wood YMCA, where you did a sterling job but held me to task on my leaving you to it soon after your appointment as I pursued my career at Newcastle!

David - My health you ask after! Royal Papworth Hospital have done all they can for me and transferred me to Addenbrooke's Hospital Lung Clinic. I am now on a course of a daily Chemotherapy tablet! Otherwise healthy!

I am in correspondence with the WFYR on the subject of our American/Canadian colleagues using the word Alumni for YMCA Retirees, YMCA Alumni which is a misnomer as the Latin word Alumni is related to Education (Colleges of Education) not to retirement.

They have changed the Financial Account from World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees to YMCA Alumni! They have taken my letter on the subject seriously! Some American colleagues are in full agreement with my action!

I will keep you informed of any further action being taken as it may well be related to my position as President!!

### OUR ADVENT PRAYER

Dear Jesus,  
you are the hope in our messy world.  
This Advent, help us slow down,  
listen to your voice and focus on  
what's really important.

We place our hope in you as we  
prepare our hearts to  
celebrate your birth  
at Christmas

Amen

## YMCA urges government to deliver 'new era for young people' ahead of General Election



With less than a month to go until the UK votes for its next government, YMCA has released its manifesto calling on political parties and candidates to deliver a new era for youth, with policies tailored to give each young person the opportunity to live their best lives.

Based on the aims and concerns of young people across England and Wales, YMCA's manifesto outlines seven primary recommendations to help improve the lives of young people and their communities.

On top of restricted housing opportunities and financial uncertainty, young people are growing up during a period where youth crime, mental health difficulties and loneliness are at an all-time high, making prospects seem hopeless. With the government's support, we can change these prospects to create a brighter future – a new era for young people.

With this in mind, recommendations in YMCA's manifesto champion the fundamental basics of what all young people deserve, from having a roof over their heads to reliable income, quality healthcare and the opportunity to contribute to their community. In order to make this a reality, YMCA is calling on the next government to:

- Ensure that in relation to Brexit, the needs and aspirations of young people are considered and protected for the future
- Substantially reinvest in youth services so that all young people have access to quality support such as youth clubs and youth workers
- Remove or minimise major barriers such as cost of rent, deposits and bills, to help ensure all young people have a home and the chance to live independently
- Review the Universal Credit system and sanctions regime to properly support young people in need, ensuring a stable income for all
- Help young people to thrive at work and provide for themselves by offering a real living wage and increasing support for entry into apprenticeship schemes
- Ease the pressure on families and offer young people the best start in life by creating a fair and sustainable childcare system for all
- Take a holistic approach to wellbeing, reducing the cost of physical activities and ensuring appropriate mental health care is in place and well resourced

Denise Hatton, Chief Executive of YMCA England & Wales, said:

“At YMCA we believe that every person should have the opportunity to live their best life. Having championed young people and communities for 175 years, we know first-hand what young people are going through and what the next government must do to in order to help them achieve this.

“Now more than ever, we need a government that will deliver for our country's young people. If we want decision makers to prioritise the interests of young people through policies that will positively impact their lives and prospects, it is imperative that their voices are heard loud and clear.

“Only with access to quality youth services, meaningful careers, financial stability, secure housing and holistic wellbeing support can a new era for youth become a reality.

“In order to make this happen we must work together. As well as calling on government, young people must also make their voices heard by registering to vote. By being informed on the policies of local candidates and having their say on polling day, young people can make an impact on the result of the election and help ensure that the decisions of the next government reflect what is best for them now and in the future.”

In addition to the manifesto, YMCAs across England and Wales will be holding hustings events over the coming weeks to engage young people in the political debate, and ensure their voices are heard in person.

### **CAN YOU HELP BY FILLING IN THE GAPS ESPECIALLY IF YOU WORKED FOR THE YMCA IN THE NORTH WEST OF ENGLAND?**



Dear friends,

**We often have special challenges asked of us, mostly by doctors as our memories fade.**

**However, in this case, Julie, the daughter of the late Graeme Andrew Rogie Angus, is trying to identify his working time-line, from his first employ with the YMCA until his Acting National Secretary role prior to Kevin Williams taking up the National secretary post in April 2003.**

**I think I'm correct in stating that Graeme was born in February 1944.**

**If you can help at all please don't hesitate in sending your part of the "time-line jigsaw" to me, the editor – David Smith. Many thanks.**

[Ses.dhs@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Ses.dhs@hotmail.co.uk)



Citizens of Hong Kong are increasingly concerned about the changes in legislation that threaten to decrease autonomy and independence from China. The bill that raised current concerns is the unpopular extradition legislation that means people can be extradited to China from Hong Kong and will face the legal system there. Even though the bill has been suspended, there is growing concern about China's influence over Hong Kong as 2047 approaches when Hong Kong becomes a fully fledged part of China. The protests and government response have become increasingly violent.

*God, you know each person who has been impacted by these protests, every protester and every person on the police force, and so many who have born the brunt of this violence. We pray God that you will hear the cries of the people of Hong Kong, and let them be heard by leaders and those in power. Thank you for the movement of young people who are standing up for their future. We pray for peace and for no harm to come to fellow humans. We lament for every life that has been threatened and lost during this time.*

A failing economy, inadequate services and a hope for change that has not been realised, has led to a surge of protests that has gripped the nation in the past weeks. The protests are non-sectarian and country wide, and while linked to the looming economic crisis as well as historic corruption, legislation that protects the ruling class, and basic services not being accessible to so many, were triggered by an increase of taxes on some goods like tobacco, gasoline and online phone systems like WhatsApp. Last month Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigned in response to protesters' demands.

*God, we pray for the people of Lebanon at this time. We pray that leaders from various sectors will be united in recognising the need for change and better management of public funds that will impact on the vulnerable. We pray that you will protect all those involved in the protests, and bring the change that is so desperately sought after by men and women hoping for a better future. We ask that you bring resolution to the status quo and hear the cries of those protesting. Let religious leaders rise up, God, and lead towards lasting peace and change in this turbulent time.*

When subway fares were increased in Santiago during October, secondary school students started protesting by a coordinated fare evasion, which lead to confrontations with the police force. Protests and riots expanded to other cities and now hundreds of thousands of Chileans are protesting decades of poverty and inequality, poor healthcare and privatisation of pensions, and the cost of living. Around 20 people have died to date, some by fires started, some during looting, and some by police. Human Rights Organisations state that more than 220 people have had their eyes badly affected by chemicals such as tear gas used by Security forces.

*God, we lament with our brothers and sisters from Chile over the loss of lives during these protests. We mourn with Chile as we witness the level of violence resulting in deaths. We pray for systemic change to come to Chile that will release its citizens from the struggle of increased costs of living and inequality that is considered 'normal'. We pray for a decrease in violence as the government responds so these protests. We pray for the thousands who have been arrested and ask for their protection.*

## Jim Wilson 1920 – 2019.



All Saints Botley on October 4<sup>th</sup> was full for the memorial service for Jim. With tributes from 4 family members, 2 long standing Fairthorne involved men, the Hamble Valley Rotary President and 2 church members. With some enthralling memories of Jim's exploits and commitment to the many projects he supported, including being on ladders and roofs of the church and Market hall in his 80's!

Jim was born in 1920. His parents - a Prison Officer and a Singer. According to members of his church All Saints Botley he didn't inherit his mother's genes!. He gained a scholarship to Christ's hospital school near Horsham "doing fairly well". In the late 30's he was employed at a company in Wiltshire that produced scientific instruments and whilst there joined the TA. He was called up at the outbreak of war at the age of 19 and like many young men those 6 years shaped him.

He joined up to the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry a cavalry regiment which shipped all 600 horses to Palestine where he rode around on a horse (with a sword) which was swapped for a camel for a while but Jim always said he was not fond of them! His unit was then mechanised with all sorts of vehicles.

While driving a scout car his unit were sent on a breakneck mission to get to Tehran asap! His company were told to stop at nothing and put the pedal to the metal! 100 men in 10 or so light vehicles on their own out in the desert ahead of everyone else. In the middle of nowhere they came upon an Iranian army roadblock.

Out of a swanky low slung American saloon car stepped a very short general covered with so many medals he could barely stand who wouldn't let them pass unless they accepted the surrender of the Persian army, who didn't want to be captured by the Russians. At a nearby base the surrender of over 15,000 Iranian troops, was accepted, who were made to put all their guns in one big pile and told to stay put! Jim and his company carried on their mission to get to Tehran as soon as they could and before the Russians who were coming down from the North. Whoever got there first got the city!

Apparently they ended up arriving at about the same time as the Russians ... there was apparently 2 days of wild party then the order came down - 'no fraternising'! Later they were equipped with tanks and fought across N Africa in some of the big tank battles. Jim was blown up at Metera Ridge near Alemein .....

Jim transferred to the Intelligence corps serving in the Middle East, Sicily then Bletchley House where the Enigma code was cracked. By this stage he was a Sergeant and led a wireless intercept unit of 30 men on D Day +2 and followed the front line across France, Belgium and Holland .... They were just behind the front line all the way and listen in on German messages and sent them back to Bletchley to be cracked overnight.

He was finally demobbed in 1946 and on his discharge papers - in the reference section his CO had written 'A reliable, conscientious and intelligent worker who applies himself diligently to any task he undertakes' and then 'exemplary'.

Despite this Jim had confesses that he was a little lost after the war. He tried farming for a while apparently at different farms but didn't really enjoy it. Richard - Jim's stepson (whose tribute much of this is summarised) shared that he found "various bits of paper" while sorting through Jim's effects. One revealed that (unusually) at the age of about 40 he took an aptitude test!

The results are rather odd; the person reviewing said, "if you were 18 then based on your results, I would suggest a career as a radiologist! But as you are 40 ... I would suggest something like outward bound!!" He didn't talk about this time but it is presumed that was how Jim ended up at Fairthorne Manor working as the canoeing instructor, graduating to Director.

**Just some of Jim's achievements** - In his early years as Canoe Instructor he took a group of young canoeists to demonstrate the game they were playing in the mill pond on the Hamble. Canoe Polo at Crystal Palace from where it has become an international sport.

He invented the "mobile large 10 person tents", which were erected on pallet bases, so could be easily moved by a tractor with a forklift attachment by one person in a matter of minutes. A vast improvement on the previous - dismantle the tent, pack it up to move it and re-pitch it again - requiring a "gang of staff" and much time.

Ron Ingamells has previously said that Jim was somewhat reluctant when he approached him in the early 80's for Fairthorne to host the first YMCA Eurocross in 1982. After some consideration he whole heartedly gave his support and backing. Pembroke house - those large terrapin buildings brought up from South Wales provided additional accommodation.

The Canoe Lake - created Jim once told me by an "Irishman with a digger" provided a safe venue for beginners, not reliant on the tides of the river. His endless support of:- Botley Youth Club, where he first met Muriel his wife of over 50 years; and of course, the Hamble Valley Rotary Club.

Perhaps Jim's greatest Fairthorne satisfaction was the instigation of The Young Carers Festival held every year at Fairthorne for several thousand young carers.

The Minister who gave the address spoke of the Dash - between 1920 (&) 2019 being the life Jim lived using 1 Corinthians 13 vs 4 -8 & 13 to explain that the 16 elements of Love St Paul writes typified Jim. Humbling.