



Y's RETIRED OF THE UK

Affiliated to the World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees

Number 92 - - DECEMBER 2023

www.yretired.co.uk



President's ponderings

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Christmas came early to our village of Wheathampstead this year! September in fact! The shops were decorated and Christmas lights put up all for the filming of the Tesco Christmas TV Advert. Along with lots of others we watched while numerous takes were made of a car driving through the High Street carrying a lit up Christmas tree and as 'Human' Christmas Stars and Baubles walked along the pavement. We waited with anticipation for the advert's release only to be disappointed to find that these hours of filming had produced just a few seconds of footage, leaving us to wonder 'was it worth it?' (Check yourself!)

As we look around the world today and the suffering that humanity is heaping on each other and experience the consequences of our destruction of creation, I wondered if God looks at all he has created and asks the same question....'Was it worth it?'

Christmas and the celebration of the coming of the saviour of the world answers that question. God is saying 'Of course it was worth it!'

Despite the mess that humanity constantly makes of the world He has not given up on us. By sending his only Son to bring love, hope and peace into the world we see His glory and all that we can be and should be and that God wants us to be.

We cheer as we catch a brief glimpse of our village each time the Tesco ad airs, not everything ended up abandoned on the cutting room floor! . As we celebrate Christmas where-ever we are, we know that we have not been abandoned and that we are not just seeing a brief glimpse of God's love and grace but the fullness of that love and grace coming into all the world in the form of the child of Bethlehem and as we hear the choir of angels singing 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to all on whom his favour rests' (Luke 2:14)

I wish you all a blessed and peaceful Christmas
Graham Clarke



HORRAY the HUNT is OVER.

Two of our colleagues have generously offered to join the Editorial team to help compile, publish, distribute and more widely circulate and promote the activities of Y's Retired of the UK through The Newsletter and the Website.



We are delighted to welcome Phil' Willerton who will Edit and Compile the Newsletter from 2024 onwards and Andy Winter who will take on the Website responsibilities. During 2024 we will aim to publish a Newsletter quarterly – the first Edition of 2024 to be in circulation in March as an Easter Edition.

In addition to Andy' & Phil' it is a pleasure to share that Mary McGinty will join the team to work with Andrew Jenkins in managing the financial affairs.

Y's Retired Website:- www.yretired.co.uk

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See Page 3 for Phil's & Andy's contact details

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Jerusalem / Palestine.

YMCA East Jerusalem was reporting in late November that it was finding it increasingly difficult to operate with many of its staff unable to travel in and around the West Bank. Planned 75th Anniversary Celebrations have been postponed.

Due to the heavy bombardment, YMCA Gaza could not communicate with the wider YMCA movement. The Centre at Beit Sahour was operating reduced hours and services. The Vocational Training Centre in Jericho had temporarily closed to students and shifted to online education and hosted 33 Gazan workers in student dorms facing difficult living conditions.

An appeal for US \$ 350,000 has been launched to support their current priorities focussed on the West Bank

- Providing Psychological First Aid kits to counsellors for emergency support, offering urgent medical assistance and support to Gazan workers stranded in the West Bank including Ramallah, Hebron, Bethlehem, Tubas, Nablus and Tulkarem .
- Addressing the needs of affected communities in Bethlehem and Hebron by providing food, hygiene, medical supplies, safety kits, and mental health support.
- Providing Post Trauma Support for members, beneficiaries and staff, ensuring safety and staff salaries for the next three months

Donations can be made through the World YMCA at <https://www.ymca.int/donate/emergencyappeal/>

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John Drake advises that a personal update from Peter Nasir the C.E.O. of East Jerusalem YMCA is being compiled and will be sent as a supplement to this emailed News.

ZOOM DATES for first 6 months of 2024

Coffee Weds 7th Feb at 10.30am

AGM March 21st at 10am

Afternoon Tea Tues 15th May at 2.00pm

Link - **Meeting ID 838 2103 8035**
Passcode YMCA.



In Memoriam PIP WILSON.

It is with sadness that we record the death of Pip Wilson in September aged 84. Pip was formally the General Secretary of Romford YMCA. Having worked amongst the gangs of East London described in his book 'Gutter Feelings', he was amongst the most inspirational and innovative youth worker and trainer of youth workers in his generation. Famous for his popular Spectacular Stinking Rolling Magazine Show, Pip was a popular and much in demand at Greenbelt, Eurocross and other Christian and arts festivals. His famous 'Blob Tree' exercises devised with Ian Long continue to be a well-used resource in youth work and therapy work driven by his belief that everyone is a 'Beautiful Human Person'

YMCA Archive Project

The project funded by the Wellcome Trust to digitise the Index of the YMCA and YHA Archives at The University of Birmingham has come to an end.

The YMCA archive has over 9000 individual entries. These records provide the necessary scope and content for researchers to determine whether they wish to visit the University of Birmingham to view the original materials.

The catalogue is fully searchable on-line via:-

www.calmview.bham.ac.uk



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The following have given permission for their email addresses to be shared.

Ann Heath - ann.heath222@gmail.com

Mary McGinty - maryhmcginty@btinternet.com

Paul Smillie - paulsmillie2@gmail.com

Stan Wojcik - sicilian31@mail.com

If you are happy for your email address to be shared with Y's Retired colleagues please send Vic an email giving permission to share it.

NOTICE FROM YMCA DB 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 new website <https://pensionsymca.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, XPS, 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, or by using the XPS Helpline telephone Number 0118 918 5771 asking for Balbir Sandhu, or in writing to:- XPS Administration PO Box 562, Middlesbrough, TS1 9JA.

Please note that the website address and XPS' contact details have been recently updated and are now as set out in this notice.'

Free to a good home!

I have 2 spare copies of Barbara Vessey's book about the YMCA Farm Training Scheme British Boys for British Farms .
If you would like one contact me asap!
Graham Clarke

Wanted! Your News!

Ys Retired exists to maintain old friendships and contacts and sometimes make new ones! We are always delighted to have news, stories and memories to share. Just send them to Vic Hills, Graham Clarke, and Phil Willerton for inclusion in the Newsletter and Andy Winter for the Website. Don't store them up send them as they come to you!!!

CONTACT DETAILS:

Phil Willerton.

philip.willerton@outlook.com

Andy Winter.

andywintworld@gmail.com

CAMBRIDGE LUNCH in 2024.

The success and attendances at the last two lunches - plus a number of apologies this year has encouraged us to pre-book Girton Golf Club for next year.

Pop it in your diary - calendars for the first **Wednesday in July 3/7/24**

Y's Retired of the UK—South, West, Wales and wherever you were willing to travel from.

3.5 hours drive home the longest journey notified., 5 minutes walk the shortest, trains which stop 2 minutes from the front door convenient

The optimism of the very successful Cambridge lunch in July had prompted us - with David Pendle's willing co-operation - to organise a lunch much further west. Dulverton YMCA Group Great Western Hotel Taunton was the venue for 18 members and guests on 7th November.

We are indebted to Erin Patterson, Nat Mich, manager, Angus (Minehead hotel manager and head chef), Agnes chef, Alex Holding, apprentice, and Lucy Taylor who made us so welcome.

The photographs on pages 5 & 8 and the comments below speak for themselves.

Thank you for organising - it was very good and I think we all enjoyed it very much. The venue, the food, the company - so nice to meet up with colleagues in person. It was lovely to see people and enjoy lunch too. I was pleased with the way that the Dulverton YMCA Team had responded to the idea of hosting the luncheon.. From the beginning they welcomed the opportunity of acknowledging the service of past members of staff – retirees. We both very much enjoyed yesterday's lunch get together. Paul particularly enjoyed seeing people he hadn't seen for a while. Thanks for to all those who helped organise it.

Looking forward to the next one!!

Stephen Milner writes –

Hanna and I were very disappointed not to have been able to attend the YMCA Y's Retired Lunch at Taunton.

It is very interesting, reading on the Internet, that the YMCA Dulverton Group have managed to open hotels in various locations and we wish them well in the future.

Barley Wood, Wrington, North Somerset
The Beach Hotel, Minehead, West Somerset
The Great Western Hotel, Taunton

The Beach Hotel, Weston-Super-Mare; Dulverton Hostel, a converted vicarage in the heart of Dulverton.

I hope Andrew Jenkins has received some donations for the repairs to Bertha the Tea Van.

Some of you may remember that Jim Lamb was trying to trace Wesley House in Hannover. By chance I have received a photograph of Wesley House in Hannover, which could be the one that Jim was trying to find. It was on or very near a British military base when he was doing his National Service in Germany. It was like a YMCA drop in Centre

BBBF is still going and we are in contact with about 170 people who were either in or had connections with BBBF.

The 8th BBBF Reunion was held on Wednesday 9 August 2023 at Plumpton College, Sussex 22 people attended. The College staff gave us a wonderful day, giving us a talk on the courses available and minibus tours of the college farm. Group Photo attached.

The 9th BBBF Reunion will be held on Thursday 23 May at North Cadbury Court in Somerset which used to be a BBBF centre from 1950 to 1966 and is now an events centre.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a good and healthy new year 2024.

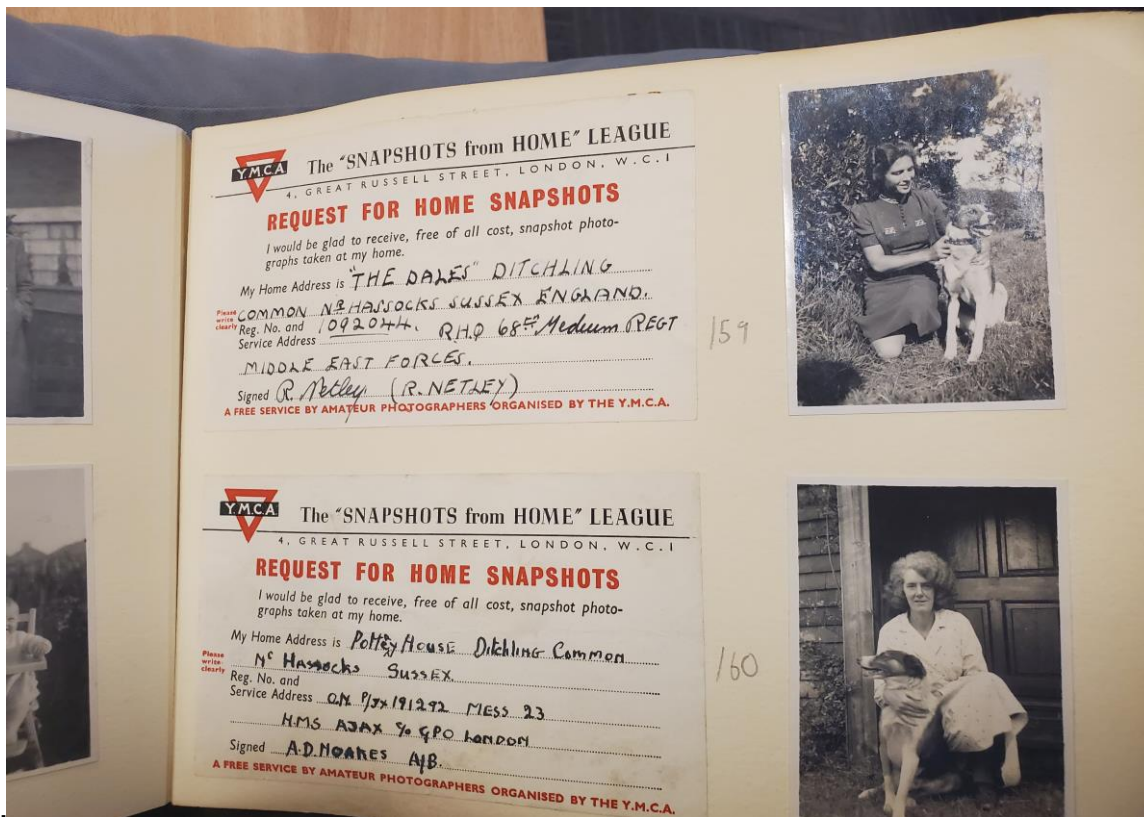
Stephen and Hanna Milner



I finally decided to give my vacuum cleaner away. All it was doing was gathering dust..
A friend of mine went bald years ago, but still carries around an old comb..
He just can't part with it.
I used to be addicted to soap. But I'm clean now..
X X X X X X

A recent visit to the YMCA Archives in Birmingham produced an album of Snap Shots kept by a photographer volunteering for the 'Snapshots from Home League.' Servicemen in the Second World War could apply to the YMCA for a photograph to be taken of their loved one at home which they then could carry with them. Each application form clearly states that this is 'A free service by amateur photographers organised by the YMCA.'

Has anyone else ever heard of this before?



Lunch at Great Western Hotel Taunton



REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS.

Liz' & Paul Harper. Celia & Stan' Wojcik. Andrew Jenkins. Ann Heath. Graham Clark. Mary & Vic Hills. Mary McGinty. Hanna & Stephen Milner. (who sadly had to give apologies the day beforehand through illness), David Pendle. Paul Smillie. Phil' Willerton. Mark Harrod. Gill' & Tony Seeley.

Great Western APOLOGIES. Were received from:- Ray Allen. David Bedford. John Drake. Angela Hall. Ron & Ann Ingamells. David & Margaret Libby. John Naylor. Peter Posner. Hilary Robins. Derek & Marjorie Shepherd. Neil & Gaye Sjoberg. Jim Thomson. David Tipping. Val & Norman Wallis. Mike & Maggie Wilkinson. Andy Winter.

KEEP it FREE!
Great Western Hotel Taunton Lunch 2024.
Tuesday October 15th

Letter from Grandma –

she is a very keen Christian but not very wise in the ways of the world.

The other day I went to a Christian bookshop and saw a
“HONK IF YOU LOVE JESUS” sticker and I put it in my car.
I’m so glad I did – Oh what an uplifting experience followed.

I had stopped at a red light at a busy crossing, just lost in thought about the Lord
And how good He is, and I didn’t notice that the lights had changed.
It was a good thing someone else loves Jesus because if he hadn’t honked I’d have never
noticed.

I found that lots of people love Jesus.

While I was sitting there, a man behind me started honking like crazy,
and then he leaned out of the window and screamed “for the love of God, Go, Go”.

What an exuberant cheerleader he was for Jesus, everyone started honking!

I just leaned out of my window and started smiling at all of those
lovely people who loved Jesus.

I even honked a few times myself to share in the love.

I saw another man waving in a funny way with only two fingers stuck in the air.

When I asked my teenage grandson (sitting beside me) what that meant,
he said it was probably an Hawaiian good luck sign or something.

Well, I’ve never met anyone from Hawaii, so I gave him the good luck sign back.

My grandson burst out laughing, even he was enjoying the experience.

A couple of people were so caught up in the joy of the moment that they got
out of their cars and started to walk towards me. I bet they wanted to pray
with me or ask which church I attended. This was when I noticed that the
lights had changed and so not wishing to hold anyone up,
I gave a cheeky smile and waved goodbye to all my new found brothers and sisters
and drove off.

In my mirror I noticed that I was the only car that got across before the lights changed again.

I felt very sad that I had to leave them all behind after all of the love we had shared, so
I slowed down, leaned out of the window and gave them the Hawaiian good luck sign,
as I drove away.

*This article was originally found in the Church Magazine, St Peter’s Edinburgh, but discovered in the
magazine of St John’s Baildon, West Yorkshire.*

This was “performed” for us by Celia Wojcik when we stayed with her and Stan recently.

We share it with you and hope you laugh as much as we did.

Although you probably need Celia to perform it to gain maximum benefit and laughs.



September Newsletter Photo

– a number of members provided names.

Thanks to Paul Harper we identified over 56 names.

Let's see who we can spot this time on page 8

Continuing Val Wallis' "skip" through her 50 years plus YMCA Experience shared with us at the Cambridge lunch this year.

My first chairmanship and yes it was chairman in those days, was the Regional Youth forum. There was a Regional Council for the grey suit brigade and a different one for young people. I remember organizing a crazy games competition between local associations.

Perhaps I am one of the few people that have taken part in the 125, 150 and 175 YMCA celebrations but in 1969 I was part of the colour party carrying Regional Flags into St Paul's Cathedral

When thinking about what I was going to include today it was hard to cut it down to size. This one-time quiet shy girl could keep you here hours talking about the YMCA but I did want to include my first experience at a National Young Members Conference at Woodside, Skegness. Not a grey suit in evidence. During the weekend we had an evening of entertainment. I was put on the stage behind screens, seductive music played and items of clothing similar to what I was wearing came over the screens. The screens were removed to show me standing at an ironing board and "dashing away with the smoothing iron" was played. I don't think we would get away with that now.

I was very aware of tokenism in those early days, if you had a young person on a committee in ticked a box if it was female in ticked two. I was asked to sit on a British Conference committee. The YMCA had done a research report and a Conference was to be held to decide the way forward. There was one other young person Chris Maynard from Reigate whom I knew but I was the only female. At the first coffee break Ronnie Howe came up to me and said if you require the toilet, I will have to show you the way. We were in 112 Great Russell Street the YMCAs headquarters and the only female toilet in the building was down in the cleaner's cupboard

Everyone else was Fred John and Harry I was, Miss Pay. It was suggested that night before the conference there would be a dinner Dance, one male asked if they could bring their wives "otherwise Miss Pay was going to be very busy". Miss Pay said "if it was a conference to attract young members was a dinner Dance quite the right scene setter." There was just a reception the night before!



Roy Holgate was to become a huge influence in my life always encouraging me to step out of my comfort zone and not to do an auto reject on opportunities - however scary they may look.

~ ~ More Scary Experiences – next time. ~ ~

CAN YOU NAME THE PEOPLE AND THE YEAR?

It would help the Archives and provide you with a coffee time challenge.



Answers please? - to Graham Clarke - at Julia-graham@talk21.com



Enlarged sections Left – Middle – Right of the main photo, to assist in identifying the back rows. . .

Front row is excluded as they were easily identifiable. Do you know any that are still living and NOT members of Y's Retired? – let Vic or Graham know and we can invite them to join.

**Who are still working for the YMCA?
– we think it is 3.**

More photos from Lunch at Great Western Hotel Taunton



Graham brought some of the Archive photos for after-lunch entertainment.

