



## President's ponderings

We have recently found another new phrase on our lips! 'Supply Chain Issues!' It's spoken of in the news and has even popped up a few times in our local supermarket. There, forlornly standing in an empty freezer cabinet, are signs apologising for the lack of the normal range of goods due to 'National Supply Chain Issues'.

These Supply Chain issues were most obvious during the recent petrol shortage when we saw queues of cars lining up outside local garages.

We have now had warnings that some of the most desired Christmas Gifts may not be available, let alone our favourite Christmas food! Whatever the cause, containers stuck in ports, lack of HGV drivers or Brexit, it all is a bit of a problem. Not of course that we are being deprived of what we need but we are being deprived of what we are told that we want!

As Christmas approaches, it is time to consider another supply chain, the supply chain chosen by God to deliver, love peace and redemption to us all.

This supply chain was very vulnerable! It involved the visit of an Angel to a young woman in an obscure middle eastern village, it involved her betrothed husband being willing to carry on with the marriage despite the potential shame.

It involved a journey to Bethlehem in the latter stages of pregnancy, the search for suitable accommodation and finally the birth of a vulnerable baby, in a stable!

Here was a supply chain that fulfilled the promises that had been made through the prophets so many hundreds of years before, a supply chain which could have broken at any point along the way!

Except, of course, it did not break because this was God's supply chain delivering to us all that he wishes us to have: the assurance of his love, the promise of his peace and gift of hope for the future.

It is the supply chain that remains firm, strong and unbroken, through which God continues to bless us with his Love and Grace, enabling us to experience Emmanuel- 'God with us' without any interruption, which so movingly described by the song writer Graham Kendrick:

*'From heaven you came helpless babe,  
Your glory veiled;  
Not to be served but to serve,  
and give your life that we may live'*

the ultimate delivery of deliveries!!!

On behalf of all friends and colleagues, may I wish you a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year

Graham Clarke  
President

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## MEMBERS CORRESPONDENCE

Dear David

Lots of thanks for your rapid response and helpful advice. I have found the Y's retired website ([www.yretired.co.uk](http://www.yretired.co.uk)) and have begun to catch up on items I have missed. That is much appreciated.

Marjorie and I are both still able to get around locally a bit and, with the help of family, enjoy occasional outings to places of interest further afield. We have a daughter and son living nearby who we see regularly though the grandchildren are now more scattered.

Some family reunions may be possible this year covid permitting - we hope for the best.

I hope all is well with you and Sue and your family. It was very good to see so many familiar smiling faces on the St Ives reunion photos. It reminded me of the wonderful experiences at Skegness conferences - unique and never to be forgotten.

Sincerely, as ever,  
**Derek (Sheppard)**

Hello David.

I am contacting you as we are linked as friends on Facebook, and I no longer have any contacts with the YMCA.

This is to inform the organisation that former YMCA South Devon Board Member, Rick Wooldridge, passed away last evening (1<sup>ST</sup> November 2021). He was a top Basketball England coach, coaching both men and youth at international level.

Rick was a good friend and took his position on the YMCA South Devon Board seriously despite his school and other basketball responsibilities. He and his wife were very supportive when my wife, Pam, went into a care home and later passed away. Regrettably much of 'our work' was forgotten when the Y finally ceased to have any members and became purely a service provider.

I worked with him when YMCA South Devon ran the junior Torbay Tigers Basketball teams and coached at the YMCA. Hope you are keeping well.

Regards,  
**Chris (Mackey)**

### PASSING OF ANNE BARRATT

Dear David,

I am sorry to have to let you know that my mum, Anne Barratt, passed away on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021 after a prolonged period of ill-health. She passed peacefully, without apparent fear or pain, which was a merciful release.

Mum worked alongside my dad, Brian Barratt at London City, Leicester, Leeds, Skegness and, I think, Stockwell YMCAs.

Once arrangements are in place for her funeral, which will be in Norfolk, I will let you know as there may be former colleagues who would wish to attend and would be most welcome.

**Jonathan (Barratt)**



'I used to say to myself, during my time in captivity, remember: light is stronger than darkness. I hold on to that hope until this day.' - Terry Waite

November 2021 marks 30 years since Y Care International's co-founder, Terry Waite CBE, was released from captivity. Held for 1,763 days, Terry's resilience and courage has been an inspiration to people across the globe.

Terry co-founded Y Care International before he was taken hostage, and he remains actively involved to this day as President.

Thank you so much, Terry, for your ongoing support and for championing the work of Y Care International, young people, and their communities around the world.

### Tom Price/ Y Care International



Hi David,

Thank you for the copy of Christmas copy of "Bridges." I await my copy by post too! A colourful presentation linking many memories of persons with whom I was privileged to know and admire!

I would refer to Oscar Escalado in particular, who supported my late wife, Eve, on our arrival for a conference in Mexico. She was quite ill following our arrival and he immediately attended to her needs resulting in her quick recovery!

He was involved in a difficult piece of work with people attempting to cross the border from Mexico into America.

He shared the experience of picking up a young man in a wheelchair with a bullet in his back on the border. He was CEO of the YMCA in Tijuana as I recall. I must try to communicate with him as he faces serious health problems.

Warm regards, **Jim (Lamb)**



**Remembrance Sunday 2021 as the YMCA team passed the Cenotaph.**

Dear David,

Please accept 'extracted' from television coverage, when I was about to hand over the YMCA wreath and immediately before the 'eyes left' at the Cenotaph.

Left to right front row were Emily Brewster National Council England, Jillian Law and Kerry Riley both YMCA Scotland, Bronagh Riley (Kerry's daughter) and myself. Second row were two ladies from Telford YMCA, one lady, I think from Worcester and the man behind me was also from YMCA England but his name escapes me.

I thought that you would like to have this picture.

Kindest regards. **Jim (Thomson)**

**World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees  
WFYR Seventh World Conference**

**City of Aarhus, Denmark, July 3-9, 2022, in conjunction with the 20th World Council Meeting**

**Introduction**

The WFYR Seventh World Conference will be held in July 2022 in conjunction with the 20th World Council Meeting of the World Alliance of YMCAs, in the beautiful city of Aarhus, the second largest in the country of Denmark.

Follow on in right hand column.....

**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.

This conference will be historic and will enable us to gather in fellowship within the context of the global movement, providing ample opportunities to connect with its current leadership, to share, celebrate, learn, and build strong and lasting relationships.

It will be one week of joyful experiences, gathering with old friends and making new ones, learning from others, and sharing our experience while showing the movement that retirees are still active and care deeply about the YMCA and its mission.

You will not be surprised to know that we already have 51 colleagues who have requested to participate, and the target for this event is only 60 spots.

Regardless of your future ability to participate, we would like to encourage you to preregister as soon as possible, with no future obligations. We will love to see you there!

**WFYR participants**

We anticipate that the World Council attendance will be around 1500. For the WFYR Seventh World Conference we have secured 60 spots for retirees from the World Alliance. Eligible to participate are any YMCA retirees and spouses from around the world.

**Pre-Registration**

Early bird registration will continue through Jan 31 2022. WFYR participants will benefit from an attractive, reduced cost.

**How to register?**

It is extremely easy! You confirm your intention to participate with no future obligation via e-mail to [jerrypradoshaw@hotmail.com](mailto:jerrypradoshaw@hotmail.com) and in return you will receive brief and clear information on how to proceed. Of course, the sooner the better, as, space is limited.

**Accommodation**

Ideally, it is desirable that all retirees stay in the same location, in double occupancy rooms due to availability. We encourage this.

**Let's keep in touch!**

As always, it is great to be connected, especially in this special time of pandemic, let us look to the future with faith, hope and uncontainable joy, thanking God for all the *blessings we are receiving, and asking that He continues giving us opportunities to serve others.* Warmly, and grateful for your friendship,

**Phillip Joseph Dwyer  
WFYR Chair 2018-2022**



**OBE for Reg with wife Peggy and daughters Elizabeth and Jane.**

When I returned from Zambia to work for National Council in the premises of London Central YMCA my immediate colleague was Bob Brunswick who was responsible for the physical education elements of programme and training. For the time being, I had a room in the London Central Hostel and crossed the road for meals at the YWCA, where the food was much better and cheaper.

Ahead of me was the bustling and challenging service as firstly the National Youth Work Secretary and then Head of the Education and Training Department. This involved being part of the politics of the Youth Service and social change in the post "Albermarle" Report era, in my case 1966-1982.

Having been away from the scene for some time was an advantage in that I could take a more critical and hopefully more objective view of the situation. There had been significant and at the time, accelerating change arising from 'Albermarle'. I began to identify and amalgamate the impact made at local and national levels of YMCA organisation and programme in relation to YMCA Aims and Purposes.

Broadly speaking, 'Albermarle' had provided for the entry of the first Local Education Authorities to the Youth Service field and in theory a partnership between statutory and voluntary organisations in a national youth service.

Provisions included the appointment of county or Area Youth Officers employed by the LEA; expanded training facilities and salary grants for a new breed of youth and community workers; capital and maintenance grants for purpose built youth centres all on condition that the provisions be open to both sexes and with grant criteria based on the number involved and the range of activities performed. Management committees were made accountable to the LEA and perforce, included LEA representatives.

While many YMCAs had benefitted and continue to benefit under such provisions the far-reaching effects seemed not to be fully appreciated. A massive capital building programme with additional finance for hostel accommodation under the overseas student welfare programme continued. Funding also led to the employment of many more full-time youth workers not all of whom understood or had commitment to YMCA Aims and Purposes and who saw their first responsibility being to the LEA.

Other results included a rapid lowering of the age range of young people involved; a marked increase in the number of girls; virtual absence of young people over the age of say 17; a departure from the concept of 'membership' in favour of 'users', and unchanging and largely elderly management committees, often with limited commitment to YMCA basics and thereby nullifying our professed dynamic of leadership elected by the membership.

I began to share my concerns with the then National Youth Work Committee (to which I was responsible). I found strong support especially from Lord Aberdare as Chairman, for giving some priority to work with young adults. Not only was the aim to recover and increase that constituency in membership but also to foster the concept of a participating membership as a basis for the insights and enthusiasm of young adults to influence movement affairs. From this decision grew the organisation of Regional Young Members Councils and a representative National Young Members Committee elected at the Annual Assembly of young members. Ultimately, we gained constitutional provision for young member representation on appropriate national committees and at the annual National Assembly of the Movement at large.

There was no question of abandoning or neglecting work with juniors. On the contrary, efforts to give more positive direction resulted in the development of SYMCA (Schools YMCA) with local groups using a loosely structured pattern of activities and leadership.

In part the idea was to promote awareness of belonging to a Movement. This was never better experienced than at National SYMCA Camps and SYMCA Leader Training Events, mostly held at Lakeside, which gave me opportunity of some influence on the camping programme and to involve both centres in national training schemes in camps.

I eventually found support for the then revolutionary step in the appointment to my department of a Youth Associate. This first appointment of a member of the fair sex to the National staff raised a few eyebrows but in the shortest time was accepted and commended. We were extremely lucky in the calibre of those appointed, starting with Lyn Porteous an active SYMCA leader who set the seal on the wisdom of the appointment.

Lyn was followed in due course by Maggie Edge, Beverley Dancy and finally by Sue Hobson. In the International arena I become involved in the European Youth Work fellowship and for my sins served a three year term as President. When the European YMCAs Area Council was formed with Egon Slopianka as Secretary, the fellowship was restyled as a forum with a more specific training content, and I did another stint as Chairman.

**Two quick points of personal proudness – One of the three Associations involved in the research by the Grubb Institute with Jean Hutton resulting in "The Wholeness of Life Report," was that of Barnard Castle YMCA.**

**This small county Durham YMCA went through a rich period of developing local youngsters as Trainee Youth Workers, four of which successfully received full-time Youth and Community qualifications. They were Lyn Porteous, David Smith (Junior), Richard (Dick) Marquiss and Ken Allison.**

**Editor – David H Smith (Senior)**

I organised and led a couple of International Work Camps in Ghana. The British Fraternal Secretary at the time was Norman Owen but with decreasing support for Ghanaian Workcamps the focus moved to India adding great strength to our Refugee and International Development Programme.

Back home my National Council of YMCAs brief gave me representation on SCNVYO later to become NCVYS which I served a term as Vice Chair. This link was useful in YMCA terms in that NCVYS was represented on various committees on the Department of Education and Science. Other commitments included the Churches Youth Council, Overseas Committee for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Jewish/Christian Council. I like to think that I served the interests of young people and with some benefit to YMCAs in general.

The early 70's brought developments of significance in both professional and personal terms. The long-planned re-building of London Central YMCA in Great Russell came into effect. A decision was taken to erect purpose build offices on land owned by the Waltham Forest Council next to the National YMCA College.

The greatest change came with the report of a National Council Commission. This had far reaching effects for the Movement as a whole but none more so than the Council's administration. The Commission called for Youth Work, Education, Physical Education and Youth In Industry departments to be brought together under an "Education and Programme Committee – with yours truly as Department Head.

Shortly after the move to Walthamstow, my long-time mentor and friend Bob Roberts had to take early retirement. Many of us hoped that Norman Ingle would take Bob's place as National Secretary, but it was not to be. The subsequent appointment was not a happy one as far as I was concerned and whilst it may sound unworthy, and while we all had sympathy that illness should be the cause, there were no great regrets when the person concerned also had to take early retirement.

The early 70's also brought revolution in YMCA salary scales. These were aligned with those dictated by the Youth Service Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC). The scales were advances in the scales of the teaching profession. Such rapid and weighty increases resulted in an explosion of staffing costs. Many of us felt that professional staff were in danger of costing themselves out of employment. It also became evident that the attractive scales were leading to the appointment of folk who did not necessarily share the old-style sense of vocation or commitment to YMCA Aims and Purposes. This was all keenly felt National Council. There was heavy pressure for staff reductions and the Education and Programme Department became a prime target.

By length of service and current responsibilities, my salary was at the top of the appropriate grade. An ad hoc working group, led by the then National Secretary, proposed that I be made redundant. This would have produced a major saving but there appeared to be little consideration for the work represented by my post. Fortunately for me, the E&PD Committee would have none of it. An irony in the revision staffing situation was that Local Associations still looked for the scale of programme and training support previously developed by my department. Eventually, Youth at Work Service continued under my brief.



**Two proud YMCA Overseas Fraternal Colleagues Reg (Zambia) with Ray Onions (Tanzania)**

It was later transferred to a new Special Services Department. Further change came in 1982 when I was asked and accepted the role of Secretary for Personnel and Training. Recognising that such services would be in the nature of a "swan song" in my YMCA career I looked forward to the opportunities offered.

So we come to the last lap of my YMCA service. The post called for close links with the YMCA National College then offering a two-year Certificate course in Youth and Community Work. I should add that under our "one staff" principle, responsibility extended to staff employed by YMCAs in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.



By way of "icing on the cake" I was elected President of the Association of YMCA Secretaries for the year 1984/85. Such office, always regarded as a mark of esteem in which the person concerned was held by colleagues, could be regarded as a signal honour.

And so to September 1985 and another step, but now into retirement from the YMCA service. My mind wandered back over the journey of some 40 years, along the track to one of several mountain top experiences which stick in the memory. That of the Paris Basis 1955 and the Centennial of the World Alliance of YMCAs celebration. At the final rally, some 15,000 members, drawn from some eighty countries, joined in the singing of "Thine be the Glory." It was then that I caught the vision of a worldwide Movement of young men and women committed to building bridges of fellowship and peace. Whether or not I did much to further such an ideal seems to me debatable, but I knew then and feel now that it was good fun trying!!

So, I retired with thanks for opportunities presented and with few regrets other than for sins of omission.

## **A JOINT MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENTS OF WORLD YWCA AND WORLD YMCA**

As we steer through the troubled waters of COVID-19 and all the pain and disruption it has caused, we have seen rays of hope and resilience in communities, especially as vaccination is becoming available worldwide. The pandemic has severely affected our YMCA/YWCAs. In parts, we have been broken; in parts, we are putting the pieces back together again. Our ways of doing things may have changed, but our goals remain the same.

“Beauty from Brokenness” is the theme chosen for this year’s World YWCA and World YMCA Week of Prayer and World Fellowship. The story of our Christian foundation is that we are like pots of clay, made from earth, moulded into a beautiful being, some- times we break. Each of us can contain the light of God within us, a light that can heal this brokenness and reach others.

As Paul the Apostle writes: “... we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that this all-surpassing power is from God, and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” 2 Corinthians 4, 7-9

During the Week of Prayer, we were reflecting on many aspects of our COVID life: on healing and restoration, on serving our communities, on forgiveness, inclusivity, and dignity. This year, we also reflected on two defining issues critical for us to move towards a co-created future: the need for decent working environments and the need for Climate Justice.

The YMCAs and the YWCAs continue to strive for a just world. We envisage a community of people where each of its members enjoys the fullness of life, living in dignity based on equality, regardless of religion, race, or gender.

We invite all our members worldwide, our friends and partners, to come together in one spirit as they did during the Week of Prayer and Fellowship, reflecting on God’s unconditional love for us and renewing our commitment to love all as our own.

[Mira Rizeq Patricia Pelton](#)

President, World YWCA President, World YMCA

### **PRAYER OF BLESSING**

Lord, our God,  
You are the Creator of Heaven and Earth,  
You have created wisely and beautifully.  
We praise you for Your creation.  
Yet we see so much brokenness and darkness in our world.  
This we bring to You.  
You are the God of change and renewal.  
We thank You for sending Your Son Jesus Christ as our light and our hope.  
We praise You for the wonder of His resurrection and that You have shown us that You always open up ways for transformation.  
Place in us the hope for renewal, show us Your vision for our world and guide us by Your Holy Spirit to reach out into this world.  
Amen.

## Correspondence

Dear David

I am prompted to respond to Ron (Ingamells) lament for the loss to the YMCA of Dunford House, which I share, although totally ignorant of the circumstances with which the decision was made!

As Ron says, a piece of ecumenical history.

The late Reverend Peter Hayman, when he was Warden, used to delight in showing off the Visitors Book, which contained names such as Archbishop Michael Ramsey, John R Mott, JH Oldham, Dr. Visser-hooft, not forgetting a certain ZF Willis (YMCA National Secretary) all of which begs the question:

"Does the ecumenical movement still exist? If so does the YMCA have a part in it?"

It is generally recognised the YMCA, YWCA and SCM (Student Christian Movement) played a part in the formation of the ecumenical movement.

There was a time when it was considered newsworthy; *Archbishop of Canterbury meets the Pope; Pope meets Archbishop of Canterbury.*

Maybe I am answering my own question in that probably the best contribution the YMCA can make is at local level.

I speak from the experience of having twice chaired Taunton Christians Together, now defunct, enough said!

It would be interesting to hear of any YMCA ecumenical involvement. Could it be that this got lost when the YMCA became a service provider rather than a membership movement?

A good response might be an excuse for another conference!

### Paul (Harper)

*For most people, Advent is a busy time and a season of shopping for gifts. This year, like the last two, have been altered and change by the various strains of the coronavirus – beta, alpha, gemma, delta and now omicron.*

*The time of celebration with our loved ones and friends is so important and rich with many blessings as we share gifts with each other. And as Christians, we have the knowledge that God is with us at this Holy time!!*

*Revelation 21:3 says "Look! God's dwelling-place is now amongst the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." Jesus, by coming amongst us fulfilled the promise of God with us – Emmanuel.*

*Christ's birth paved the way for God's residing presence among His people. God with us, in us, on us, for us, through us! God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son as a gift to the world – a gift we didn't qualify for or deserve.*

*May we embrace Christmas as God's gift to us*

*(Editor).*

## A PRAYER FOR THOSE IN NEED

**Gracious God, we bring to you  
the marginalised, the struggling,  
the working poor and unemployed,  
waking up and wondering  
how they are going to get through  
this day and many more to come.  
May we become part of the answer  
to this prayer, a compassionate  
and generous people, working  
for the common good of all,  
and seeing all as neighbours,  
not simply strangers to ignore.  
May we become a little more like you.**



**Des and Pearl (Willcox)** sent me a joke which Des had received from his friend in Canada entitled –

**"Where is my Sunday paper?!"**

The **irate customer** calling the local newspaper office, loudly demanded to know where her Sunday edition was. "Madam", said the newspaper employee, "today is Saturday. The Sunday paper is not delivered until tomorrow SUNDAY".

There was quite a long pause on the other end of the phone, followed by a ray of recognition as she was heard to mutter....

"Well, that explains why no one was at church either....!!!!!!"



Des and Pearl and David and Sue (Smith) had the chance to meet at the Half-Way House on the A38 for lunch late October 2021 (still under Covid regulations.)

We hope to meet up again in the not too distant future.

Editor