

Y'S RETIRED OF THE UK

AFFILIATED TO THE WORLD FELLOWSHIP
OF YMCA RETIREES



SUMMER – 2025 | WWW.YSRETIRED.UK



President's
Ponderings

HOW TIME FLIES!

Amongst my Christmas books last year was 'Patriot', the autobiography of Alexi Navalny, the Russian lawyer, opposition politician and anti-corruption campaigner. In August 2020. During a flight from Tomsk to Moscow, he became ill and was taken to a hospital after an emergency landing in Omsk, having been poisoned by Novichok. He was put in a coma and evacuated to hospital in Berlin where he spent a month recovering before returning to Russia to continue his campaigning and political work opposing President Putin and the United Russia Party. He was to eventually die in 2024 in disputed circumstances while serving a 19-year prison sentence at the age of 47. In his lifetime he was He was recognised by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience and was awarded the Sakharov Prize for his work on human rights.

Despite what may seem a heavy subject, the book is an entertaining read with a good deal of self-deprecating humour in the way in which Navalny describes the sometimes-absurd levels that the authorities went to in order to manufacture reasons to arrest and imprison him, prevent him from standing for election and undermine the popular Anti-Corruption Movement that he founded.

A number of things have struck me about Navalny's story. One was his physical resilience in the face imprisonment and physical attacks. Another has been the commitment of his wife Yulia in her support for him and another is the way in which, despite the strength and power of a huge state such as Russia working against him, he never gave up, he never stepped back or working for what he believed to be right.

He will of course never see if his campaigning will bear fruit. Russian Society has not yet changed and does not appear to be changing at present, yet the movement that he started continues...

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Vic & Hills)

President's ponderings cont...

Although for many of us our days of being impassioned workers for peace and justice are somewhat limited, people like Alexi Navalny but deserve our support not just as examples of the strength of the human spirit but because they remind us of the importance of standing firm about what we believe no matter the size of the odds against us.

As you read this, there are YMCA colleagues around the world standing firm for what they believe and working to support and encourage young people to develop their skills and understanding to make the world a better, fairer place. They may not be household names but they are just as vital as those who are famous but are worthy of our encouragement, support and prayers.

'Blessed are the peace makers for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of God' (Matthew 5 9-10)

NOTICE FROM YMCA PENSION AND ASSURANCE PLAN (DB SCHEME)

On 1st July 2024 the Plan changed its Actuary and Administrator to Broadstone Corporate Benefits Ltd. Pension Plan members should now contact Broadstone for any queries in connection with their pension. Broadstone's contact details can be found below.

Broadstone has launched its online portal, Engage, to pensioner members, and has written to them all with access details. Please let Broadstone know if you have not received this communication.

Richard Lock has been re-elected as a Member Nominated Trustee Director. We are always on the look-out for new Trustee Directors. Please contact Gwynne Jarvis if you are interested in becoming a Trustee Director.

Information on the YMCA Pension Plan can be found on the website at www.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 Pension Plan Administrator know of any changes to your circumstances, such as change of address. You can do this by contacting YMCA Pension and Assurance Plan, c/o Broadstone Corporate Benefits Limited, 23 -25 St George's Road, Bristol, BS1 5UU."

Email address: YMCA@broadstone.co.uk

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From the YMCA Archives

The YMCA Archives at Birmingham University's Cadbury Library have recently completed the digitisation of 388 items relating to the YMCA and World War 2 which we hope will be of use during the 80th anniversary celebrations of the end of the war in 2025.

We have also received a digital copy of a booklet about the Mobile Canteens featuring a number of pictures of the tea cars and their staff and users. If you would like an e mail copy, please contact Graham Clarke at julia-graham@talk21.com.

21st World Council of YMCA's Toronto Canada



19-26th July 2026

Y's Retired UK are invited to attend the World Federation of Y's Retired Meetings which will be held alongside the World Council Meetings in Toronto Canada next year.

The accommodation and conference will be held in the Sheraton and Marriot Hotels in Down town Toronto

We are seeking to subsidise delegates from the UK with assistance towards the all-inclusive conference fee (£2220) and travel (£400 estimated)

In order to benefit from the Early Bird Booking Prices, we need to book our places before 19th December 2025

If you would like to be considered as a potential delegate, please contact Vic Hills by 31st July 2025.



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Zoom Coffee Morning June 2025

13 friends and colleagues joined the June Coffee Morning. The chat was interesting and varied including Neil Sjoberg's basketball playing, coaching and refereeing days in Gaza in 1978 followed by some thoughts about the current situation and the history behind what is happening now. We also heard about Graham Clarke's encounter with the late Queen with representatives of China YMCA in 1985!

Among other things, stories were also shared of General Services hostels in Chislehurst, Farnborough and Wisley.

Phil Willerton urged us to send in news and items for the Newsletter and Vic Hills encouraged us to book for the Ys retired lunches in Cambridge, Taunton and London

Paul Smillie gave a brief update about YMCA Ukraine and the fact that the YMCA has been banned in Belarus and Alison shared that the former YMCA in Dumfries is now a Buddhist meditation centre.

Applications for bursaries for the 2026 World Council and World Ys retired Conference were encouraged.

All of this plus Stephen Milner revealed that he is a blood relative of George Williams made for a very interesting coffee break.

We hope that you will join us at the next one!!

In Memoria

Chris Roles

We are sorry to announce the death of Chris Roles former Director of Y Care International following a brief illness. Chris will be remembered for his gentle manner, sharp analytical mind and commitment to social justice.

There will be Thanksgiving Service at Hinde Street Methodist Church, London, W1U 2OJ on Monday 28th July at 12 Noon.

Chris's wife Penny can be contacted at prestige.roles@btinternet.com

Dates for your diary 2025/26

World YMCA Retired Zoom Meeting **18th June.**

Cambridge Lunch **8th July.** (Please RSVP to Vic no later than **23rd June.**)

Taunton Lunch – **16th October.**

21st World Council of YMCA's Toronto Canada **19-26 July 2026.**

If you are happy to share your own e-mail address with fellow members, please send an e-mail to Vic giving permission to share it in a future newsletter.

June Scripture of the Month: -

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. ~ Isaiah 41:10

Summer

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
~ Ephesians 4:32

Cambridge Lunch (It's not too Late)

In case you have, either missed the previous invitations, now found a space in your diary or I've just jogged your memory, this is a final invitation to lunch on July 8th to convene in the bar at 12.00 for lunch at 12.30.

Please respond to me with your Menu choices by June 23rd so that I can advise the Club?

Menu: -

Lamb leg steaks with rosemary infused roast potatoes
Grilled salmon with hollandaise sauce and new potatoes
Roasted Red Peppers with new potatoes
All the above served with mixed vegetables

Dessert: -

Dutch apple crumble with custard
Eton Mess meringues
Baked New York Cheesecake and cream

All followed by coffee and mints.

The cost is £25 per head and can be paid on the day.

If you have allergies or the above is not to your choice please advise me and I can contact the Club Caterers, who in the past have managed to meet individuals' preferences.

How to Find Girton Golf Club

Girton Golf Club is conveniently located just a few miles northwest of Cambridge, making it easily accessible for both locals and visitors.

- **By Car:** From Cambridge, take the A14 westbound and exit at Junction 31, following signs for the A14 towards Huntingdon. Take the B1049 exit towards Girton. Continue on Huntingdon Road (A1307) and turn left onto Cambridge Road. The club entrance is clearly signposted on the right-hand side.

- **By Public Transport:** The nearest train station is Cambridge North, about 5 miles away. From the station, you can take a taxi or a bus towards Girton, with regular services running along the A1307.



World Fellowship of YMCA Retirees virtual gathering

Fellow YMCA Retirees from around the world,

We are looking forward to seeing you at our next virtual gathering...

June 18, 2025 at 14:00 U.K. time.

We will be hearing presentations from

- Fadi Suidan (Jerusalem International YMCA) and
- Alicia Sanjurjo, 2026 WFYR conference

We are using Zoom and multi-lingual captioning. Please check the settings for the language you speak and the language for the translation of the captions. For most of us they are the same.

The link for the gathering: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86445192493>

Please share with other fellow retirees.

When you sign on, please take a moment to “**rename**” yourself by indicating the **country with your name**.

We look forward to seeing you.

Y's Retired of the UK Minutes for the AGM

held on ZOOM on April 3rd 2025

PRESENT: - Graham Clarke, Andrew Jenkins, Mary McGinty, John Naylor, Phil Willerton, Stephen Milner,

Vic Hills, Geoff Havers, Paul Smillie, Ron Ingamells, Elizabeth Lamour, Mary McGinty, Stuart McCrea.

APOLOGIES: - Peter Posner, Clyde Binfield, John Drake, Mike Wilkinson, Stan Wojcik. David Tipping,

Neil Sherringham, Ali Robertson, Hilary Robbins, Geoff Cooper, Andy Winter, David Standing.

OPENING REFLECTION and PRAYERS In MEMORIAM

for colleagues Pat' Howarth, Ray Allen, Peter Brookes, Paul Harper who passed in 2024 with prayers focussed on the Beatitudes thinking of people and places around the world, were led by Graham Clarke

MINUTES OF THE 2024 AGM: – The minutes – circulated as part of the Newsletter in May 2024 and on the Website were approved.

Wanted – Your News: -

Please send your news, observations, stories, personal experiences and memories to Vic Hills, Graham Clarke or Phil Willerton to the e-mail addresses listed on pages 1 & 2.

News for the website should be sent to Andy Winter
(andywinterworld@gmail.com)

1. **MATTERS ARISING:** - none notified in writing to the Secretary before midnight on March 15th.

The reports and papers referred to below had previously been email circulated.

2. **PRESIDENT'S REPORTS:** - Graham Clarke (GC) spoke to his report, thanking his colleague officers for their support and work during the year and their reports. Stephen Milner (SM) reminded of the work being undertaken restoring BERTHA (WWII Tea Wagon) and the rising costs of a replacement engine and more extensive woodwork damage than anticipated. SM noted the BBBF re-union planned for 10 – 11th July near Beverley during which participants could visit the nearby Bertha restoration work. GC was thanked for his Presidency, his Newsletter "thoughts" and his report which was **Adopted** with thanks.
3. **TREASURER'S REPORT:** - for the year 2024:- Andrew Jenkins (AJ) using his report and the accounts explained the income and expenditure as noted with the prepaid WFYR Membership and the provision for supporting members to attend the Toronto World Conference in 2026. He thanked David Bennison (in his absence) for his work in certifying and laying out the Account. GH asked if consideration had been given to investing half of the balance to gain interest. It was suggested that might raise 4 Cappuccinos (an ongoing joke from earlier). AJ explained that Nat' West had taken 5 months to verify the new bank signatories, so how long would they take to manage that change. He went on to present the budget below which was **Approved** and his **Report Adopted** with appreciation.
4. **BUDGET 2025**
 - a. ***Secours Speciaux proposed to be - Member's Donations.***
 - b. ***World Fellowship of Y's Retired - £200 per year (pre-paid in 2024)***
 - c. ***Administration - £300***
 - d. ***Trust Fund - £250***
 - e. ***World Conference Toronto – participant assistance fund. £500***

5. APPOINTMENT of OFFICERS – no other nominations had been received by mid-day on March 12th.

Those below were proposed en-bloc by Paul Smillie; seconded John Naylor and approved Nem Con.

EXECUTIVE

President	Rev. Graham Clarke
Hon. Treasurers.	Andrew Jenkins & Mary McGinty.
Executive Secretary.	Vic' Hills
Newsletter.	Phil' Willerton
Scottish Rep.	Gillian Law (YMCA Scotland) has offered to help.
Secours Speciaux	John Naylor

6. MEMBERSHIP (EXECUTIVE) SECRETARY's Report: - Vic Hills (VH) offered his report for consideration, noting concern that despite 7 invitations to join being extended, none had been taken up during 2024.

Paul Smillie (PS) suggested that Members could contact ex colleagues who are not members to invite to join. He also noted that there was no longer an all-embracing YMCA group of staff like the "old" APS. He was aware of the CEO's Strategic Group. GH asked why the membership numbers were not the same as those paying in the Treasurer's report. VH noted that deceased member's DDR's occasionally ran on for a year after their deaths. Some members forgot to pay. Also keeping track of people is an uncertain activity because of increasing age, incapacity and uncertainty whether the member is still living or has just moved and their relative/carer has not notified us. The report was **Adopted.**

7. SCOTTISH GROUP REPORT: – The group had not met in 2024 – however through the generous Offices of Kerry Reilly YMCA Scotland CEO and Gillian Law lunch had been organised on 1st April 2025 in Edinburgh for Retirees in Scotland. JN & VH were thanked for their involvement in encouraging the event.

8. INTERNATIONAL REPORTS: -

- a. SECOURS SPECIAUX Report: - JN presented his reports on the activities of Secours Speciaux (Staff Assistance Fund) over the previous year, how and when it meets and how Constituent members of the Committee are recruited. JN noted that committee members are linked to a grant recipient, which is a recent innovation of engagement not just a financial gift.

- b. JN confirmed his intention to stand down after the Toronto World Conference in 2026 and how Y's Retired (one of the largest fund contributors) could continue having a presence on the committee by invitation from the SS President.
- c. **WFYR REPORT:** - JN's circulated report detailed the work, priorities and strategies of the committee that meets virtually under the Presidency of Kohei Yamada. As the Toronto 2026 World Conference will be John's last, he reminded that it is crucial that the UK has representation at the event with a nominated successor. John reminded of the twice-yearly virtual gatherings of WFYR, the next of which focussed on the Middle East on May 21st 2025. John was thanked for his work on our behalf and his reports that were adopted with appreciation.
- d. It was noted that PS had previously indicated his willingness to be considered as a successor to John.

9. **CONSTITUTION:** - Proposed draft amendments to enable a wider participation and make clearer those eligible to be involved in Y's Retired of the UK had previously been circulated. Following email comment from members it had been further revised and re-circulated for consideration. It was noted that further work by the committee was needed. GH proposed that the amended document be adopted.

MM raised whether a clause "was in good standing" be added to cover retirees applying who had left "under a cloud". It was felt that this might be open to legal challenge.

TITLE: - PS raised the question of Irish members who live in the Republic which is not part of the UK. [YMCA Ireland embraces both countries]. A variety of ideas were suggested for a title that embraced not only 5 countries and is clearer about who can join Y's Retired. PS & AJ suggested "Alumni of E.I.S &W. 4 Nations was also suggested. It was noted that YMCA England and Wales is the Working Title of the National Councils of England and Wales.

It was agreed that this needed to be reverted to the Committee for further consideration in time for the next ZOOM Coffee Morning an EGN on 3rd June at 10.30am.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** – none arising from Committee Comment or Member's Items had been notified in writing (email or post) to the Secretary before mid-night on March 15th.

The President Closed the Meeting at 12.0 by thanking everyone for their participation and contributions.