



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

**August 2023**

**www.yretired.co.uk**



## President's ponderings

There has been a lot of coverage lately about the arrival of refugees and migrants to the UK. This has included the controversy around the accommodation barge 'Bibby Stockholm' and the 'Stop the Boats' policy.

Our church has developed a close relationship with the Asylum Seekers and migrants who are living in a hotel about a mile away from the church. Some have come across the channel in small boats others have come with visas to seek asylum.

Some have been living in the hotel for over a year just waiting for an interview to progress their applications. Although capable and skilled, they are unable to work and live in limbo type existence. Here are young men, far from home, in a strange place, with very few possessions seeking escape from war, persecution or poverty but all facing uncertain futures.

With support from the wider community and other organisations, we offer a weekly café providing friendship, games and conversation along with specific personal support and the distribution of clothes and other necessities when they become available and occasional trips to places around and about.

As I have got to know these men I am struck by how similar the aspirations and needs of these men are so similar to those who George Williams reached out to in London in 1844. The YMCA's has played a role over the years helping many to make fresh starts like. post war refugees, the Vietnamese Boat people

Time passes by, but the needs of our fellow human beings do not change and we need movements such as the YMCA as much as ever.

**Graham**

## Cambridge Lunch

22 Y's Retired friends enjoyed the now Annual Lunch at Girton Golf Club Cambridge on 5<sup>th</sup> July.

The guest of honour was Val Wallis MBE Vice President of YMCA England and Wales (and a Y's Retired Member) along with her husband Norman. Also with us were Jackie Walker, Stan and Celia Wojcek David and Judy Cory, John Drake Vic and Mary Hills, Tony and Jenny Miles, Paul and Thelma Kerridge; Neil and Gay Sjoberg, Stephen and Hanna Milner; David Pendle, Andy Winter, David Bedford, and Graham Clarke Sadly Ron and Ann Ingamells were unable - at the last minute to join us, Ron having had a fall while staying at a local B+B.

After lunch Val gave a light hearted but thoughtful presentation of her life and the influence of the YMCA which has taken her from being a volunteer receptionist at Maidstone YMCA in the 1960s through to her present role as National Vice President. She reflected on being the first woman on the National Board and the trail blazing that she found herself doing. Val has kindly agreed for her talk to appear in our newsletter.

**Y's Retired Website:-** [www.yretired.co.uk](http://www.yretired.co.uk)

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**NEWSLETTER EDITOR & WEBSITE DESIGNER:**  
A Vacancy exists for an Editor to collect articles and correspondence to forward to someone who has volunteered to compile and publish the Newsletters. Could you help? Contact Graham or Vic.

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# First Worldwide Zoom Meeting for YMCA Retirees May 24, 2023



Over 100 participants including a gathering of 32 in Germany in 86 locations joined in the first ever Y's Retired world wide Zoom meeting.

The technology was successfully handled by YMCA Canada, Whilst this was in the evening for Europe, for others it was rather more challenging, it being 3am for the participants from Japan!

Speakers at the event included Kohei Yamada President of WFYR; Carlos Sanvee, World Alliance Secretary General and Juan Simoes YMCA Europe.

The main speaker was Victor Sekbulov of YMCA Ukraine who gave an inspiring insight into the work and challenges faced by the YMCA since the Russian Invasion, which follows below.

European Secretary Juan Simoes was able to report that YMCA Europe is developing skill development programmes in 4 countries and with HP has been able to provide 5323 Laptops to Moldova.

All in all it was an impressive and inspiring event. The next World link up is planned for 24<sup>th</sup> October. It will be worth joining in! Watch out for joining details!

The work of Ukraine YMCA has been supported by Pan European Funds and has included the involvement of 32 different national movements.

World Secretary Carlos Sanvee reminded us that we should keep hope alive; that love is stronger than hate and transcends everything, Without love there is no peace and that the YMCA should stand together in love.

Victor Sekbulov of YMCA Ukraine explained to the WFYR Zoom Meeting that. Twenty of the twenty four YMCAs in Ukraine are now operating. Five youth centres have accommodated over 35,000 people. 100,000 water filters and 50 tons of aid have been distributed to 100 destinations.. Y members have been involved Uniform sewing, helping in evacuations to safe places and have been trained in First Aid and Tactical Emergency techniques.

This has all happened in the context of bombing raids, lack of electricity, loss of some leaders and the need of psychological support for volunteers. A major concern has become the psychological support needed by many traumatised young people which is being offered through YMCA Youth Centres.

Respite care for children has been provided through summer camps in the Carpathian Mountains. Future work is being focussed on providing educational hubs to help individuals develop skills for employment, the support of internally displaced persons, returning military personnel and also support of young people who have lost parents and relatives in the war. Victor stressed that the situation is complicated by problems caused by propaganda and some oppression of Russian speaking people. The YMCA is committed to reconciliation work when this is possible using the experiences gained by the work in the Balkans.



## GRANTS FROM THE BENEVOLENT FUND

Grants of assistance of up to £500 are available for Y's Retired Members which will improve their quality of life, e.g. stair-lift, mobility scooter, electric chairs, adjustable bed, or similar.

If you know of a Y's Retired member who would benefit from such a gift, please make 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) or at:- 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.

## New Home for Bertha

Thanks to the efforts of Stephen Milner and David Standing, Bertha the Tea Car has a new home at the Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington near York. She is in need of some repair (like us all!) which volunteers at the museum are hoping to carry out.

Financial donations towards this work are welcome and would be a tribute to those who served in the war in such vehicles.

Donations can be made via Andrew Jenkins our Treasurer



**Can you join our communications group?**

**We need help with the Newsletter production and Website.**

Please contact Vic Hills if you could consider doing this.



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

The project funded by the Wellcome Trust to digitise the Index of the YMCA and YHA Archives at The University of Birmingham has now been completed.

The YMCA archive catalogue comprises over 9,000 individual entries under 16 headings.

These records provide the necessary scope and content for researchers to determine whether they wish to visit the University of Birmingham and view the original materials

The catalogue is fully searchable via [www.calmview.bham.ac.uk](http://www.calmview.bham.ac.uk)

If you have material that may be of interest to the archive please check that it is not already there and contact Mark Eccleston [m.r.eccleston@bham.ac.uk](mailto:m.r.eccleston@bham.ac.uk)



## 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.

### **Wanted! Your News and pictures !**

*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*

*We would also welcome photos of events and people over the years which will jog the memory and roll back the years!  
Just send them to Vic Hills or Graham Clarke as they come to you!!!*

### **A prayer for our times**

**Loving God, our continent has witnessed times of exuberant creativity and periods of callous destructiveness. Guide all those who build peace and seek justice in our lands today**

*Dr Alison Elliot In BBC Radio 4 Prayer for the Day on Peace*

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**Secours Speciaux <-< continued**

### Wider Communication

Committee members will be speaking at area National Secretaries meetings to raise the profile and engage national movements. If you have any further suggestions or comments on the website, please contact me [cjohn.naylor@outlook.com](mailto:cjohn.naylor@outlook.com)

*John Naylor*

## Secours Speciaux Half Year Report

In recent years Secours Speciaux has given two main types of support:

**Responding to individual requests**, largely, from colleagues who have a lifetime of YMCA service, little or no pension and suffer from life threatening illnesses ranging from cancer to heart disease or where death of a colleague has impacted the family. As I write, there is an emergency request from an Indian colleague for an urgent lifesaving heart operation. Last month a request was received on behalf of the wife of a colleague in Latin America who lost her husband and then her husband's two brothers leaving her with medical and funeral bills and very little future income to support herself and family including an aged mother.

**Wider response to the impact on retired colleagues** with little or no pension of covid, rampant inflation, and in some countries, like Sri Lanka, political unrest. In 2022, 78 grants of \$300 per person were made.

Last year income from donations and the cost of individual requests broke even.

However, the wider response (£21,000) had to be funded from reserves built up over past years.

So far this year, there is a shortfall between income from contributions and responses to individual requests of over £4,200.

It therefore looks that if there is to be any wider response, reserves will again be needed.

Thanks to a generous £5000 contribution from Reg Wake's estate Y's Retired UK's contribution this year is likely to be £7,781, just over £1000 more than last year, nowhere near enough to fund a wider response.

**If you can, please give to Secours Speciaux by sending your contribution to:**

**Y's Retired of the UK; Sort code 60-13-15; Account number 43913105.**

### **Other points**

Secours Speciaux Website has been further updated as part of the new World Alliance website. Click on [www.ymca.int](http://www.ymca.int) then on 'what we do' and then 'Staff Assistance Fund'.

Note the final click is not on Secours Speciaux but Staff Assistance Fund, which is felt to be a better description of what the fund does. Secours Speciaux is still used but in a more secondary role.

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**Followers of the recent Ashes series will remember the 'controversial' stumping of England's Jonny Bairstow. This was nothing in comparison with the infamous North V South AOS Matches remembered by Dennis Carnaby!**



### **Memories of an AOS Conference**

It was Wednesday afternoon at the annual (1975) AOS conference, in Skegness. Contrary to the norm, the rain had held off, and the wicket on Woodside's lawn looked almost decent. The North versus South cricket match was 'on.' Over the years, honours were fairly even, although it should be said that some of the south's better results featured good performances from northern lads who had defected. One's allegiance on these occasions might be determined by the geographical location of the YMCA at which one served. I believe a line south of the Humber, was arbitrarily assigned, rather than an ancestral tree coursing with the pure northern county blood of say a Yorkshireman or Northumbrian. Bill Sargison and Richard Gooch, both authentic southerners, were spearheading the south's bowling attack on this occasion. Gooch had gone so far as to remove his Etonian scarf, a sure indication that he was taking things seriously! Paul Harper prowled at deep mid-off, Mike Kent too, was out in the deep, whilst Michael Hands, fielding at first slip, quietly figured out some details of the pension plan. Ronnie Howe officiated at one end, or was it both?

Anyway, I was batting, and was facing the last ball of an over. I decided a quick single was called for to get me to the 'Kenning Wing' end, and a gentle push towards mid-off set me on my way. I got about a yard out of the crease when my Achilles tendon snapped, (I didn't know it at the time) and down I went. Southern faces gathered over and around me, peering down and inquiring as to my state of health. Comments such as "Get up Carnaby", and "Stop fooling around" did not exactly ease the pain! It soon became apparent that I needed to leave the field, and willing, southern hands reached down to lift me. At this moment Paul Harper stuck his head into the circle of heads and with total absence of malice, (I think) quietly said "By the way, Carnaby, you're out." The last image I recall was of the stumps minus a bail. Paul always has been a gentleman.

The AOS conferences I attended over the years were rich in fellowship and brotherly love, and 1975 was no exception, but ever since that fateful incident, I have never witnessed a run-out that didn't cause a pain in my right leg. I think it's known as PTROS or Post Traumatic Run Out Syndrome!

***Denis Carnaby Salem Oregon USA***

St Helens 1962-73;Whitley Bay 1973-5; Wiston Lodge 1975-84; Romford 1984-87)

#### ***SOUTH WEST AND SOUTH WALES LUNCH***

**To help those who find Cambridge too far away,  
It is hoped to organise a lunch South of Bristol for mid or late October.  
Watch your EMAILS or if you do not use email ring Vic and let him  
know you are interested?**

# Cambridge Lunch July 2023



## Y's Retired of the UK Cambridge Lunch 2023.

APOLOGIES—were received from:-

Mary McGinty, Denise Hatton, Rev' Tony Malcolm, Rupert & Beulah George, Mike & Maggie Wilkinson, Ray Allen, David Tipping, Martyn Handley, John Naylor, Roger & Elaine Hunt, Barbara Drake.



Vic Hills and Andy Winter

Val Wallis Tony Miles and Stan Wojik

## Below is the first excerpt of Val Wallis' YMCA Story – shared with the Cambridge Lunch Group.

Thank you for your welcome and it's good to be here at the Ys retired Cambridge Lunch gathering. Looking round the room with so many eminent and eloquent YMCA colleagues I do have to wonder what moment of madness it was that you asked me to talk to you today.

It strikes me that there is a lot of YMCA years in the room just Vic and I make a century I wonder how close we would get to a millennium of YMCA service if we added all our years together. We all have our own YMCA journeys and stories to tell but perhaps mine is slightly different, one being a volunteer, although I know there are others in the room, but also in the late sixties early seventies being a rare species. Being young and female in that era was very rare indeed.

So, I want to take you back to 1967 and you to imagine a tall slim leggy blond wearing a skirt her father had described as little more than a wide belt arriving at Maidstone YMCA to meet the new General Secretary Roy Holgate. He wanted a nucleus of young Christians to do voluntary work. As a quiet shy

person with not a lot of confidence, being described by her mother as an educational disappointment, with a pronounced stutter, atrocious spelling and numeracy not a strong point this was a big step.

Whether Roy saw any potential in this dumb blond or just needed volunteers I'll never know but a couple of months later I started on the reception desk. I can't remember who chose Friday night but it was to become a momentous decision as a certain young man used to come in on a Friday night to prepare the football pitch on a Friday. The rest as they say is history. Maidstone was a very vibrant center with nearly 4000 members almost half under 25 and a very equal gender split. So. imagine my surprise when venturing into the region I met the old, male, grey suited brigade.

Although to be fair when you're a teenager anything over 40 is old.  
It's funny how you change your mind when you reach 39  $\frac{3}{4}$  yours

MORE NEXT TIME....

### **Can you name the people and the year??**

Pat Howarth has kindly provided a number of copies of BSA/AOS Conference Photographs left by her husband Fred but none of them are dated. It would help the Archives and provide you with a coffee time challenge if you can identify any of the faces and the year of the conference. It may include you..

Send your answers to Graham Clarke at [Julia-graham@talk21.com](mailto:Julia-graham@talk21.com)



WOODSIDE HOLIDAY CENTRE, SKEGNESS

The following pictures are the previous photo' separated into 4 and enlarged to enable better identification.

**LEFT FRONT ROWS**

Who is the youngster in front of the President?



**LEFT BACK ROWS - Who is still living today?**





**RIGHT FRONT ROWS** - Who is the youngster and their parent on the right?



**RIGHT BACK ROWS**

**Does anyone know where Dick Turner is now? - Vic would like to re-new contact with him.**



Who can identify the most "Characters"?

Please send your answers to Graham for the archive and to include in the next Newsletter?

*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}.

**We were sad to receive the news from his son Brian that Bob Brunswick had passed away. This was rather sudden, on the morning of Saturday 1st July, he had just stepped outside the flats' front door to walk to the shops and collapsed and could not be revived despite efforts by police and ambulance. He is survived by son Brian (myself) and wife Barbara. Contact Brian on 07747752128.**

**There was a Methodist funeral service at Skipton Crematorium on Thursday 27th July at 1:20pm, followed by a reception at the Clarke Foley centre in Ilkley afterwards (2-5pm).**

**There was a webcast of the service which can be found at:**

<https://watch.obitus.com> Username: hehu3541

Bob was the Physical and Outdoor Pursuits Programme Secretary for the National Council in the late 60's and early 70's, who was one of those who had to be released through cost savings.

Can our readers provide anecdotes or a photo' of Bob for the next edition???