



I have just been out to feed the husky dogs and grease my sledge runners just in case! Hopefully for the last time this winter. We have certainly had a rough time over the Christmas and New Year period.

The staff and volunteers worked tremendously hard in making sure that clients' needs were met during the long hard spell of snow and ice.

Everyone worked outside their normal range of duties in order to ensure that each persons requirements were met in the way of shopping, errands, etc. To all those who in any way helped I would like, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, to say a huge thank you. Staff battled against the elements to report for duty. Their dedication must be admired.

Shortly we will be saying goodbye to two of our long serving staff members; Joyce Ashworth who organized our holidays and outings

service and Sylvia Doughty who filled several different posts during her time with us. Both leave with best wishes for a long and happy retirement. Joyce will act as a volunteer on some of our holidays. We all welcome Rosemary Jackson who will take over the administrative arrangements for future holidays and minibus outings.

More information on the toe nail cutting service is shown in this Newsletter. The service has been delayed in implementation owing to the recent bad weather. Interest in this service has however been encouraging. The Feather Duster scheme is now proving a financial success. Continuing the theme of success, the Bishopthorpe Road shop has enjoyed some refurbishment and sales have improved as a result.

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**Jeff Mortimer**  
Chairman

Our domestic cleaning business goes from strength to strength. We have over a hundred customers, most of whom are Age Concern referrals, supported by fifteen cleaners. If you, or anyone you know would like to have cleaning done please consider Feather Duster.

Jo, our manager can be contacted on 612417, or 07985 177023.



# Kilimanjaro Or Bust!

**Carol Knight**

This time last year my daughter Kate and I were well into our training for our assault on Mount Kilimanjaro. Every Sunday morning I was out at Kilburn going up and down the footpath to the top of the White Horse Hill, wearing in my new boots and getting used to walking with a stick.

We flew out to Tanzania via Addis Ababa and Nairobi eventually landing at Kilimanjaro's own airport. We were welcomed by the driver from our hotel and driven through the bustling town of Moshi where we were staying. Next morning we met our guide and he told us everything we needed to know about our climb up the mountain.

The following day we set off early in a truck to the base of the mountain. Kilimanjaro is in a national park and everyone who enters has to sign a book. As you pass through each gate you have to sign in the book. Eventually everyone who goes in one end comes out the other. There is a one way system on the mountain, so you go up one path and down another. We had chosen one of the 'easier' paths but it was very steep! On the first day we climbed for 16 kilometres, through lush green forest, and the only flat part was where we stopped for lunch break.

Next morning after a filling breakfast of porridge, bread and tea we set off. Our porters were way ahead of us; we stopped a lot looking at the birds, trees and flowers along the way. Our guides stuck with us and kept trying to slow us down even more - 'Poley Poley' they kept saying 'Slowly Slowly'.

We walked through more rocky terrain along paths over rocky outcrops and along dried stream beds. As it was approaching the rainy season some of the streams were beginning to fill and it was the last trek up the mountain for our team for a few weeks. Lunch was shared with some enormous crows and some tiny mice. The crows stole our whole boiled eggs and the mice waited for the bread crumbs.

On the morning of the third day I had to admit to not sleeping well, not feeling hungry and generally being 'under the weather'. We set off on a very rocky path, not a plant in sight. Porters and trekkers from other parties all overtook us, I was going slower and slower, catching breath was getting more difficult. Finally I gave in and told Kate and our guides I was feeling terrible, not able to breathe well and pain in lower chest area. Our guide measured my oxygen levels and listened to my chest. He said he thought I was probably getting fluid in my lungs because of the thin air at altitude. There was only one

thing to do. I had to turn around. After lots of hugs and tears we decided that Kate should carry on with her guide and the rest of the party; one of us should make it to the top!

I was upset to split up but there was no option. Kate was very brave and went on to the top by herself. She was befriended by a large crowd of South Africans who coaxed, persuaded and at one point pushed her up the last part of the climb. She told me the peak was very cold -20 degrees. She had all her clothes on – and some of mine too!!

As for me once I had done the two hour walk down to a level where the air was not so thin I was able to breathe freely again. My guide arranged for a car to pick us up and we had another two hour journey down some pretty hairy tracks, I went back to the hotel, took a shower and slept for eleven hours. I woke up to realise that all my clothes were up the mountain, not even a change of undies or socks. Luckily I had my swimsuit so spent some time by the pool while my washing dried.

One of the porters arrived mid afternoon with my belongings. He had walked all the way down carrying both my bag and his.



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## A Few Words from The Treasurer

The severe economic downturn means that these are difficult times for most organisations in Britain and Age Concern York is no exception. Last year, as you may remember, we had to make considerable cost savings in order to prevent a serious financial crisis. The staff of Age Concern York have done a remarkable job in such difficult circumstances and we are very fortunate to have such a dedicated team of employees and volunteers.

There is no doubt however that we enter a new decade in a situation of great financial uncertainty. Whoever wins the general election, it seems

certain that severe cuts will be imposed upon the public sector, although many economists question the wisdom of such spending cuts in a deep recession. Here in York public bodies such as the City Council and the NHS trust will be looking at very difficult budget settlements, and of course this is likely to have a major impact upon the work of charities such as Age Concern York, which rely heavily upon public funding to run services. So our future finances are far from secure.

Having said that, we have reason to be extremely grateful to those individuals who have donated so generously

to ACY in the past year and to the legacies we have received from those who have sadly passed away. It is no exaggeration to say that these sources of funding have been the difference between continuing our current level of service to the elderly citizens of York and having to reduce some services or even stop them altogether. So please consider a donation to Age Concern York and look at the flyer on legacies enclosed with this newsletter. Your generosity could make a huge difference to the lives of elderly people in York, now and in the future.

**Mike Painter**

## In Safe Hands

It was nice to have the opportunity to meet and chat to the volunteers who were able to get to the Christmas Mulled Wine Get-together.

We have continued to look for new opportunities to advertise our service and we are planning an initial promotion in the Fulford/South Bank area of the city. If you have any ideas about places we could advertise or know of any local groups we could talk to about the service 'In Safe Hands' can provide for carers and the opportunities for volunteering for the scheme and in Age Concern generally, please get in touch with Liz or

any members of the ISH team.

We have recently had our Annual Review from the Care Quality Commission.

We are pleased to report that we have had our 'Good' rating confirmed for another year. As part of the review, questionnaires were sent to a number of service users. Their comments about the service show how much they appreciate the service and the help they get from our volunteers.

## Shop Makeover

Bishopthorpe Road shop has had a makeover! Complete redecoration, new rails, bookcases and a laminate floor have transformed the look of the shop. The last time it was refurbished was nine years ago. Comments from customers, staff and volunteers have been very positive, so we are hoping for an improved trading result for the future.



**E mail [ageconcern@ageconcernyork.org.uk](mailto:ageconcern@ageconcernyork.org.uk)**

## Holiday News

### Joyce Ashworth

The final holiday of 2009 was just before Christmas when we travelled to Llandudno on the first day of the snow! Incredibly everyone managed to get to Memorial Gardens to meet the coach despite the chaos on the roads!

We had a wonderful Christmas Crackers weekend with lots of fun and laughter and excellent Christmas fare!.

The Holiday information pack is now available.

Our holidays are popular, and we expect them to be in demand, so please book early!

During December we were able to once again help some of the schools provide Christmas parties - these are always popular and very much appreciated by the people who attend them.

We would like to thank Burnholme Community college, Canon Lee School, Huntington School and The Mount School who all readily gave their time at a very busy period in the school year to ensure that many people were able to enjoy the festivities.

We must also thank the students at The University of York St John and our friends at York Lions Club for their excellent annual Christmas luncheons.

Last years mini-bus outings were very much enjoyed by many frail people. Thanks

must go to our loyal band of outings volunteers who make this all possible.

If you know of any elderly person who would benefit from these outings please let us know and we will be happy to add their name to our outings list.

I would also like to take this opportunity to tell you of some changes that are taking place this year. I will be officially retired at the end of January after 14 very happy years at Age Concern York.

I joined the staff at Walmgate in January 1997 as Projects Organiser, responsible for the check visiting service, coach outings, mini-bus outings, parties and cold weather watch. Looking back I wonder – how did I fit all that in!!

We have seen many changes and also a big increase in the number of people over a certain age! Staff, me included, have seen their roles within the organisation change too. In 1999 after accompanying my elderly aunt on a coach holiday to Blackpool and seeing how much fun and enjoyment was had by all, I knew we should be offering this sort of holiday for our 'younger olders' here in York. (Our oldest guest by the way celebrates her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday this year!)

We decided to give it a try and organised our first Blackpool holiday in Spring 1999, and here we are now at the start of our eleventh year!

### Kilimanjaro or bust Continued.

Kate meanwhile was on the downward leg. It takes almost two days to walk down the mountain. My guide and I went to the park gate to meet her; the sun was shining brightly and it was very warm. Lots of other parties arrived. Buses and trucks filled up with tired smiling people going back to showers and rest and maybe the odd bottle of beer or two. Kate and her party arrived two hours late and guess what - the heavens opened! We got drenched, but it was so good to have her back down and to give her a big hug.

We were sponsored very generously us on our trek, altogether we collected £620. The money has been spent on a variety of things for all the day clubs including two loud speaker units, a CD player, a scanner/printer, a laminator, sets of table mats and coasters, CDs and books.

## Simple Nail Cutting

Prices for this service have just been announced - £12.50 in Community Centres, and eventually £19.50 for home visits. We are still taking names and addresses and will contact everyone as soon as we can. To date we have nearly 50 enquiries.