

A Brief Summary of our AGM , by Group Chairman, Brian Robertson

About 20 members attended our Group AGM on 16TH March at the Grove Street Annex of the Central United Reformed Church, Argyll Street, Bath. Guest speaker was CSPA Chairman, Jim Dunlop, who flew down from Edinburgh for our meeting. Jim was entertained to a buffet by some Committee members and were brought up to date with HQ activities. The Agenda and Reports for the AGM had been published at the February General Meeting and online at our website, with calls for nominations for Officers and Committee members. The meeting approved the 2009 Minutes, the Chairman's and Accounts Reports. All serving officers were elected, except David Rowlands, who is retiring; David has given 20 years to the Group, with distinction. He will be missed but plans to continue attendance at General Meetings. After refreshments, Jim Dunlop took the floor and gave an interesting account of recent Alliance activities and plans. Among these are the efforts to campaign during the upcoming General Election, in conjunction with the BT Pensioners organisation Unite Federation. Details of the national campaign are covered in General Secretary Mike Duggan's report in the Pensioner magazine Issue 240. Jim then took questions from the floor. Among these was concern that sometimes the Alliance seemed to forget our core role, i.e. to preserve and maintain the purchasing power of Civil Service pensions. He acknowledged that HQ had a diverse range of strategies.

Your Group has been working on a campaign letter to local prospective Parliamentary Candidates in Bath and adjacent constituencies where our members live. This distils the issues of most concern to us in this area and national issues, which of course overlap. A draft letter was issued at the AGM and is now online for members' comments by April 12th latest, when we expect the Election campaign to be in full swing. We are considering a press release for local newspapers in sync with the letters going out. Attached to the letter is part of the PSC leaflet which sets to rights the modest pensions we enjoy compared to media hyperbole. Members may wish to lobby their candidates armed with this information.



Abbey Hotel. From left to right- Brian Robertson, Alf Riley, Edgar Fillis, Helena Hreczuk-Hirst, Jim Dunlop and Sheila Tutty.

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**Congratulations to Don
and Joyce Percy for their
Diamond Wedding
Anniversary 15th April.**

David Rowlands

As part of an ongoing introduction to Group Committee members, introducing David Rowlands. Sadly retiring from the role of Group Membership Secretary (see Brian Robertson's AGM Report, Page 1).

Inland Revenue 1946. HM Customs and Excise at Pool of London 1947-1950. Ammunition Technician in Royal Army Ordnance Corps 1950-1952. Customs and Excise at Newhaven and then at HQ London 1952-1954. Admiralty, Naval Accounts, Harrow 1954-1955. Armament Supply Department, Admiralty (Deputy Armament Supply Officer) at Devonport, Portsmouth, Chatham, Singapore, Hong Kong, Trecwn, Rosyth, Copenacre, Bath 1955-1989. Officer in Charge of Sub Depots at Upnor and Grain, Computer Programmer, War Planning, Fleet Liaison Officer, Missile Officer, Work Study Team Leader, Health and Safety Inspector and served afloat on HMS Vigo and RFA Regent. Member of Institute of Explosive Engineers. Had some great times at outposts – hated every minute of being chained to a desk at HQ. Founder member of three break away Staff Associations – enjoyed every minute of that too!

Group Letter to Prospective Parliamentary Candidates - Main Issues

Defence of Occupational Pensions

Public Service Pensions are under threat, yet the average pension is only £6,500 a year, comparable with those in the private sector. About 53% are under £5000, and only about 1.4% are over £30,000. We believe that emotive media attacks on retired workers are misplaced and damaging.

Care of the Elderly

Properly and fairly-funded care of old people is one of the urgent matters a new Government must address, with the aim of independent living as far as possible.

Protection from Crime

Older people are particularly vulnerable to lawlessness on our streets and estates. Risks from attacks and antisocial behaviour prevent many old people from leaving their homes. Everyone is entitled to peace and security.

STANDING ORDERS – CHANGE OF ACCOUNT NUMBERS

You may be aware that we recently changed the account numbers for our current and deposit account. Although it was our understanding from bank staff that annual Standing Orders would automatically be diverted into the new deposit account, this has not happened. Would those who make regular payments to the CSPA Bath and District through this method, please contact me by telephone, or at my home address, so that I can let you have the new number together with the old one so that you can notify your bank of the change in the account number. Please let others know who use the same arrangement.

Your assistance in this matter is fully appreciated and I apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Alf Riley, Treasurer 01249 463629

Programme of Events

20th April

John Craig, Retired Fire Chief - Fire fighting anecdotes.

18th May

Talk by Pat Lomasney - "Swiss Railways"

15th June

Beryl Brooks and Audrey Wood – Georgian Newspaper Project

21st September

Ralph Warfield – photos presentation

19th October

Graham Lewis – Mount Kilimanjaro

Note. All meetings held at the Central United Reform Church Halls (Argyle Room), Grove St., Bath, starting 2.30pm.

**Letters and Articles required
for the next Issue. Please
send to the Editor**



Group Letter to Prospective Parliamentary Candidates – Other Important Issues

State Pensions

Should be phased to match increases in earnings, a link broken in 1981, resulting in withering of its value. Means testing and the poverty trap should be reduced.

Taxes and Benefits

No-one whose income is below £10,000 should pay income tax.

Hospital Parking Charges

Should be capped nationally at an affordable level for patients and visitors.

Social and Digital Exclusion

Those with no access to internet or mobile phones should not be disadvantaged for goods and services. All digital Freeview channels should be available to license-payers; many in Bath for example are restricted.

Sheltered Housing Wardens

Wardens should be restored where they have been arbitrarily withdrawn.

National Transport

Concession bus passes and senior rail cards should be integrated.

Fuel Poverty

Despite winter payments, and improvement grants for a small minority, many pensioners have to choose between food and heat. Fuel costs and social tariffs need to be more effectively regulated, and grants eligibility rules relaxed.

The Reality Behind “Gold-Plated” Pensions

(Source – Joint PSPC/CSPA Paper “Public Service Pensions” Jan 2010)

The Scheme	The facts
Average Local Authority Pension (LGPS)	£4000 a year (around £1,600 a year for women)
Teachers Pension Scheme	. Average teachers’ pension in payment £9,900 .53% of pensions in payment are less than £10,000 per annum .For teachers with under twenty years service the average pension in 2006-7 was £3,750 per annum .Only 0.64% of pensions in payment are over £30,000 per annum
Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS)	.Over 75% of pensions in payment are less than £10,000 per annum .Only 1.36% of pensions in payment are over £30,000 per annum
Civil Service Pension	.52.8% of pensions in payment are less than £5,000 .Average civil service pension in payment £6,500
Average Occupational Pension	.£8,320

Group Committee

President

Edgar Fillis

Chairman

Brian Robertson

Vice Chairman

Ray Cliffe

Secretary

Sheila Tutty

Treasurer

Alf Riley

Jim Foreman

Ron Hornsby

Ros Kedge

Helena Hreczuk-Hirst