

MAC SENIOR

UNISON

News for Unison
Retired Members in Scotland



Wee Norrie

Many UNISON retired members will have been saddened to hear of the death in June of "Wee Norrie" Steele.

Norrie was a former President of NALGO. At UK level he was pivotal in the development of policy during the turbulent Thatcher years of the 1980s and 90s when trade unionism was under great pressure.

Many of our present-day UNISON activists owe much to Norrie for their Union involvement and social and political understanding.

Many of us have tales to tell of Norrie and of time spent with him.

Our thoughts are with his wife Marion and his family.



Scottish Retired Members Committee outlines its priorities ...

The Scottish Retired Members Committee has set out its priorities for the coming year as a result of a special policy meeting in August. Its action plan is aimed primarily at increasing awareness of the work of UNISON's Retired Members structure both nationally and, more importantly, at Branch level. It will aim to ...

- Help Branches set up RM sections where they don't already exist.
- Seek to raise the profile of the RM sections and to encourage better communication between the main Branch Committee and the RM section, and
- Look for more effective ways of recruiting members by producing special pre-retirement publicity posters and leaflets.

The photo above shows members of the RM Committee at the policy session.

National RM Conference

There's only one motion from Scottish Region on the agenda for the National RM Conference which will be held in Chester from 11th to 12th Oct. The motion is on the growing need for grandparents to provide childcare for families.

We are also involved in some amendments. We'll give a full Conference report in the next issue of Mac Senior



Scottish Retired Members demonstrate their concerns

Not content with drifting quietly into obscurity, many retired members have continued to join with their working colleagues to speak out against cuts in services.

One told us "The Unison contingents in the various recent national demonstrations have included many Retired Members and former Branch activists.

It's great to meet some old friends and see that the fires are still burning, but it's also heartening to note that so many retired members understand the significance of the Coalition Government's cuts for themselves and their families."



“Retired Members Sections are doing loads of great work but in many cases, members - retired and working - don't even know we exist. We need to start ‘blowing our own trumpet’ and making our presence known”

Mae Stewart
Scottish RM Chairperson



Mae Stewart

We must broadcast the benefits of Retired Membership and RM Groups

Retired Union membership and Retired Members Groups have important benefits and functions, but despite this, Retired Members Groups are active in only about 50% of the UNISON Branches in Scotland. The Scottish RM Committee aims to increase the number of groups and to step up the range of activity across the board.

The Committee has placed a top priority on spreading the word - and encouraging the formation of active groups in UNISON Branches throughout Scotland. Retired members Secretary, Sue Chalmers said “Those that are active provide clear evidence of the positive aspects. We want to establish examples of good practice and broadcast these for others to take up”.

At its special policy meeting in August, the Committee decided that its highest priority for the coming year will be to increase awareness of the role and benefits of Retired Members Groups right across the Union structure. “If our working colleagues see the advantages of having strong, active RM groups, then they will be inclined to take part in them when they retire” said Sue.

“The Scottish UNISON Retired Members Committee and local groups are active in campaigning over a wide range of matters affecting older people. We are the Union’s voice the concerns of older persons on such as Pensions and Health Services.”

“Too many just see us as “a tea and buns group - but we’ve got to show them the much more positive aspects of our work.”



Eugene Duffy

It’s good to report that former RM Chair Eugene Duffy has recovered from the wee health problem that forced him to step back from Committee work.

He is now safely back living and thriving in Milngavie after a ‘sojourn’ in Dumfries.

Christine sews a part of history in the Prestonpans Tapestry

Christine Russell, a member of the Scottish RM Committee recently made her mark on history by putting put her needlework skills to good use. She has contributed a panel to the Prestonpans Tapestry which relates the story of Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobite Uprising.

Christine was recruited to the project which harnessed the commitment of 200 volunteer embroiderers. It is hailed as the longest in the world. It is the product of over 25,000 hours of work and research and contains over 10million stitches.

The Tapestry is tribute to the Jacobite rising of 1745 led by Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Each of its 104 panels depicts a scene from the Prince’s early campaign from his landing on Eriskay to his victory at the Battle of Prestonpans. Inspiration came from a visit to the Bayeux Tapestry and thus began this remarkable community project.



The Tapestry has been on show in its birthplace of Prestonpans and in Edinburgh over the last year. There are hopes that it will also be exhibited in other towns in Scotland. Well done, Christine!



One of our Hustings’ speakers made it to Holyrood

Only one of the speakers at our Scottish RM 2011 Annual Conference “Hustings Session” made it through the May elections to take a seat at Holyrood.

Scottish Labour candidate Anne McTaggart was successfully elected to one of the ‘List MSP’ seats for Glasgow Pollock

Advance Notice

The 2012 Scottish Retired Members Conference

will be held on

Tuesday 27th March 2012 in the

STUC Offices

333 Woodlands Rd. Glasgow

Full details and Delegate nomination forms will be sent out to branches by the beginning of February - but why not put the date in your diary NOW!

What is your Retired Members Group doing ...

It's fairly obvious that there's a great deal of difference between the range of activities in the RM Groups. Many of them have regular monthly meetings and these feature exciting programmes of speakers and visits. Topics tend to include a range of environmental matters and broader community issues.

Most groups look to the members to suggest topics or speakers who may be of interest. It's quite interesting and amazing what some of the programmes cover ...

- Local Industrial Heritage
- Living Wills & Power of Attorney
- Genealogy and Family History
- Pensions & Investments
- Foreign Travel

Some of the more active branches make a point of getting regular speakers from their main branch to give updates on the ongoing issues facing working colleagues. It's great for reminding the main Branch that you're still interested in broader trade union activity.



Bus trips (above right) are popular and feature prominently in RM group programmes. Some of the interesting ones we've noted were to the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood (photo above) and the Sea Bird Centre at North Berwick.

Museums are popular e.g. the Aircraft Museum in East Lothian, the People's Palace in Glasgow, and the Mining Museum in Midlothian. We've even seen a trip to a brewery. All good stuff!

... and Retired Members can do a lot more!

Many branches are finding that the RM Groups can be much more than 'social clubs'. Retired members have a lot of experience, plenty of time and in many cases willingness to continue to play an active part in UNISON affairs.

They are only too happy to lend a hand when routine tasks such as leafletting, campaigning or simply stuffing envelopes needs to be handled.

Rural Problems

The RM Committee acknowledges that one particular problem is that many rural branches face difficulties in trying to establish active groups. It's not easy in the larger centres of population, but rural branches have all added difficulties of communication.

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If your branch has any particular problems, let us know. Better still, if you've managed to overcome problems, tell how you have tackled them. There may be a lesson in there for all of us!

Scottish Retired Members Committee

Chairperson	Mae Stewart	Dundee
Vice-Chair	Lilly McNaughton	Strathclyde Police & Fire
Secretary	Sue Chalmers	Dumfries & Galloway LG
Committee Members		
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Christine Russell	East Lothian	
Eddie McMillan	Glasgow Housing	
John Gabriel	North Ayrshire	
Angus Gordon	Grampian Health	
David Olwa	Lothian Health	
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Peter McCann	West Dunbartonshire	
Elsbeth Kerr	Lanarkshire Health	

MAC Senior is produced and published by the UNISON Scottish Retired Members Committee. Contact RM Secretary, Sue Chalmers 01387 267647 (e-mail suechalmers@sky.com) if you have any questions or comment.