

SCOTTISH SENIORS

Campaigning for a better deal for older people since 1992



Newsletter of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum Issue 36/October 2014

SPF ANNUAL CONFERENCE, STIRLING 2014

The SPF Annual Conference took place on Tuesday 10th June 2014 at the Golden Lion hotel in Stirling, with over 160 delegates in attendance. Margaret Murdoch, SPF Chairperson, opened the conference with all formal business taking place in the morning, with motions and changes to the constitution presented and considered, the presentation of year end accounts and Treasurers' Report, auditors and Standing Orders Committee for 2014/2015 elected by delegates at conference as well as formal notice of the SPF Executive Committee for the year 2014/2015.



The afternoon session began with a warm civic welcome from Provost Robbins, who highlighted a programme of events taking place in Stirling, and district, over the coming months to commemorate the anniversary of the battle of Bannockburn. The main session of the afternoon, which was chaired by Bill Martin, focused on the Independence Referendum with Denis Canavan, spokesman for Yes Scotland and Jackie Baillie, representative from the

Better Together campaign, spoke from the platform on what the yes and no vote would mean for pensioners in Scotland and afterwards engaged in an hour long question and answer session with delegates, answering questions on such issues as:-

- safeguarding pensions and universal benefits
- the health care system,
- the implementation of a two tier pension scheme in 2016
- the need for a more robust representative body for older people in Scotland
- the currency issue
- closure of industry and outsourcing
- the White Paper
- the safety of the NHS in Scotland



A full conference report will be made available in our Annual Report 2014/2015

NPC PENSIONERS' PARLIAMENT, 17-19 JUNE BLACKPOOL

Representatives of the Scottish Pensioners' Forum, as affiliated members, were in attendance at the recent NPC Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool.

The event began with a march from Blackpool Tower to the Winter Gardens with over 250 delegates in attendance. The 3 day event saw such speakers as **Claire Keating**, Older People's Commissioner for

Northern Ireland, who explained that her remit was to investigate any matter concerning older people from bed blocking to the treatment of dementia. Claire was followed by **Owen Jones**, columnist and broadcaster, who rallied the audience by assuring them that the youth of today are aware that it is not young and against old,



as the government would have us believe, but was instead the fault of a government who imposed policies by blaming the economic crisis. Finally **Dot Gibson**, NPC Chair, set out the NPC's manifesto for 2015, calling for a basic state pension, above the current poverty level, of £175 per week and a legally binding dignity code to improve that quality and standards of care for older people. Over the next 2 days, workshops were held on

several key areas including pensions and benefits, the Hands Off Campaign in Northern Ireland, Concessionary Travel, Parliamentary Outreach Programmes, United For All Ages and a presentation by the TUC Youth Forum. The SPF also held a fringe meeting on the Scottish independence referendum, chaired by **Bill Martin**.

HANDS OFF: DEFENDING THE NEED FOR UNIVERSAL BENEFITS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

As the General Election in 2015 draws nearer, already many of the UK parties have hinted that universal pensioner benefits, like concessionary travel, the winter fuel payment and free TV licenses, are no longer affordable and may be facing the axe. **The Hands Off Campaign**, supported by many older people's organisations throughout the United Kingdom, are calling for these



benefits to be safeguarded after the 2015 General Election and beyond. The

campaign sets out the need for all political parties to be made aware that these benefits are essential to ensure a decent standard of living for pensioners, means testing should not be considered when considering these benefits and that "universal benefits are cost neutral, when considering their positive impact on the health and well being of the older population"

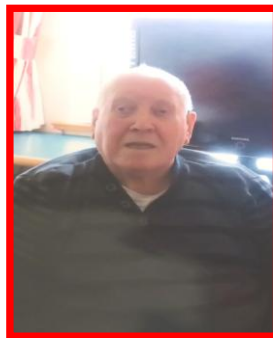
The Scottish Pensioners' Forum fully supports this campaign and encourages its members to get involved. An online petition is available to sign at handsoff.org.uk

OUR PENSIONER PROFILE:

BOB MCLEAN

In this issue we talk to former Executive Committee and founding SPF member, Bob McLean. Bob served on the Executive and Constitution Committee for 17 years before ill health made it impossible for him to continue in a hands on capacity, however the SPF continue to draw on his valuable opinion and expert knowledge when campaigning on older people's issues.

In his 97 years, Bob has had a long and varied career, from his first job as a crane operator and dispatcher before being conscripted in August 1939 to serve firstly in the Royal Artillery and then in the Royal Army Service Corps, where he reached the rank of Sergeant. After settling down to married, family life, Bob began work for British Telecom as a telephone engineer where he became actively involved in trade union business as



Vice Chair, education officer and social convener of his branch of the Post Office Engineers, now more commonly known as the Communication Workers' Union.

Even in retirement Bob remained an active retired trade union member, and understanding the need for a proper mechanism for older people's rights helped set up a steering committee, in partnership with the STUC Pensions Association, which went on to become who we are today, the umbrella organisation for groups and individuals working and campaigning for a better deal for older people in Scotland.

Bob is now resident in the RedCross Centre at Erskine Hospital, where he is visited regularly by the many friends and colleagues he has made over the years.

Join the Scottish Pensioners' Forum
Campaigning for a better deal for older people since 1992

Application forms can be requested from:

**Scottish Pensioners' Forum,
333 Woodlands Road, Glasgow G3 6NG**

**Telephone 0141 337 8113
or at: www.scottishpensioners.org.uk**

SPF ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2015

The 24th Annual Conference of the Scottish Pensioners Forum will take place on **Tuesday 9th June 2015**, in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire.

The event is open to all SPF members and affiliated organisations and more information will be made available over the coming months.

We hope that you can come along and celebrate another successful year for the SPF

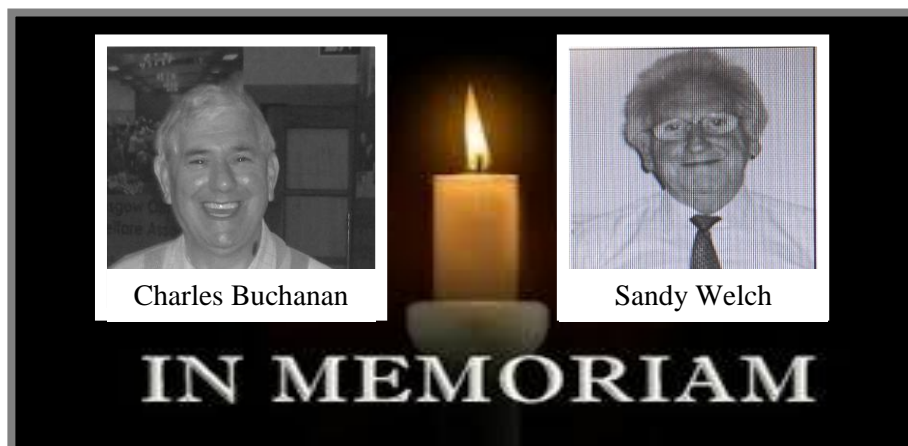
WITH OUR DEEPEST CONDOLENCES

It is with deep regret that we inform our membership of the passing of two of our Executive Committee members, Sandy Welch and Charles Buchanan.

Sandy, the representative of Prospect trade union, was a much valued member of our Executive Committee for the past 4 years and was Chair of our Constitution Committee.

Charles, the representative from Unite Retired Members, was Chair of our Health and Social Care Committee and was active in campaigning on residential care issues.

We would like to convey our condolences, on behalf of our membership, to their family and friends. Their expertise, and valuable input, will be sadly missed by our organisation.



Telephone 0141 337 8113

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