



# The BAFUNCS Newsletter

March 2009

Nº 55

*Food for work helps build an irrigation canal*



*Photo: Tony Loftas, Rajasthan1969*

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- Are emergencies changing WFP policy?
- The Benevolent Fund receives a bequest
- Life after retirement can be a busy one
- The Pension Fund replies to FAFICS
- Membership and regional news

**British Association of Former United Nations Civil Servants**

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June Hargreaves-Beer (WHO)  
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Co-opted Members  
Marilyn Carr (UNIFEM/UNDP)  
Sheila Cooper (WHO)  
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# BAFUNCS Newsletter N° 55

March, 2009

## Note from the Editor

One of my claims to fame as a writer is that most of my mistakes are self-evident. I once gave the height of a satellite from the Earth as its orbit in a newspaper column. Even so, my heart still sank when I noticed that I was a year behind with the date I gave on cover of the last newsletter for the General Assembly and Annual Reunion at Chilworth Manor Hotel. That nobody commented, other than someone at Exbury Gardens - venue for one of the outings, I take as proof of my point. It does, however, give me an excuse to point out that, although over 100 people have already signed up for the meeting, there is still room for one or two more (*see page 8*).

As usual, this Newsletter contains papers for the meeting: the Chairman's report of the work of the ExCo; the Treasurer's report on expenditures in 2008 and proposed budget for 2009; and the Annual Report of the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund. This year the accounts of the Fund reflect a substantial bequest from the late Denise Thomas, an act of generosity that has transformed its resources (*see page 13*). Even so the Chairman of the Fund, which is open to all UN retirees in need of help and resident in the UK, has asked me to emphasize that all contributions are most welcome.

For me one of the most intriguing contributions was a brief article submitted by David Axford, one of our Vice-Presidents. I was intrigued because it presented the other face of having worked in the United Nations system and represents, in many ways, the *raison d'être* of BAFUNCS as a social refuge for retirees. Many of us, if not most, will have returned on retirement to a country that we hardly knew after so many years away. How have we adapted, what have we done to forge a new life and to enjoy the freedom to break away from the constraints of our previous occupation? I hope David's story (*see page 19*) may move more members to write about life after the UN!

Not unrelated to this is Fred Beer's *Think Positive* on the need to set our social sat-navs (*see page 26*). Probably watching out for each other has never been more important than now. Those, for example, who rely on savings or investments for income face a bleak future. If their needs become desperate, they can all too easily slip through the safety net, pride may play a part. We should keep a watchful eye for signs of financial distress. Fortunately, as Michael Davies explains, the UN Staff Pension Fund is not in danger of failing (*see page 4*).

The **deadline** for contributions to the **September 2009 issue** is **Friday, 21 August**. If you wish to try out an idea before writing, I can be contacted by phone (01844 343 652), by letter (36 Manor Park Avenue, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, HP27 9AS) or, **preferably**, by e-mail ([tony.loftas@btinternet.com](mailto:tony.loftas@btinternet.com)).

Tony Loftas

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# Report of the Executive Committee for 2008/2009

**Patricia Brown**

Chairman, Executive Committee

## 1: Chairman's statement

When I was elected in 2004 it was, I said, for two years. So, after five years, it is certainly time to go. Hence this is my final report as Chairman of the Executive Committee.

The five years have been literally full of movement; the Committee has met at IMO, at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, at the United Nations Association, at the London Office of UNHCR/UK and, at last, back at IMO in its refurbished building. We are certainly grateful to the heads of all those organizations for acting as our hosts. It was a pleasure to travel to the different venues and to see at close quarters parts of London changed almost beyond recognition since I left a post in the City to become an international civil servant 52 years ago.

There have been changes in the composition of the Committee over the past year, because of resignations and also because of departures abroad, with another announced for next June - Christine Woodworth-Batho, the Subscriptions Secretary, who is going to live permanently in the United States, her husband's home country. Christine's sterling work in supporting the Treasurer and the Membership Secretary has been much valued.

Still we have a strong Committee, as can be seen from the individual reports below. However, we still need help. After it was decided that the Archivist did not necessarily need to be a member of the Committee, entailing travelling to meetings, Rod Storer agreed to again act as Archivist, but only temporarily because of the many commitments he has in his village. Is there no-one willing to relieve him? Jeremy Wells did a deal of work on computerizing the archives, so it is necessary to be computer literate; otherwise it is not very onerous.

Through the Regional Convenor (*see* Item 6 below) and Regional Representatives the Committee has sought members' opinions on several issues. It has also passed on information to members; for example from the Chief Executive Officer, UNJSPF, on the implications of the current financial situation for the Fund; also published in the BAFUNCS page of the IMO website (<http://bafuncs.imo.org/home.htm>). Michael Davies, the Pensions Officer, updates this information in his report below.

I wonder how many members who have the internet look regularly to see what information is on the website. I am sure Sheila Cooper, who is now in close touch with the responsible web-master at IMO,

would like to have your reaction to the BAFUNCS page and to hear what sort of information you think it should contain. Some work is also being done, by Sheila in particular, on developing a web site of our own. If any members have the expertise to help with this I am sure also that she would be glad to hear from them.

Work has started on interpreting the suggestions made at an informal gathering during the last reunion in Kendal for making the BAFUNCS image and the services it provides to its members more efficient, so that members are encouraged to participate in its activities - and recent retirees, or even those still working, to join. The process is bound to be a gradual one carried out in consultation with members. In the meantime, as the Membership Secretary describes below, Mr Bernard Cochemé, the CEO/UNJSPF, is sending out with his Annual Letter a letter from BAFUNCS to the 2395 United Nations retirees in the United Kingdom advising them of the existence of the Association and encouraging those who are not already members to join. Currently, only 800 or so of the 2395 are members. It is gratifying to hear that at this early stage there have already been some positive responses, and we are grateful to Mr Cochemé for doing this for us.

The letter draws attention to some of the work that BAFUNCS does to support former United Nations system staff settled in the United Kingdom. The Association provides: advice on taxation, health insurance and residency issues; assistance with specific problems relating to pension payments or after-service health insurance; and it organizes social events which enable those who have worked in the system to contact others with a similar background.

While the social events are, of course, a much appreciated part of BAFUNCS' work, what it does to clarify and promote the interests of its members, and in fact all retirees, with the Pension Fund and the various organizations' after-service health insurance schemes is vital. That is why we need a vigorous membership to form part of a consultative process that enables us to speak forcefully.

Some members have responded to our request for comments on what it was like for them settling back in the United Kingdom when they retired. This will be very useful in updating document INF.4 on "Planning for Retirement in the United Kingdom". There is still time for more comments on the subject if you would like to send them. Some have remarked that the information in this document is of use only if members see it before they retire. That is true and numerous attempts have been made to encourage organizations to distribute it (and other documents)

## Report of the Executive Committee - continued (Item 2 Administration)

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during their pre-retirement seminars, unfortunately without much success. And people who retire from the field receive very little briefing. Members, especially recent retirees, could help by encouraging colleagues to join the Association before they retire. In that way they would see from the *Newsletter* the various documentation that is available.

In the early years of the Association, regions, with their younger and more recently retired members, were happy to organize the Annual General Meeting and Reunion. Unfortunately, the sequence briefly enjoyed during the '90s (of CAM, SCL SWT, SRY, WMW, OXF, KSX, NOR) is starting to fall by the wayside because two of the regions, quite understandably, no longer have members willing to volunteer for the task. Even in Surrey we are beginning to feel apprehensive because all of us will be over or nearing 80 years of age by 2011. So it seems that the time is drawing near for a different approach to the Annual General Meeting.

A call went out some time ago to the regions to appoint one member to promote the Career Records Project. I can only speak for my own region, Surrey, which has appointed Marilyn Carr, but it might be of interest to other regions to hear that among her promotional activities will be face-to-face recorded interviews with members about their life in the United Nations system. Marilyn was also appointed liaison officer with the United Nations Association. She reports on recent initiatives below.

I must thank all those who have helped in the work of the Committee during my chairmanship: our previous and current Presidents, Dr Erik Jensen and Sir Richard Jolly, who have provided me with enormous support, for which I am eternally grateful; the Vice-Presidents, who have given valuable help and advice, especially my predecessor as Chairman, Dr David Axford; all past and current members of, and advisers to, the Committee; and the Regional Representatives.

My thanks also to Mr A W Hall and Mrs Elsa Brathaug who have audited the accounts during my term of office.

### 2: Administration (Annie Kean, Secretary)

#### A. Meetings of the Executive Committee

During 2008/2009, the Executive Committee held an *ad hoc* meeting at the Castle Green Hotel, Kendal, on 11 May 2008 and five regular meetings at the Headquarters of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on 24 July, 18 September, 20 November, 20 January and 26 March. The Executive

Committee wishes to thank IMO for welcoming those meetings to its building and for agreeing to welcome others in the future.

Following the resignation of Brian Dando, Michael Davies was elected Vice-Chairman. During the July meeting, Christine Woodworth-Batho, who had been elected as a full member of the Executive Committee at the Annual General Meeting held in Kendal, agreed to act as Deputy Treasurer and it was decided that Marilyn Carr would no longer be responsible for liaison with the United Nations and its organizations and bodies but would instead act as liaison officer with UNA and the National Pensions Convention.

Jeremy Wells, who looked after the BAFUNCS archives, moved to Savannah, Georgia, in March 2008. Vice-President David Axford kindly offered to store the files and DVDs until such time as a replacement could be found. Rod Storer has now agreed to temporarily take over the archives.

David Nott and Rosemary Ap Rees, representing the South West and Channel Islands Region, attended the July meeting to report on progress in preparing the 2010 Annual General Meeting and Reunion, while June Hargreaves-Beer, the Annual Reunion Coordinator and present as a member of the Committee, reported at every meeting on the progress made by the South Central Region in organizing the 2009 AGM/Reunion. President Sir Richard Jolly and Vice-President David Axford attended on several occasions.

Work continued on Phase II of the United Nations Career Records Project. The ex-Secretary, Sheila Cooper, maintained the BAFUNCS website in liaison with IMO.

#### B. Responsibilities of ExCo Members

The responsibilities of the elected and co-opted members of the Committee were as follows:

##### *Elected Committee Members*

*Chairman:* Patricia Brown

*Vice-Chairman:* Michael Davies (also *Pensions and Health Insurance Adviser and Chair of the EAFICS Working Group on After Service Health Insurance and Long-Term Care*)

*Treasurer:* Bryan Suitters

*Secretary:* Annie Kean

##### *Members:*

Bill Jackson: *Regional Convenor*

Tony Loftas: *Editor*

Fred Beer: *National Welfare Support*

Ben Goffman: *Membership Secretary*

June Hargreaves-Beer: *Annual Reunions*

Membership of BAFUNCS, mid-January 2009											
Type of Membership	Regions										Total
	CAM	KSX	LON	NOR	OVS	OXF	SCL	SRY	SWT	WMW	
Single	20	40	58	49	41	30	27	44	40	31	380
Joint	32	34	32	44	26	28	10	24	34	16	280
Single Life	4	13	11	4	15	*2	3	4	3	2	61
Joint Life		4	10	14	4	8	2	10	10	2	64
Single Associate	1	1	1	1			1	1			6
Honorary	1										1
Honorary Associate								1			1
Total	58	92	112	112	86	68	43	84	87	51	793

\*HVP

*Co-ordinator*

Christine Woodworth-Batho: *Subscriptions Secretary and Deputy Treasurer*

**Co-opted Members**

Marilyn Carr: *Liaison officer with the United Nations Association, UK*

Ziaul Islam: *Deputy Secretary and Liaison officer with Age Concern and Help the Aged*

**Others assisting the Committee have included:**

Michael Askwith: *Special Adviser on UNCRP II and Liaison with NGOs*

David Axford: *Representative on the Working Group on the Objectives and Function of FAFICS and Revision of its Statutes*

members resigned or allowed their memberships to lapse, mainly through ill-health, and 23 members have died.

It is hoped that the membership will be boosted as a result of an initiative by the Executive Committee that has secured the agreement of the UNJSPF to include an invitation in its next Annual Letter for UK-based recipients of pensions from the United Nations or related organizations to join BAFUNCS. Many former international civil servants who retire to live in the UK do not know an Association exists that is dedicated to looking after their interests. They will now all have an opportunity to join BAFUNCS and with a larger membership enable it to speak forcefully on pension matters, health insurance and taxation. (The invitation was included in the UNJSPF January 2009 Newsletter.)

**3: Finances**

**(Bryan Suitters, Treasurer)**

See end of this Report (page 9).

**4: Membership Secretary**

**(Ben Goffman)**

Since the last statistical report was published (March 2008, BAFUNCS Newsletter no. 53) 26 new members have joined the Association, seven of whom are spouses covered by joint subscriptions. Five

**5: Pensions, Health Insurance and Tax**

**(Michael Davies)**

The economic turmoil of the past year will have been a worry to many members. The collapse of financial markets and the drop in value of many assets has given rise to concerns over the strength of the Pension Fund. While, in common with all investors, the assets of the Fund have fallen in value they have performed in the upper quartile when compared to many investment funds, a reflection of

## Report of the Executive Committee - continued (Item 6 Regional Convenor)

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the Fund's conservative investment strategy and global cover. The banking crisis was essentially a liquidity crisis and the Pension Fund's liquidity is not an issue, because current pension outlays are covered by contributions from serving staff and the underlying assets do not have to be touched.

Furthermore, the actuarial valuation of the Fund is based on long-term investment averages and not on one year's results; so even if the market were to drop further it does not necessarily mean that the Fund faces a funding crisis. While the actuarial surplus of the Fund has fallen over the past four valuations this has in part been because some of the surplus was returned to retirees through return of part of the 1.5 percent of initial pension adjustment withheld owing to past funding problems. The most recent valuation had a slight (0.4 percent) surplus but the Pension Board took a conservative approach and did not allow a proportion of the surplus to be used for changes in benefits.

At the end of January 2009 the Fund had assets of US\$29.3 billion, a fall in value of 30 percent compared to the record level of US\$42.2 billion in October 2007. Some 50 percent of the Fund's assets percent in bonds and 4 percent in real estate. In the same period US equity markets as measured by the Dow Jones index dropped by 43 percent.

The fall in value of Sterling against the dollar has diametrically reversed the situation of the past two years and while Members who have switched from the dollar to the dual track are protected against the dollar's rise, new pensioners are now faced with a more difficult decision as to which track to take. As always we recommend that decisions only be taken after obtaining the Fund's calculations of your pension on each track as the calculations depend on the exchange rates ruling over the three-year period prior to the pension being drawn.

Based on a proposal by BAFUNCS, the Federation of Associations of International Civil Servants (FAFICS) has agreed to submit a paper to the Pension Board which requests improvements in the system used to obtain data for the annual increases in pensions on the dual track. Members will be aware that, for several years, the annual pension adjustment has been received late, even though the UK official cost-of-living index is available from official sources. We have asked the Pension Board to permit updates using official website data. In this we have been supported by a number of other Associations which have had the same problem.

Your committee (in cooperation with the UK World Bank Retiree Association) has been looking at issues of UK taxation and we believe that an approach may be allowed under UK tax law that

would reduce the tax liability by more than the 10 percent granted currently. We continue to study the matter and members will be advised of developments once we are sure where we stand.

For some retirees medical insurance is an issue that will come to the fore in 2009. Many UN organizations have failed to build up a fund to cover the cost of after-service medical insurance. BAFUNCS raised awareness of this at FAFICS, which created a medical insurance sub-committee and has adopted a series of policy positions on the issue. However, in recent months the adoption of new international accounting standards by the UN and the Specialized Agencies has required that these liabilities be properly covered in the long term (in the same way that the Pension Fund is fully-funded). Given the large amounts involved (US\$2.4 billion for the UN alone) this has resulted in Member States reviewing more carefully these liabilities and pressure can be expected to reduce the programmes to manageable financial levels. We continue to monitor this and to provide advice to FAFICS as the Chair of the FAFICS Sub-Committee on After-Service Health Insurance is currently held by BAFUNCS.

### 6: Regional Convenor (Bill Jackson)

Through the Regional Convenor, Regional Representatives have been requested by the Executive Committee to inform the membership as a whole, or solicit its views, on a number of matters. *Inter alia*, these have:

- enabled members to respond to suggestions made in Kendal for a review of the format of the Annual General Assembly and Reunion and the services provided by BAFUNCS;
- informed members about the actual and potential implications of the turmoil in the financial markets for the UNJSPF;
- sought comments to assist the updating of *BAFUNCS Inf 4 "Planning for Retirement in the United Kingdom"*;
- solicited further written contributions to the UN Career Records Project;
- sought to encourage members to participate in the work of the UNA, UK; and
- invited nominations for national officerships.

The importance of re-energising BAFUNCS by attracting newly retiring colleagues has been underscored by the resort in some Regions to meeting in localised 'clusters' within the Region, and by a further Region now indicating that it is not able to host an AGM/Reunion when it is its turn to do so.

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Doubtless these and other issues will be on the agenda of the meeting of Regional Representatives to be held in conjunction with the Reunion in Chilworth. With this in mind, all members are encouraged to convey their thoughts and suggestions to those who will represent them there.

### **7: Welfare** **(A.G. [Fred] Beer)**

We have a support group of twenty welfare/help-line officers. Their efforts in establishing and maintaining contact with BAFUNCS colleagues is appreciated. The group is looking into what help and support might be required in an environment of retired people. We know that visits to friends in residential care are welcomed, as are phone calls. Understanding, of course, that we are not qualified legal advisers and can only act informally, we would encourage members to contact any of the welfare group should they feel some assistance might be needed; they should not feel reluctant to make others aware of problems or needs..

### **8: Editor** **(Tony Loftas)**

From an editorial point of view, this has been a satisfactory year and, apart from the odd glaring error, the *BAFUNCS Newsletter* has been satisfactory. It continues to receive favourable comment and support from members, but, once again, the Self-help section received very few contributions. Perhaps this section should be dropped. It has had a good run, dating back to when I first took over as editor of the Newsletter in September 2000. Two books written by members were used as a basis for articles. I enjoyed these little journalistic forays and I hope that members find my selection of material interesting and informative.

Production costs of the newsletters and the Membership List have remained more or less on budget, for which we owe thanks to our printers, Mayfield Press. It is difficult to know whether this will continue in the coming year because of the now well-publicised economic uncertainties. Their representative says the Press is holding its charges at the 2008 level; it would change them, however, if paper prices were to be hiked substantially.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the postal charges which continue to edge higher. If this continues, serious consideration may have to be given to distributing publications, including the

Newsletter, as low resolution pdfs to those members prepared to receive them by e-mail. If, for example, the print-run of all publications were to be reduced by 350 from 750 to 400, it could save over £700. I hope, however, that it will not come to this. Distributing publications as e-mail attachments transfers the production costs to readers if they want hard copy. Of course, there can be some advantages, not least of which is that the print size and legibility of the Newsletter can be increased on the computer screen at the click of a button!

As in previous years Susan Miller has offered her help with proof reading, but unfortunately I could not take advantage of this for the September 2008 *BAFUNCS Newsletter*.

### **9: Annual Reunions Co-ordinator** **(June Hargreaves-Beer)**

The Thirty-first Annual General Assembly and Reunion was held in Kendal, Cumbria, from 9 to 11 May 2008, hosted by the Northern Region. A total of 109 participants attended and enjoyed a good meeting in a very pleasant hotel.

This year's meeting, the Thirty-second, is being organized by my own Region, South Central, and will take place in Chilworth, Hampshire, from 8 to 10 May. Arrangements are proceeding and we are looking forward to an enjoyable meeting.

Close contact is being maintained with the South-West and Channel Islands Region who are hosting the Thirty-third Annual General Assembly and Reunion in Exeter in 2010.

Of some concern is the delay each year in receipt of registrations. An early deadline (usually December of the preceding year) is necessary as the host hotel often requires quite a substantial deposit to be paid in January, and they need too a good idea of numbers for their own planning purposes. I would, however, like to point out that this does not mean late registrations cannot be accepted. We like to have as many participants as possible; this makes for a more convivial meeting and ensures that we obtain an advantageous price from the hotel.

Some Overseas members have apparently experienced problems in transferring money to cover their registration. We are investigating ways and means of overcoming this but, if problems do occur, those members concerned should contact me.

### **10: Archives**

Nothing to report.

## Report of the Executive Committee - continued

### (Item 11 Relations with other organizations)

#### 11: Relations with other organizations

##### **Age Concern (Ziaul Islam)**

Dr Islam attended various meetings organized by Age Concern, Help the Aged and related bodies. A meeting of Joint Fora (which includes the National Association Forum and the Retirement Forum of the National Council on Ageing) was held on 14 January 2008. Malnutrition in hospital patients, depression and long-term care of older people were discussed.

The National Council on Ageing, meeting on 28 January 2008, focused on social and health care. It was attended by representatives of the NHS Confederation and the Association of Directors of Social Services, among others. The role of general practitioners in identifying early signs of debilitating conditions such as depression was emphasized.

Age Concern (ACE) is also looking at the human rights of older people in health care, emphasizing malnutrition, dehydration, lack of privacy in mixed sex wards, early discharge from hospital, communication problems because of dementia and language problems, among other issues.

A Joint Meeting of the Chairs of ACE Trustees, Planning Group members of the Retirement Forum, the National Associations Forum, the Black Minority Ethnic Elders Forum and the National Council on Ageing was held on 5 June 2008. The purpose was to discuss a proposed merger of ACE and Help the Aged to create NewCharity UK. The two organizations share many of the same priorities. The overall view was that more money could be raised and more done with it through a single charity. Individually the two charities raised over £165 million but this could rise to over £350 million following the merger. The ACE Board of Trustees wanted to go ahead with the merger from 1 April 2009. The June meeting was followed up by a Special National Council on Ageing meeting on 3 July 2008 where a large majority voted to create NewCharity UK.

Members of the Retirement Forum reviewed eligibility for the Blue Badge for Disabled Persons. Presently there are 2.3 million badge holders. There is a need to extend the eligibility to those with severe and permanent inability to walk, and to consider including people with Crohn's disease or colitis, severe mental impairment and the partially sighted.

In April 2008, Help the Aged and Friends of the Earth filed a judicial review application with the High Court, arguing that the Government is failing to meet its own legally binding targets to eradicate fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010.

On 9 October 2008 Dr Islam participated in the

Annual General Meeting of the National Council on Ageing. Rosie Winterton, the Pensions Minister, addressed the Council and commented on various issues raised. Those included free swimming at Councils' Leisure Centres, income tax on pensions, the cost of dental care and Pension Credit Reforms.

##### **United Nations Association, UK (Marilyn Carr)**

In November 2008, the President of BAFUNCS, Sir Richard Jolly, and Marilyn Carr met with Sam Daws, Executive Director of UNA-UK, to explore closer co-operation between the two organizations. A number of opportunities were identified. For instance, UNA-UK's monitoring of UN system activities can keep BAFUNCS members up-to-date through local UNA branches, the quarterly magazine *New World* and its web-site. BAFUNCS members could contribute first-hand knowledge and views. Also, they could share their expertise by giving talks at UNA meetings or mentoring people interested in working in the UN.

These ideas were shared with UNA-UK's Board and BAFUNCS' Executive Committee in late November and met with their approval. A brief questionnaire was then prepared and distributed to BAFUNCS members through the Regional Convenor and Regional Representatives. The aim was to find out how many people were already members of UNA-UK and how many would be willing to speak at UNA-UK meetings or brief young professionals about working in the UN.

At the time of writing, 25 responses have been received to the questionnaire. Of these, 16 BAFUNCS members are also members of UNA-UK. Eight people expressed an interest in being a speaker at UNA-UK meetings and 12 people said they would be willing to talk to young professionals on working in the UN system. Most of those people who replied negatively were willing to help but felt unable to do so either through ill-health and/or because they felt they were too out of date. As a follow-up, Veronica Lie, Deputy Executive Director, UNA-UK, suggested BAFUNCS members willing to speak could submit an 80-word description of themselves with a view to compiling a 'directory' of BAFUNCS mentors and speakers.

In the meantime, Rich Nelmes, the Membership Secretary of UNA-UK, has checked on overlap of membership (without contravening the Data Protection Act). He found that 2.82 percent of UNA-UK members are BAFUNCS members and 22.45 percent of BAFUNCS members are UNA-UK members. The implications of these statistics for BAFUNCS need to be explored.

## Notices

# Next year's Annual Reunion and General Assembly will be in Exeter

**Host Region:** Southwest and Channel Islands

**When:** Friday, 7 May to Sunday, 9 May 2010

**Venue:** Mercure Southgate Hotel, Exeter, Devon

Dating back to around 50 AD when the Romans established a fortress for their 2nd Augustan Legion, Exeter has had a chequered history being subsequently occupied by Saxons and Danes before the Norman King William occupied the city and built the Rougemont Castle on its walls. The cathedral dates back to 1133. Built in Norman style, it was later remodelled in Decorated Gothic style. The city is on the east bank of the River Exe and is well placed for exploring the Devon coastline and nearby Dartmoor. It has two main railway lines to London via Taunton and Salisbury as well as a rail link to Bristol and the north and an international airport with connections to Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Southampton and other cities.

The Southgate Hotel is within easy walking distance of the city centre, the Cathedral and the Quayside. It has two restaurants, a lounge bar and excellent conference facilities. It also has an indoor pool, a gym, sauna, solarium and whirlpool spa as well as adequate free parking.

**How much:** Full weekend (Category A) £475 for a double or twin room, £260 for a single room.

**Guest speakers:** To be announced.

**Saturday outings:** The following excursions are being considered:

- **Killerton** The ancestral home of the Aclands, it has a beautiful hillside garden featuring rhododendrons, magnolias and rare trees as well as having a renowned historical collection of fashion.
- **Bicton Park Botanical Gardens** Magnificent gardens that span 300 years of horticultural history including a formal garden modelled on Versailles, a palm house, a nature trail with woods and lakes and a woodland railway.
- **A guided walk** around historic Exeter with visits to the Cathedral, the Quayside and other sites of historical interest.

**The banquet:** A gala dinner will be provided on Saturday evening with music afterwards.

**Longer stays:** Thursday and Sunday: £105 for a double room, £95 for a single room, bed and breakfast. Dinner, bed and breakfast: £135 double and £115 single occupancy.

**Further information:** will be provided at AR 2009 and in the September BAFUNCS Newsletter when the booking form will be available.

**Queries:** : Contact David Nott, 43 Godwins Close, Atworth, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 8LD (tel. 01225 708388, e-mail: nott511@btinternet.com).

## Notices

# Still time to lord it up at AR2009 in Chilworth Manor Hotel

The Thirty-Second Annual Reunion and General Assembly will take place from 8-10 May in the Chilworth Manor Hotel, Chilworth, Hampshire. The hotel, which was an Edwardian Manor House, sits in 12 acres of landscaped gardens. Its leisure centre, which involved an investment of £3 million, has a swimming pool, fitness and training facilities and beauty spa. The modern Cedar Conference Theatre is similarly a feature of the hotel. The hotel is located just over four miles from the centre of Southampton.

As is customary, participants have a choice of three excursions for the Saturday afternoon: to Exbury Gardens, containing the world-famous Rothschild Collection of rhododendrons, azaleas and camelias. The garden was given in the March issue of the Royal Horticultural Society's journal, *The Garden*, as one of the best gardens to visit in search of Spring colour. Mottisfont Abbey House and Garden, originally a 13th century Augustine

priory similarly boasts a great plant collection, in this case of old-fashioned roses. The house has an amazing dining room which is decorated by Rex Whistler in 'trompe l'oeil' fantasy style. The third tour on offer is to Breamore House and Countryside Museum near Fordingbridge. This magnificent manor house contains a fine collection of pictures, rare tapestries, porcelain and furniture while the museum features old thatched cottages and replicas of village shops.

On Saturday morning the guest speaker will be Juliet Colman. Juliet was President of the UK National Committee for United Nations Development Fund for Women from 2004 to 2007, and Chair of the National Alliance of Women's Organisations from 2007 to 2008. She is a frequent speaker on international development issues, in particular women's human rights and gender equality. She has participated in UN and other international conferences including the

# Financial report for the year ended 31 December 2008

AR/2009/10

**Bryan Suitters**

Treasurer

## **A. Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2008**

A satisfactory operating surplus was achieved again during the year. This was carried to the General Fund and will facilitate the operations of the Association. The Life Membership Fund suffered a modest reduction in value this year. However, the large drop in the number of Life members registered with the Association at the end of the year should ensure that the Fund will sustain the short-term needs of the Life Members of the Association.

## **B. Budget for the year ending 31 December 2009**

It is thought that the income of the Association will decrease during 2009, and a modest decrease is anticipated in the budget. A conservative balanced budget is proposed, anticipating a pattern of expenditure that has emerged during recent years, and taking into account the proposed activities that ExCo has been discussing.

## **REPORT**

### **On the Accounts of the British Association of Former United Nations Civil Servants for the year ended 31 December 2008**

I have gone through the Accounts of the Association for the year ended 31 December 2008, and to the best of my knowledge I find them to be in accordance with the substantiating documents and bank statements provided by the Association's Honorary Treasurer.

In my opinion the Accounts present an accurate and fair view of the financial situation of the Association for the year 2008.

10 February 2009

signed:

E. Brathaug

Commission on the Status of Women. Her talk is entitled "How universal are women's rights?".

The Sunday morning session will include a new feature: an "Any Questions Session" with a panel chaired by Dame Margaret Anstee. Dame Margaret, a member of BAFUNCS, served the UN for over four decades (1952-93) and in 1987 was the first woman to achieve the rank of Under-Secretary-General. She was also the first woman to head a UN peace-keeping mission, including its military component, when from 1992-3 she was the Secretary-General's Special Representative to Angola. The hope of this new feature is to encourage participation by members in the proceedings of the Reunion.

At the time of going to press just over 100 members had registered for the meeting, but a



limited number of places still exist. Terms and reservation details were given in the Registration Form AR/2008/2 that was sent out with the September 2008 Newsletter. Members who may have mislaid it, can still book a place. Contact the Convenor/Registrar, June Hargreaves-Beer (email: [jhb@hargreaves-beer.freemove.co.uk](mailto:jhb@hargreaves-beer.freemove.co.uk); tel: 023 9241 2568). Since the deadline for booking (and paying) for the Annual Reunion has now passed, members wishing to attend should act immediately in order to avoid disappointment.

# ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

(rounded to nearest £)

	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Receipts:</b>					
Balance forward from 2007					64876
Membership Subscriptions		9770			
Bank Interest	Note 1	2742			
Reunion	Note 6	385			
Miscellaneous		0			
		<u>          </u>	12897		
Off-budget Items					
Music Group	Note 7	0			
Deposit from NOR Region	Note 5	12740			
Bank interest, NOR deposit		135			
Deposit from SCL Region	Note 5	11407			
Bank interest, SCL deposit		3			
		<u>          </u>	24285		
			<u>          </u>	37182	
<b>Payments:</b>					
General Administration	Note 2	605			
Executive Committee	Note 3	4540			
Taxation		0			
Other Organizations	Note 4	538			
Publishing		4143			
The Regions		869			
Reunion		0			
Miscellaneous		0			
		<u>          </u>	10695		
Off-budget Items:					
Music Group	Note 7	0			
Funds to NOR Region		24962			
Funds to SCL Region		0			
		<u>          </u>	24962		
			<u>          </u>	35657	
Surplus of receipts over payments					1525
<b>Balance carried forward at 31 December 2008</b>					<u>66401</u>
<b>Balances in Hand at 31 December 2008</b>					
(A) Bank Community Account			911		
(B) Bank Business Reserve Account			13956		
(C) Treasurer Deposit Account			40000		
(D) Bank Business Reserve (AR)			11412		
(E) Bank Business Reserve (MG)			122		
(F) Debtors			0		
			<u>          </u>		66401
<b>Movement of Funds:</b>					
Life Membership Fund at 31 December 2007		4033			
Pay Life Member subscriptions		-1512			
Interest on Fund Assets		100			
Member subscriptions		420			
			3041		
<b>General Fund:</b>					
at 31 December 2007		43101			
Add Life Member subscriptions		1512			
Pay interest to Life Member Fund		-100			
Pay new Life Members subscriptions		-420			
			44093		
<b>Liabilities</b>					
Shirley Phillips Reserve Fund		3259			
Life Membership Fund		3041			
General Fund	44093				
Add: Surplus for 2008	1525	45618			
Regions' deposits		14361			
Music Group deposits		122			
		<u>          </u>			
		66401			
		<u>          </u>			
<b>Assets</b>					
			(A)	911	
			(B)	13956	
			(C)	40000	
			(D)	11412	
			(E)	122	
			(F)	0	
				<u>          </u>	
				66401	
				<u>          </u>	

# NOTES TO BAFUNCS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER, 2008

(Rounded to nearest £)

	£	£
Note 1. Interest due but not yet received is not included.		
Note 2. These Administrative charges were:		
Mail (with internet)	285	
Travel	0	
Print/Photocopy	0	
Supplies	320	
Telephone	0	
Miscellaneous items	0	605
Note 3. These Executive Committee charges were :		
Printing and copying	927	
Mail and internet	0	
Telephone	0	
Travel	668	
Representation	2449	
Supplies	416	
Stationary	30	
Miscellaneous items	50	4540
Note 4. This payment is the subscription to FAFICS and the cost of making that payment		
Note 5. BAFUNCS offers the Region organizing the Annual Reunion a deposit facility to hold prepayments from attendees		
Note 6. This represents surplus funds generated from holding the Annual Reunion: in 2008		
Note 7. During 2008 it was decided not to continue with the activities of the Music Group. These residual funds will be absorbed into the General Fund.		

## BAFUNCS Proposed: Budget for 2009

Budget 2008	Item	Actual 2008	Budget 2009
Receipts:			
10500	Members Subscriptions	9770	10000
1500	Bank Interest	2742	1500
0	Surplus from Reunion	385	0
0	Miscellaneous	0	0
<u>12000</u>		<u>12897</u>	<u>11500</u>
Payments:			
1400	General Administration	605	600
3000	Executive Committee	4540	3900
700	Life Membership Subscriptions	1512	1250
0	Miscellaneous & Taxation	0	0
600	Other Organisations	538	550
4800	Publishing	4143	4200
1500	The Regions	869	1000
0	Reunion	0	0
<u>12000</u>		<u>12207</u>	<u>11500</u>

# Report of the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund to 31 December 2008

I have great pleasure to report that the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund has received a bequest of £430,000 from the estate of the late Denise Erica Thomas, a UN pensioner and a BAFUNCS member. An interim payment of £ 350,000 has initially been invested with Barclays the Fund's Banker.

This large contribution has changed the status of the Fund and, in accordance with the Charity Commissioners rules and regulations, the presentation of the annual accounts has had to be changed. Because the income received during the year exceeded £100,000, the Fund is required to

have an independent audit. The Trustees have, therefore, employed Hale & Company, a firm of Accountants and Auditors, to carry out these functions.

The accounts published below, are in a concise form. If any members wish to examine the complete version they should contact me.

The Trustees are well aware of the added responsibilities entrusted to them and will act in the best interests of the Fund, as always.

Nanda Wijayatilake, Clerk/Treasurer

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

	2008 £	2007 £
<b>Incoming Resources</b>		
Covenants	1,002	1,042
Legacies	430,000	-
Donations	19	300
Gift aid reclaimed	311	321
	<u>431,332</u>	<u>1,662</u>
Bank interest received	1,859	1,151
	<u>433,191</u>	<u>2,814</u>
<b>Resources Expended</b>		
Grants payable	600	900
Independent Examiner's fee	1,725	-
Administrative expenses	<u>9</u>	<u>23</u>
	<u>2,334</u>	<u>923</u>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for year</b>	430,857	1,891
<b>Accumulated surplus brought forward</b>	<u>37,937</u>	<u>36,046</u>
<b>Accumulated surplus carried forward</b>	<u><u>468,794</u></u>	<u><u>37,937</u></u>
<b>Balance sheet as at 31 December 2008</b>		
	<b>2008 £</b>	<b>2007 £</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash at bank	390,519	37,937
<b>Other Monetary Assets</b>		
Debtors	<u>80,000</u>	
	<u>470,579</u>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Independent Examiner's fee	<u>1,725</u>	
	<u>1,725</u>	
<b>Net Assets</b>	<u><u>468,794</u></u>	<u><u>37,937</u></u>
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS</b>		
<b>General charity fund</b>		
Accumulated surplus	<u><u>468,794</u></u>	<u><u>37,937</u></u>

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## **The British Association of Former United Nations Civil Servants Benevolent Fund**

### **Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2008**

I am reporting on the accounts of the general fund for the year ended 31 December 2008.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that
  - proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the Act); and
  - accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*Signed:*

C J Krol FCA

Hale & Company Chartered Accountants, 14 Crauford Rise, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 7LX

30 January 2009

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## **Denise Thomas (1925-2008): a major benefactor of the Fund**

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**Feature**

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**I**n August 2008 Denise Erica Thomas died bequeathing over £435,000 to the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund. Her bequest, the first sum of which (£350,000) was paid into the Fund in October 2008 has transformed the finances of the fund.

All the time that I knew Denise she remained something of a mystery; she rarely mentioned her past. Despite visiting her most weeks for four years, it was not until her death that I made a determined effort to learn more about her life.

Denise was born on 6 November 1925 in Mitcham, Surrey where her father was a family doctor. At the tender age of six, she was left by her parents with the Principal at Thame Girl's Grammar School as a full-time boarder. Her parents, I am told rarely visited her. Her final three years of schooling were at South Hampstead High School for Girls. From there she went to the famous Cheltenham Ladies College (1940 to 1942).

Like so many young women in

those times, after college she went on to train as a secretary, taking a course at the Queens' Secretarial College in London in Pitman's Shorthand. Her first employment was as a stenographer in the Medical Services branch of the Canadian Military Headquarters in London. In 1945 she went out to South Africa where her father was working. She was employed there as a secretary, but after three years she returned to the UK. She continued to work as a secretary.



On 23 July 1953 she married Rex Thomas, a photographer, and eventually went with him to New Zealand when his mother became ill, but the marriage did not last; the Decree Absolute was registered in New Zealand on 26 March 1964. After her divorce she returned to the UK where once again she turned to secretarial work. The break through came in 1966 when she was offered a probationary post in the UN in Geneva as a G4 secretary working for the Economic



Commission for Europe, she went on a mission to Africa, then worked for the High Commissioner for Refugees, finishing up in the Office of the Director-General and retiring in December 1985. During her UN career Denise was complimented on her precision, conscientiousness, competence, loyalty and courtesy. A colleague said she was very elegant, business-like and always very smartly dressed.

In retirement she purchased a flat in Worthing from which she enjoyed visiting friends, supporting clubs, the National Trust and many others in her car until it too had to be retired. In February 2004 she collapsed because her diabetes was not controlled. She was taken to hospital and returned home two weeks later on a Zimmer. Realizing she could not cope, she moved into a care home nearby. In December 2004 she decided to move to the Normanhurst Care Home where my mother had been for several years. Again she would not allow her diabetes to be controlled. As a result she collapsed and spent five weeks in hospital.

Denise could be difficult. She refused to have tests for diabetes because she would not allow needles to be pushed into her flesh. When she came out of hospital the second time Joan Wilson and I chose Bay House Nursing Home for her. We picked the best room, but this did not satisfy Denise and so the owner renovated a larger room. She was very well looked after by the staff and they even persuaded her

to have two cataract operations.

When things were difficult the owner of the home would say to me, without rancour, "Mr Foster we regard Denise as a challenge" - what a wonderful way to deal with the situation. Life for me would have been so simple had others accepted her peccadillos in a similar fashion.

Denise was very fond of cats; she surrounded herself with pictures and ornaments of them. She was very generous in her gifts to friends. She supported many organizations and was a friend of St Martins-in-the-Fields. Having no known relations, at times she felt very lonely and isolated. So ends the life of Denise Thomas who devoted so much of her working life to the service of the UN, working 20 years in Geneva. We must hope that her generous contribution to the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund will give valuable help and support to other less fortunate UN retirees in time of trouble and need.

*John Foster, KSX*

## Report

## Regional activities

Compiled by **Bill Jackson**, Regional Convenor

### Cambridge Region

Vincent Austin

We are sorry to report the deaths of Peter Elkan, Ann Kamp and Eleanor Porritt, all long-standing members living in Cambridge and who will be missed. We have also had resignations from Dr and Mrs Richard Hoggart, Marie-Therèse Bamford, Ann Elkan and Reg and Betty Johnson of Ipswich. Dr Hoggart's name, of course, remains for his lifetime on the roll of BAFUNCS' Honorary Vice-Presidents.

In September, eleven members took lunch with Carolyn Allaman at her house in Moulton near Newmarket. We are grateful to her for opening up her home to us.

In December, 12 members and their guests gathered at The Angel Hotel, Bury St Edmunds, for the Christmas Lunch and a look around the town afterwards. This was

the first time we had held the lunch in Bury: our far-flung Region stretches from Lincoln to south of Lowestoft, with a large concentration of members close to Cambridge.

Our plans for 2009 started with the AGM on 5 March at The Bell at Thetford, which has proved a popular venue in previous years. Further events will be held in June and September, at dates to be determined.

### Kent/Sussex Region

Joan Wilson

The Christmas Lunch at the Brickwall Hotel was enjoyed by 16 members. Lunch in Winifred Saunders' garden at Ditchling on 4 June, was most successful and the membership greatly regrets that she is moving to East Grinstead to be near her daughter: her hospitality will be greatly missed.

## Regional activities - continued

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The AGM was held in the Norfolk Arms Hotel, Arundel, on Wednesday, 11 February 2009, and 14 members attended. The following Officers were elected:

- Chairman/Regional Representative  
Joan Wilson
- Treasurer  
Brian Dando
- Membership Secretary  
Margaret Bills
- Welfare Officers
  - Brighton  
Grania Skeldon
  - Kent  
Anne Miller
  - Lewes and Haywards Heath  
Jennifer Brooke
  - Tunbridge Wells and environs  
Sheila Cooper
  - West Sussex  
Margaret Bills

The following activities were proposed for 2009/10:

- Monthly lunches at Alfriston: call Joan Wilson on 0142 4221459
- Occasional lunches in West Sussex: call Margaret Bills on 0190 3787081
- Autumn Lunch on Thursday, 1 October 2009, at the Hope Anchor Hotel in Rye
- Christmas Lunch on Wednesday, 9 December 2009, venue to be announced
- AGM on Thursday, 11 March 2010, venue to be announced.

There was also some discussion on the difficulty of finding suitable retirement homes. It was agreed that Welfare Officers would continue to keep in contact with members in their area.

### London Region

Walter Hoffman

The London Region completed its programme of luncheons for 2008 with a function celebrating UN Day in October and a final event in honour of Human Rights Day in December. Attendance at both of these meetings was rather disappointing. It is hoped that 2009 will bring increased interest among the members in these activities.

This year's programme follows the customary pattern, with our first luncheon at the Sherlock Holmes Hotel on 20 March 2009 followed by UN Day and Human Rights Day luncheons in October and November respectively.

During this year Dr. Zia Islam will be Vice-Chairman in place of Georgette Butler who acted in this role for several years.

### Northern Region

Robert England

The Region is currently planning to hold its 2009 Gathering from Thursday, 1 October, to Saturday, 3 October. It will take place at the Park Hotel, Peebles, in the Scottish Borders.

Nestled on the banks of the Tweed, about one hour

due south of Edinburgh, Peebles is a wonderful centre for walking, golf, fishing and wildlife - and even mountain biking (for adventurous BAFUNCS members only). Culturally it is close to John Buchan's birthplace and to Sir Walter Scott's home, Abbotsford, as well as a variety of Scottish country estates.

The Region will announce a more detailed programme in the spring, but BAFUNCS members should certainly consider including the Gathering in a tour of the area.

### Oxford Region

Bill Jackson

Our last report omitted to mention that we had lost a good friend with the death of Vernon Chivers. We now also much miss Oliver Knowles, who with his Shavian looks and fund of experiences both colonial and UN was a pleasure to be with at our lunches. Despite these losses our numbers have remained much the same, as we have welcomed Alan Handcock, Margaret Gallagher and Maggie Black as new members.

In October, 31 members met at Benson Marina and enjoyed drinks in the sun before lunch in the Waterfront Bistro. A further very encouraging attendance saw 29 of us get together on 11 December for our habitual pre-Christmas lunch at the Four Pillars Hotel in the Thames-side Oxford suburb of Sandford - in a heated outdoor marquee with seasonal decoration and ambiance appropriately reminiscent of the Middle East!

Our plans for 2009 will include a lunch/visit in the west of the region at the Flag and Lamb at Southmoor or the Horse and Jockey at Stanford-in-the-Vale; a visit in the east to the Henley Rowing Museum, with lunch in the Museum Restaurant and an after-lunch stroll over the weirs along the Thames path; and a visit to Thame Museum and Town, with lunch in the recently refurbished Spread Eagle, or to the Lambert Arms at Aston Rowant, combined with a visit to the English Nature Reserve. Our Region has been invited to host the BAFUNCS' 2012 Annual Reunion and we are just beginning to put our minds to the task.

Cyril Groom remains our Secretary/Treasurer and Bill Jackson our Chair. The post of Welfare Secretary has been filled by Susan Miller. Living near Oxford, Bill gives some assistance to BAFUNCS' Adviser on the UN Career Records Project, Michael Askwith. A useful meeting on the Project involving our President, Sir Richard Jolly, and Dr. Helen Langley of the Bodleian Library was held at the Library in December.

### South Central Region

June Hargreaves-Beer

Twenty-four members attended our Autumn lunch on 4

September. This took the form of a buffet lunch at our home in Rowlands Castle. Each member brought a contribution and our table groaned under a variety of delicious food. Fred gave a talk on encounters over the years, and over the world, with various creepy-crawlies. Although the weather was far from suitable for people to sit in the garden, a few brave souls did venture out to look at Fred's Koi.

Our Christmas lunch took place once again at the Upland Park Hotel, Droxford, on 4 December. Twenty-eight members and guests attended. Before lunch we were treated to an entertaining and informative talk, with slides, by Brian Kidd, Hampshire's well-known and well-loved garden expert. Brian's talk was entitled 'Colour all the Year Round' and even the non-gardeners in our group enjoyed it very much.

We have been busy with arrangements for AR2009 to be held at the Chilworth Manor Hotel, Chilworth, from 8–11 May. We are very impressed by the hotel, its beautiful grounds, splendid new leisure centre and the efficient and friendly staff. We have three pleasant excursions planned and we look forward to an enjoyable meeting.

Throughout the year we shall continue our formula of a lunch (in a pub or hotel) in different parts of the Region towards the end of March, June and September, and early December for our Christmas lunch. Members from other Regions and guests are always welcome to join us.

### South West and Channel Islands Region

Rosemary ap Rees

Our autumn reunion at the Wessex Hotel in Street, Somerset, attracted 28 members, some staying the night after the very enjoyable dinner.

The lunches at the Strode Arms in West Cranmore have also drawn good numbers: 25 in September and 29 in December for the Christmas gathering – it would have been 31 if a car hadn't broken down!

Our AGM takes place on 5 March 2009 at the Old Pavilion of the Somerset County Cricket Club in Taunton. The next lunch after that will be at the Strode Arms on 11 June. This year's autumn reunion will be held at Tanton's Hotel in Bideford on 3 October.

We look forward to being hosts to AR2010 from 7 to 9 May at the Mercure Southgate Hotel in Exeter. We are now identifying a choice of interesting outings for that weekend.

Sadly the last few months have seen us lose our old friend Dr. Seal. Our stalwart former Regional Treasurer, Mrs Ellen Alves, died in January. On the other hand we welcome to our Region Dr and Mrs John Sale, formerly members in West Midlands and Wales.

### Surrey Region

Patricia Brown

The six months since the last report on Surrey Region activities have passed in a flash. A proposed visit to St John's Gate, the Headquarters of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, had to be cancelled owing to lack of interest. This was a disappointment and as a result it has been decided to organize only one event during 2009, possibly a visit to Lincoln's Inn. In addition we shall try to emulate the KSX Region by making arrangements with an accessible pub in Surrey to allow members to have lunch together regularly, say once a month, on a selected day, by simply turning up. Once the name of the pub is announced, members are urged to give the idea a try.

The Christmas luncheon was held at a new venue, the Antoinette Hotel in Kingston-upon-Thames. It was a relaxed and chatty occasion in very pleasant surroundings. The hotel looked after us well and we would have liked to go back, but unfortunately outside Christmas it charges a high fee for the hire of a room.

Therefore, for the Annual General Meeting on 27 February we went back to the Ambassadors, the theatre complex in Woking that members have enjoyed in the past. The existing regional committee of Tilly Armstrong, Alison Husaunndee, Isobel Taylor, Dell Tierney, Hazel Parsons, Patricia Mukhtar and Patricia Brown was elected for a further term, with two new member, Ann Chaplin and Gerard Teunissen. Tilly, who has certainly done her stint in one capacity or another, will not stand again.

I mentioned in the last report that Marilyn Carr is promoting the United Nations Career Records Project in the Surrey Region. Among her activities will be face-to-face interviews with Surrey members, starting with one member as a trial, after which it is hoped that others will come forward to be interviewed, in addition to those who are already taking part or have expressed an interest.

Three new members have joined the Region: Mrs M Francis, Mr G Teunissen and Mrs M Roes; and two have moved to Surrey from the KSX Region: Mrs P Coulter and Mr A T Brough. Current membership stands at 87.

With sadness I have to report the deaths of three members: Mr T G Davis, Mr A J Smyth and Mrs Pamela Gates Botton. Mr Smyth will be remembered by many of the longer standing members and Pamela, my personal friend of more than 50 years, will be remembered as a former Honorary Secretary of the Surrey Region.

### West Midlands and Wales Region

Duncan Morris

The region has lost three members who have moved: Dr and Mrs Sale have moved to Crediton in Devon and Sarah Oswald, a nonagenarian, has gone to Canada to be with

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her son. We wish them all the best in their new homes. We have, however, gained four new members: Mr and Mrs Sutcliffe have moved to Solihull in the West Midlands and Mr and Mrs Herd have moved to Welshpool in Powys. We welcome them and look forward to meeting them at our regional reunions. The region now has 54 members.

As always, we extend our thanks to Mrs Phyl Marshall, our Regional Welfare Officer, for her sterling work.

The Region held its Autumn Reunion Lunch at the Unicorn Hotel in Stow-on-the-Wold on 29 October. Sixteen WMW members were joined by ExCo members June Hargreaves-Beer and Fred Beer (SCL) and Michael Davies (OXF) for lunch. This was followed by a reassuring briefing on the UNJSPF by Michael Davies and a lively discussion about AR 2012.

The Region's Spring Reunion will be held on Wednesday, 8 April 2009, at the Old Passage Inn at Arlingham in Gloucestershire. The Old Passage is offering a two-course lunch with coffee for £15 a head and, providing there are enough people to make it worthwhile, a guided tour of nearby Frampton Court, a Grade 1\* Listed

Georgian country house, at £7 a head. BAFUNCS members from other regions and their guests are always very welcome at WMW functions and anybody wishing to join us on this occasion should contact Duncan Morris on 01452 740773.

## **Overseas Region**

Fred Beer

Our Region's membership remains at around 70, with four new members, though sadly we have had reports of the death of two members. It is encouraging that BAFUNCS is of interest to UN retirees living outside the UK.

All Overseas members were sent information on the position of the UN Staff Pension Fund under the current financial turmoil.

To date, four members have registered for the Annual General Assembly and Reunion, organized this year by the South Central Region, in Hampshire. We look forward to meeting them in May, and to welcoming others who have yet to register.

## **Visit events in other Regions**

Members are welcome to attend events in all Regions. For the latest information see the IMO website: <http://bafuncs.imo.org/home.htm>. Contact details, where not given, can be found in the Membership List.

### **Cambridge**

Events planned for June and September, at dates to be decided.

### **Kent/Sussex**

1 October - autumn lunch, Hope Anchor Hotel, Rye  
9 December - Christmas lunch, venue to be decided  
11 March, 2010 - AGM, venue to be announced  
Second Thursday of each month: informal lunch at The George Inn, Alfriston, East Sussex - contact Joan Wilson on 0142 4221459  
Occasional lunches in West Sussex - contact Margaret Bills on 0190 3787081

### **London**

Lunch at the Sherlock Holmes Hotel from 12.30: lunches are planned for UN day and Human Rights day in October and November respectively, for details contact Brenda Suitters (01582 763457).

### **Northern**

1-3 October - Gathering at Park Hotel, Peebles.

### **Oxford**

Plans for 2009 include a visit to Southmoor for lunch

at the Flag and Lamb or a visit to Stanford-in-the-Vale for lunch at the Horse and Jockey; a visit to the Henley Rowing Museum, with lunch in the Museum Restaurant, followed by a walk along the river; and a visit to Thame Museum and Town, with lunch in the Spread Eagle or lunch at the Lambert Arms at Aston Rowant, combined with a visit to the English Nature Reserve. Contact: Cyril Groom 01844 218399

### **South Central**

8-11 May - General Assembly and Annual Reunion, Chilworth Manor Hotel, Chilworth, Hampshire. Lunches are planned towards the end of June and September with a Christmas lunch in December

### **South West**

11 June - lunch at the Strode Arms, West Cranmore  
3 October - Autumn Reunion, Tanton's Hotel, Bideford  
Contact: Rosemary ap Rees 01749 880511

### **Surrey**

The Region has decided to organize only one event during 2009, possibly a visit to Lincoln's Inn, but plans to experiment with occasional informal lunches in the same way as KSX Region.

### **West Midlands and Wales**

8 April - spring reunion, the Old Passage Inn, Arlingham, Gloucestershire.. Contact: Duncan Morris 01452 740773

## Tony Loftas Editor

"I can claim to have enjoyed the excitements of long-distance sea travel before the transition to air travel and having taken part in the last years of imperialism."

"March 1943 was the very peak of the U-boat war with a hundred German submarines at sea and 69 ships sunk in the North Atlantic during that month."

Cloudless Sulphurs migrate from the forests of Yucatan across the Gulf of Mexico to the eastern United States to breed. The offspring then returns to Central America. The convoy probably met a returning cloud of butterflies.

"We had no escort but travelled at thirty knots, zigzagging from time to time. The Queen Mary carried the finest sonar equipment and bristled with anti-aircraft guns."

Arthur's stories carry more than a hint of nostalgia. His love of ships goes back to youthful adventures on a home-made raft on a big horse pond at the family farm in Suffolk.

**\*On Boats In Wartime**  
by Arthur Staniforth,  
Trafford Publishing  
([www.trafford.com](http://www.trafford.com)),  
ISBN 1-4251-6283-5  
paperback: £7.50

Arthur Staniforth's little book gives a glimpse of a time when ships still dominated long distance travel and when the hostilities of war meant crossings were made in convoy under the threat of submarine attack. It consists of a series of linked vignettes that cover a period from 1943 to 1945. I was amazed at how many boats are featured in this short span. An agriculture graduate from Reading, Arthur owed the experience to being selected "to go to the colonies to organise agriculture to produce crops that were essential to the war effort". This required him to attend the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture (ICTA) in Trinidad. After the war the passenger plane soon eclipsed the ship for travelling the world and he ended his colonial service in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan in 1949 "when the writing was on the wall".

The author starts with a description of the assembly of a convoy of 64 merchant ships and its escort, and his subsequent experiences crossing the North Atlantic in the spring of 1943. Many of the ships became separated in a violent storm. Only 40 of the original convoy were still together for the final leg from just south of Greenland to New York. Arthur's description of navigating through the fog off the Grand Banks is quite exciting. He was on board *MV Tigre*. On her return voyage to the UK three ships in her convoy were torpedoed and sunk. "We did not realise how fortunate we had been."

Arthur's journey from the United States to Trinidad and the ICTA can be said to presage what was to come. He flew there from Miami in a converted Liberator bomber. "We travelled in eleven hours about the same distance as we had travelled in storm-tossed seas between Ireland and Newfoundland in about a month."

His training at the ICTA complete, Arthur left the Caribbean for the UK and his duty station in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The first leg of the journey was aboard the *SS Dynastic*, the commodore's ship, that was leading a small convoy of eight ships plus escort. Early in the voyage they were joined by more ships. While sailing close by Haiti they ran into huge clouds of pale yellow butterflies, heading south with the wind. When they were off the American base on the tip of Cuba, Guantanamo, the faster ships left the convoy which was now joined by an American escort. They then ran into stormy weather, eventually classified as a hurricane, but made it safely to New York. The return across the North Atlantic from New York was very different from the crossing from England. This time it was on the Queen Mary in cabin accommodation, shared with three others, that had been used by Winston Churchill when crossing to meet President Roosevelt!

To reach his posting in northern Sudan, the author had to travel from Liverpool to Port Said on the *SS Capetown Castle* again in convoy. After staying overnight, Arthur took a train to Shellal where he boarded a new type of craft - a Nile stern wheeler. "This was just before passenger planes took over the job of ferrying people over long distances and must have been one of the last runs by business passengers on the stern wheeler from Kosti to Juba."

Arthur retraced these steps in 1945 on his first home leave. The war had just ended and he had great difficulties obtaining a berth home. After waiting three weeks he finally obtained a place on the *RSMP Orbita*, a Royal Steam Packet Ship that had been converted into a troop carrier. This journey in a ship packed with hundreds of returning soldiers was almost the last time he travelled by sea. He returned from his leave by air, first in a series of hops in a Bristol Wayfarer, a converted freight-carrier, to the Sudan and then by Vickers Viscount, a purpose-built passenger plane, to his duty station. It was a new era in travel although the increasing popularity of cruise holidays has led to the construction of passenger ships far bigger than any he experienced. The slowness that led to the demise of sea travel has become an attraction to people seeking leisure, comfort and an escape from the hectic pace of living.

# Life after retirement - from the World Meteorological Organization

Feature

*David Axford was asked recently by a friend what he had done since retiring from the WMO. His reply adds substance to what many of us feel: retirement can be the start of one of the busiest times of your life! What do you think? Please let me know. The Editor*

Mid-1995, when I retired from WMO, seems a long time ago now. Fortunately most of what I have been up to is in my PC! On leaving Geneva Diana and I returned to our house near Henley-on-Thames and settled back into life in the UK. I think of this as the first phase in my retirement.

From 1996 to 1999 I took an interest in local and environmental matters. For example I spent two days a week as a consultant with the Earthwatch Institute in Oxford. In the community I was a Trustee of the Thames Valley Hospice in Windsor from 1996 to 1998.

In 1999 I was invited to be Chairman of the Accreditation Board of the \*Royal Meteorological Society (RMetS). I was also invited to be Chairman of the Accreditation Committee of the newly active European Meteorological Society (EMS). I had been on the Committee of the RMetS Specialist Group on Meteorological Observing Systems since 1995.

In 1996 I was co-opted on to the Executive Committee of BAFUNCS. After a spell as Vice-Chairman in 1998, I became Chairman in 1999.

In mid-1998 we decided to move to Stanford-in-the-Vale, Oxfordshire, to live in a more rural village community. This was somewhat put in jeopardy by my having five operations needed to put in two replacement hips between 1999 and 2002 (and remove a nasty infection). Nevertheless, this began a second phase of retired life for both of us.

In 2004 my five years as Chairman of the RMetS Accreditation Board came to an end, but in 2002 I had been appointed as a Vice-President and Treasurer of the EMS. In 2006 all my EMS activities were completed.

In 2005 my time as Chairman of the BAFUNCS Executive Committee also came to an end, although I was made a Vice President for my sins. Since then I have represented the Association at the meetings of the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) Council, in particular on its Working Group on a revision of the Statutes and on agreeing the Rules

of Procedure. It has been interesting to see the work done by FAFICS to protect our pensions.

We soon settled into our new village. I became a Trustee of the village Public Purposes Charity in 2000. I was the Honorary Chairman from 2000 to 2002 and then Honorary Clerk/Correspondent, a task which I am still looking after. There is a lot of village politics – just like WMO politics but on a smaller scale! I drive a community bus every 3 or 4 weeks which is a fund of village rumours. I also became the first Chairman of our Stanford-in-the-Vale and District Local History Society from 2004.

My interest in family history and local village history led me to take a Diploma and an Advanced Diploma in English Local History Studies at the University of Oxford in Kellogg College from 2004 to 2007. It involved a lot of enjoyable study sessions with a mixed age group of like-minded people, writing a number of papers and even taking two three-hour exam papers where I had to write with a pen again. This was very educational, no doubt, but my writing has always been difficult to read.

My latest foray is to become a Trustee of The Friends of the Ridgeway, a small environmentally-friendly charity that supports the maintenance of this ancient trail in southern England.

So retirement has been a rather busy time. Diana and I do manage to find time for some leisure activities, such as looking after the home and garden, visiting Europe, mainly France, Italy and Portugal (and occasionally Switzerland), as well as the occasional holiday further afield. We have visited China, Egypt and Thailand amongst other places. We like good food and good wine. We also enjoy the regular lunches of the BAFUNCS Oxford Region and the weekend Annual Reunion and AGM that is held in a different region each year.

I still maintain some contact with the meteorological world through the Meteorological Club, which brings colleagues together most months for a pleasant dinner in London. There is a good set of ex-WMO members ranging from Oliver Ashford and Martin Stubbs who were well before my time, to John Rodda, John Miller, Stan Cornford and Dave Carson.

At Christmas 2008 we had many visits from children and grandchildren to enliven the days (we have four boys and three girls, and twelve grandchildren). We went to Egypt for a week in February. Altogether I have to agree with a former colleague, Gustavo Necco, that retirement is a time full of activity and action. We do not know now how we found time to go to work!

*David Axford, OXF*

\*David Axford has been a Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society (RMetS) since 1960. He served as Honorary General Secretary from 1983 to 1989 and as a Vice-President from 1989-1991.

# The World Food Programme: collapse of a concept?

**\*Farid Oufi**  
OXF

The Paris meeting took place at a time when the role of aid in development was attracting increasing public scrutiny. The British government had made the lack of economic development in Africa a major issue for the Gleneagle's G8 Summit in July 2005. The Global Call to Action Against Poverty, mobilised partly in preparation for the Summit, now Involves some 80 countries. It is the largest anti-poverty movement in history.

\*Farid Oufi worked as a senior field officer in WFP from 1967 to 1989. During this time he had assignments in seven countries where he was responsible for food aid operations.

Recent developments in the operations of the UN World Food Programme give the impression to former staffers like me that the basis on which the agency was founded in 1962 has passed into history. While a changing world has dictated that UN agencies and programmes adapt to meet new and changing challenges, they still continue essentially in the same way; certainly none of them seem to have undergone such a fundamental change.

WFP was founded primarily through the initiative of the United States which wanted to find a market for its huge grain surpluses and to keep a powerful farmers' lobby happy. The Europeans joined them because they favoured the idea and it was in their interest. The effectiveness of food aid was to be judged by its impact on social and economic development. Food-for-work was set up as a vital instrument in motivating local communities and for delivering food aid, although the needs of people in times of emergency and calamity were not overlooked. About 20 percent of the Programme's resources were set aside for such needs while the remaining 80 percent was allocated to support social and economic development with self-sufficiency as a target.

Over the past 10 years or so, the situation has changed. Grain surpluses have fallen and global food crises with a variety of causes have emerged. Increasingly the providers of food aid have focused on emergencies and the need to sustain the people caught up in them rather than on supporting economic and social development. The food-for-work concept has been further weakened by reductions in food donations and a lack of or inadequate financial support by the recipient countries. Food aid is usually seen as third in line of development assistance after capital investment and the transfer of technical knowledge. In 2004, almost 85 percent of WFP's resources went for relief operations in three categories: national disasters, crop failure (as a result of drought) and man-made disasters (civil wars and the like).

In February 2005 the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) organised the Paris High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Despite some progress in coordinating aid and making it more responsive to the needs of the recipients, it was still determined largely by the priorities of donors and administered through donor channels; developing

countries found it difficult to take the lead. The Paris meeting agreed that there was a need for improved coordination, greater reliability and more transparency in the provision of aid. There was a consensus that for aid to be more effective, developing countries should take centre stage in formulating and implementing their own national development plans. More than 100 signatories (from donor and recipient governments, multilateral donor agencies, regional development banks and international agencies) endorsed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

The Paris declaration laid down principles for making aid work better, and drew up specific targets which donors and recipients are supposed to meet by 2010. It aims, among other things, to integrate the use of food aid in local development, not to create a parallel system guarded by foreigners as technical consultants. Recipient countries are encouraged to lay down a set of national development priorities and to ask donors to fit in with them, even to refuse offers of aid that do not do so (see Panel, top right).



*Digging clay to make bricks for walls and houses*

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The food-for-work concept would seem to be completely in step with such proposals, but WFP seems determined to relegate it to the pages of history. In his foreword to the WFP Annual Performance Report for 2005 (16 May 2006) Executive Director, James T. Morris, wrote, "The year 2005 also confirmed that our strategy is well placed – our highest priority is responding to emergencies and saving lives." In June 2008, WFP's Executive Board approved a new four-year Strategic Plan (2008-2011) to address growing hunger as a result of the global food crisis. The Plan in effect wipes out the development concept of food-for-work as pioneered by the founders of WFP. If this concept goes, it is unclear what a functioning community development will mean in the context of meeting hunger needs.

According to WFP, the Strategic Plan marks a historical shift from WFP as a "food aid" agency to WFP as a "food assistance" agency with a set of tools to respond to critical hunger needs, saving lives and protecting livelihoods in an emergency. A more or less similar task is undertaken by some 37,000 non-government organizations that presently operate on international and domestic levels. If fragmentation of development assistance is to be avoided and food aid delivered effectively, some order and coordination needs to be brought to the multitude of procedures that are involved. A positive sign is the increasing number of NGO partners that WFP has, indicating a strategy to improve coordination of operations in the field something that did not exist in my time. This should encourage a move away from a pyramidal structure dominated by headquarters to a strengthening of country offices.

The overarching goal of WFP's new strategy is, we are told, to reduce the dependency on aid or assistance of low-income communities, and to support efforts to ensure long-term solutions to the challenge of hunger. How can this be achieved without food-for-work projects and with so many demands being placed on the Programme's finite resources? I await with interest and not a little concern for WFP's answer over the coming years.

## The Paris Forum 2005

The Declaration of the Paris High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness focuses on five principles:

- **Ownership** Developing countries must be in charge of and lead their own development policies and strategies.
- **Alignment** Aid must support the priorities set in the development strategies of the recipient countries.
- **Harmonisation** Donors must improve their coordination in order to avoid duplication and pool aid in support of strategies led by the recipient country.
- **Managing for results** All parties involved in the provision of aid must focus on the difference it makes in the lives of the poor.
- **Mutual accountability** Donors and developing countries must account more transparently for the use of aid funds, and to their citizens and parliaments on the impact of their aid.

## • how to avoid scams

*Unless I receive more contributions from members, this column will be dropped in future issues. Editor*

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### Avoiding scams

A scam is a scheme to con someone out of their cash and can take the form of bogus offers sent by post, telephone or e-mail. Every year 3 million people fall victim to scams losing an average of £850 each. You can protect yourself from scams by taking the following simple precautions:

- Never reply straight away to an offer. Discuss it with someone before you send any money;
- Never trust any message that says you have won a lottery or big prize. They will always

want you to send a fee or order something and you will never see any promised winnings;

- Never give your bank account details or other personal information to people you do not know;
- Don't be frightened into sending off money to so-called psychics. They send identical letters to thousands of other people to con them;
- Don't ring a premium rate 090 phone number to claim a prize unless you are told how much the call will cost and what you are likely to receive;

If a person you know receives a lot of un-requested junk mail of this type, it is suggested that they sign up to the free Mailing Preference Service to reduce the amount of junk mail (Tel 0845 703 4599). A similar service exists to block unsolicited phone calls.

If you or someone you know has been scammed get advice from your local Citizens Advice Bureau, from Consumer Direct (Tel 0845 404 0506) or your local Authority Trading Standards Service.

*Excerpts prepared by Michael Davies from the Office of Fair Trading brochure on scams*

## Self-help centre

## Irene Chamberlain Southwest and Channel Islands Region

The reason given for her dismissal was that her conduct had been so harsh and unreasonable that she was responsible for a shortage of nurses.

Normally verbatim reporters take notes for ten minutes and then have 30 or 40 minutes for transcription.

This is what the late, distinctly eccentric, American artist, Andy Warhol, once claimed we would all experience. The full text of his remark, made in 1968, was "In the future everybody will be world famous for fifteen minutes". I can not claim world-wide fame, but I certainly experienced a few days of fame, of a sort, in this country in 1939 and I have been reminded of it by the discovery of a file of yellowing press-cuttings.

I had finished training at my commercial college and was working there as a pupil-teacher when, in February 1939, a gentleman from the Ministry of Health paid us a visit. He explained that the Ministry was holding an inquiry at the nearby Farnborough Hospital where the Matron, recently dismissed by Kent County Council, was appealing against that decision. The inquiry was expected to last three days and the College was asked if it could provide a verbatim reporter. I had a verbatim shorthand speed of between 180 and 200 words per minute and the College agreed to loan me to the Ministry.

I thus embarked on an extraordinary task. Far from being over in three, the inquiry lasted seventeen days! When it was clear that it was going on longer than expected, the College sent a couple of other girls to help me, but they were less experienced and so I still tried, not entirely successfully, to get every word down. I filled seven quarto-sized half-inch thick notebooks in all.

The inquiry became of national interest and was followed by reporters from *the Daily Mail*, *Express*, *Daily Herald* and *the Evening News* among others, and when it was all over, to my utter astonishment and not a little alarm, I was surrounded by these gentlemen. I had imagined their interest would have been in the Matron, but she was not a very attractive lady; even during the inquiry, she had been somewhat overbearing and arrogant - attitudes which had apparently led to her dismissal. For the so-called 'gentlemen of the press', I was a much better bet for a story. I was 17 and blond!

The next morning I hit the headlines of the national press (though only on the inside pages and not, I hasten to add, as a 'page three girl'):

"180-a-minute girl starts on 540,000 word task...Sunniest smile of all was that of seventeen-year-old Irene Chamberlain who has taken down the whole of the 540,000 words of evidence." *Daily Express*

"Typist, 17, filled seven notebooks...Seventeen-years-old Irene Chamberlain closed a fat quarto-sized writing block, shook her fair curls with relief, and the Farnborough Hospital inquiry was over." *Daily Mail*

"Irene took a note of it" *Daily Herald*

and so on. *The Daily Mail* and *the Evening News* carried photographs, and there were items in various local papers. In one I was described as a "Silent Heroine". I even received mail addressed simply to Miss Irene Chamberlain, shorthand-writer, Petts Wood.

It was quite fun while it lasted, but then I had to get down to transcribing my notes. This took nearly three months, working nine to five every day and sometimes weekends. I duly sent off the massive transcript to the Ministry of Health in, I think, early June.

I had to wait months to be paid. My father became indignant at the delay, He was well placed to do something about it because he worked in Westminster. He was a political journalist, a member of the Press Gallery of the House of Commons. The advent of the Summer Recess meant he had time to hammer on a few doors in the Ministry of Health. I finally got paid just before War broke out. I got something over £100 – a lot of money in those days. I treated myself to two new dresses and bought a 'wireless' for the family, but a lot was banked and used to fund my first trip abroad in 1946.

And the Matron? She won her case but resigned shortly afterwards!  
Would anyone like my autograph?

# Follow-up by the Pension Fund to questions from FAFICS

The annual meeting of the FAFICS Council includes a session with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and senior staff of the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund (see page 23, *BAFUNCS Newsletter*, No. 54, September 2008). In preparation for the meeting with the Pension Fund the Council submits a list of questions that it like to be considered.

The formal response to these questions is given following the meeting in a written memorandum from the CEO of the Pension Fund to the Chairman of FAFICS. What follows are edited extracts from this memorandum that might be of interest to BAFUNCS members.

***Beneficiaries in a number of countries are astonished by the inability of the Fund to implement in a timely manner cost-of-living adjustments which are due normally on 1 April. This is a result, to the best of our knowledge, of the incapacity of the UN Statistical Office to obtain the relevant data on time. This issue is described in the note prepared for the FAFICS Council by the British Association of Former United Nations Civil Servants (BAFUNCS), already sent to the Secretary/CEO (Council 37/2008/D.5). FAFICS intends to propose to the Board at its next session that article 14 of the Pension Adjustment System be reviewed. We should like to hear your comments on this issue.***

The Fund uses data from the UN Statistics Division as published in the UN Monthly Bulletin of Statistics which is the formally acceptable source of Consumer Price Index (CPI) data within the Fund's Pension Adjustment System. The Fund maintains close on-going contact with the relevant staff to ensure the timeliness of providing CPI data to the UNJSPF and the reliability of Monthly Bulletin of Statistics CPI data published for countries where 'inflation' represents significant concerns.

It is important for the Fund to seek clarification as to what can be done to resolve any issues so that its beneficiary population avoids delay in CPI adjustments. With regard to the Fund's requirements, it has been stressed to the statistical office that the need for data is of paramount importance at the beginning of the calendar year, when the Fund needs to be in possession of the December data in February in order to be able to process the cost of living adjustment in time for its benefits payable as from 1 April.

In this context, the question of using alternative sources of data has been considered, but it was concluded that the potential problems of using data before it had been vetted, if it were to transpire that it was not suitable for use, were too great and that the Fund would be acting without authority if it were to use any other than the recognized sources. Allowing for the operational constraints and the potential difficulties of having to unwind an adjustment if it were based upon unreliable data, a better coordination of efforts between the Fund and the UN Statistics Division can offer a means of avoiding the issue arising.

The Fund will make a point to call the UN Statistics Division towards the end of the year, reminding it to follow up with the ILO, to provide an advanced copy of the Bulletin of Statistics and to forewarn the Fund of any potential missing data from the final listing. The Fund will provide a list of countries where it has beneficiaries paid under the two track feature of the Pension Adjustment System in order to get the most complete CPI data set. If data was sought for key countries in December, a better focus would be given to those countries where the Fund had concentrations of beneficiaries for February.

It is understood that in response to questions from the Fund, the UN Statistics Division will look into the issue in cooperation with ILO. The Fund has also considered how to improve its own communications in this regard by providing more information to the recipients of its circular letter with regard to the reasons why a particular country has not received an adjustment. More importantly, it must be stressed that any payment due under the Regulations and under the Pension Adjustment System are always made retroactive, when required, regardless as to whether or not the benefits are processed and/or adjusted on time.

***Very long delays in the processing of the benefits of surviving spouses have been reported by some of our member associations. In two cases that have been brought to the knowledge of AAFI/AFICS-Geneva, widows have had to wait for four and for ten months respectively. Both cases required an intervention of the Association with the Geneva Office of the Pension Fund. A delay of as long as 17 months has been reported by our member association in Bangalore (India). It is hardly necessary to stress what hardship may be involved in such situations. What measures do you***

*envision to put an end to situations of this nature?*

All staff of the Fund is made aware of the sensitivity of issues pertaining to the processing of survivor's benefits. In fact, processing of survivor's benefits has always been and will continue to be a priority for the Fund. Any delay in the processing of such cases is almost invariably attributable to the time it takes to receive the required documentation.

As can easily be understood from the surviving spouse's point of view the formalities required by the Fund should not be a priority at such a sensitive point in time. Unfortunately, in order to adhere to the necessary control processes, the Fund must verify that all requirements have been met before processing its benefits. There are, in fact, steps that can be taken in advance by active participants and/or by retirees to facilitate the processing of any potential survivor's benefit.

More specifically, such individuals can ensure that the Fund has relevant up-to-date documentation on file, such as the UNJSPF Designation of Beneficiary form (for potential residual settlements), birth certificates, marriage certificates and/or any relevant divorce settlements. Such preparations could go a long way towards facilitating the processing of potential survivor benefits payable from the Fund. In addition, it should be noted that the Fund intends to prepare a booklet on this subject that will list specific steps that can be taken in advance. Although the member associations of FAFICS already have useful experience in these matters and have already proven to be a valuable source of assistance to the Fund in providing the relevant information, it is believed that a specific booklet on the subject will further enhance this support.

*In the past two or three years there has been an increase in the number of beneficiaries requesting to move from the dollar track to the dual track. The processing of such applications by the Fund secretariat is, we believe, unduly long. Our member association in Australia reports cases of beneficiaries in that country whose application has still not been attended to eight or nine months after it was made. What do you plan to do to improve the situation?*

The weakening of the US dollar has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of two-track cases for the Fund. Unfortunately, given the

sudden increase some backlogs have arisen in this area; however the Fund has made substantial progress and is now again back to its normal processing time. The biggest single issue is in trying to meet quarterly cut off dates. For example, if the election is made to be paid under the two track feature on 10 July, the payment under the two track feature cannot begin until 1 October. This may give the impression of a delay whereas the Fund has implemented the case as quickly as allowed under the terms of the Pension Adjustment System. In addition, there are other issues such as the unavailability of the two track option for certain countries and occasional confusion between requesting an estimate and making a definitive election which may create an impression of delay. Moreover, it must be reiterated that any payment due under the Regulations and under the Pension Adjustment System are always made retroactively, when required, regardless as to whether the benefits and/or adjustments are processed on time.

*Many complaints are made by beneficiaries about the difficulty of obtaining replies to requests or inquiries and even of contacting the Pension Fund secretariat by phone. What improvements do you think possible on this issue?*

As has been confirmed on a number of occasions, the Fund places great importance upon client services and continues to remain accessible to all its constituents. In both New York and Geneva there are separate units specifically dedicated to the function headed by relatively senior professionals, who also have experience within the operational areas of the Fund. The Fund makes every attempt possible to respond to enquiries in due time. However, with a total population of more than 160,000 participants and beneficiaries now making up the Fund's constituency, it cannot always meet its target response times. The requirement to have knowledgeable staff available to provide the correct information is also a significant factor in providing the necessary support to beneficiaries and participants. The Fund has a communication policy in place and all staff members are frequently reminded to be aware of the important needs of the individuals with whom they are dealing. The Fund has started a project to create response templates for standard queries in order to speed up responses, but it must always endeavour to give a reply tailored to the individual's personal circumstances.

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In the longer term, reinforcing the client services function may require additional staff, but, as noted above, the need to make accurate information available means that there is a long lead time in training staff up to the necessary level of knowledge together with finding individuals with the appropriate personal skills for dealing with what are often highly complex matters. In addition, allocating personnel with the requisite client servicing experience means that such individuals must often be taken away from other functions. Since there is continual pressure upon the Fund to meet its quality objectives other tools may be required to help meet expectations. In this connection and specifically with respect to telephone queries there is a routing system in operation and there is always coverage in the office concerned. Therefore, no one should expect to wait long for telephone assistance unless they are calling a number other than the dedicated Client Services number.

Since the Fund became aware of the occasional difficulties in reaching the Geneva Office by telephone, it was decided to update its approach. Therefore, as from the end of June 2008, an IVR (incoming voice router) has been implemented in the Geneva Office. The first impressions of this change have been positive, as there seem to be fewer complaints; usage and performance will, however, continue to be under review.

***We should like to suggest that the recent booklet on the Emergency Fund be made available to all beneficiaries. The fact that it is available on the website is not sufficient, because many of the beneficiaries, particularly of the older generation, have no access to Internet.***

With respect to the booklet on the Emergency Fund, please note that the Fund is happy to provide booklets on this subject, as well as on any other subject for which booklets are available, to anyone who might request them. However, to send booklets to all beneficiaries would incur significant costs for the Fund and would very likely be of interest to a relatively small number of our retirees. In this connection, it should be recalled that a very clear reminder concerning the Emergency Fund is provided through the Fund's Annual Letter that is communicated to all beneficiaries of the Fund.

***Given that there is a relationship between the adjustment of pay of active staff and the benefits***

***paid to the retirees, what is your view on the possible and desirable linkage between the pension adjustment system and the post adjustment system? In this connection FAFICS would encourage the strengthening of the relationship at all levels between the secretariats of the UNJSPF and of the ICSC and the full participation of your secretariat in the meetings of the ICSC.***

In this connection, it should first be noted that all UNJSPF pension benefits are established on the basis of the participants last five years of pensionable remuneration which are derived from salaries. Pensionable remuneration in the case of participants in the General Service category is the equivalent in dollars of the sum of the participant's gross pensionable salary, taking into account any language allowance payable. In the case of participants in the Professional and higher categories, the pensionable remuneration scale is established and then adjusted on the same date as when the net remuneration amounts of officials in the Professional and higher categories in New York are adjusted. Once the initial US dollar track amount is determined, the retiree can opt to benefit from the two track system of adjustment which compares, on a quarterly basis, an individual's local currency track entitlement amount to the US dollar track amount and pays the higher amount after application of possible minimum and maximum provisions. In this connection, and in more direct response to your inquiry, it should be recalled that, when applicable, cost-of-living differential factors provide for adjustments to the local currency track entitlement when the 36 month average excess of post adjustment in the country of residence after retirement is at least one class over that of New York.

Concerning your suggestion that the Fund should strengthen the relationship it has with the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), I am pleased to note that this is the Fund's intention as well. In fact, the Fund has intentionally scheduled the next session of the Pension Board so that it does not overlap with the July 2009 session of the ICSC. This should provide our two offices with a better opportunity to attend each other's sessions.

***Michael Davies,  
Vice Chairman, ExCo, and member responsible for  
Pensions and Insurance***

**Fred Beer**  
National Welfare  
Support  
Coordinator

The Castle, the  
Fountain, the Robin  
Hood (inappropriately  
named for Hampshire)  
and a Harvester (I  
wonder why Fred  
insisted on mentioning  
these watering holes?  
Not I hope a sign of a  
mis-spent retirement.  
*Editor*)

Does this happen to you? I was walking alongside the village green to our shopping centre – a mini-market, a hardware shop-cum-garden centre. The garden centre is a trestle table behind the shop with a few plant pots, packets of bulbs, compost, two or three wheelbarrows and, this week, just in, some small bags of chopped firewood and coal in sacks. I haven't seen house coal for sale since the coalman's horse and cart delivered to front doors in South Wales all those years ago. And, of course, this week, two or three plastic sledges and the first spring daffodils. Thank goodness the hardware shop also includes a post office counter. The village also has two churches, one on the green, and four pubs. We are less than 2000 residents. The police house long closed. We do have an excellent surgery and, as we are a country village, an excellent veterinary surgery.

Well, I was walking...a monstrous lorry pulled up alongside and the large driver, non-English speaking, leaned out of his cab, thrusting a delivery note at me. No explanation needed. A satnav had brought him from Poland, across Europe, across the Channel. How many miles/kilometres? And now he was lost in a Hampshire village. I knew, as it happened, where he wanted to make his delivery. John Jenkins, a retailer of crystal and cut-glassware, is only a few miles/kilometres from the village, just off a motorway, but along narrow, winding country lanes. The scenery is picturesque, but in a delivery lorry as wide as the road? With hand movements, I set him on his way. "Good luck".

Satellite navigation systems do not always help drivers, Polish or otherwise to avoid narrow country lanes. But lost drivers can be helped just as we try within the BAFUNCS welfare support group to help colleagues who may welcome some assistance.

When the BAFUNCS Constitution was formulated in 1973, revised in May 1987, one of the objectives of the Association was "To extend welfare to its members and former employees of the United Nations Civil Service and their spouses in need". Welfare is the sense of wellbeing, happiness and good health where possible. The BAFUNCS Welfare support team aims at providing the service that was intended, and does so when they become aware of fellow members who may be in need of some form of personal contact.

As a part of our work and travels within the UN environment, we will have integrated into various cultures and communities. Now retired and living in different conditions, we may be involved in local activities and clubs, and become integrated into the community in which we now live. However, are we aware that some of us have specific problems, and do not have the support of family, friends and close neighbours or others with whom they can relate? Some may also be in need of financial assistance, but are reluctant to come forward to seek BAFUNCS support. A reminder, we do have the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund.

As I write, I can see into the garden. Snow white, today. Large, butterfly-like snowflakes are still falling. Is that the same robin and blackbird feeding on the crumbs and wild bird seed we've put out for them as the ones I wrote about in "Are You Ready for the Change?" (March 2007 BAFUNCS Newsletter)? I believe so. I like to think so. A little care does help, whether it be for garden birds or welfare within BAFUNCS.

Directions on satellite navigation systems may direct Polish drivers into impassable country lanes or under a too low railway bridge. But they do also help to find a correct routing. Is our 'satnav' working to help us to find our colleagues who are perhaps just feeling lonely and even a simple phone call or even better, a visit, could make a big difference. We do not need satellite navigation for that.

See the report of the  
Trustees on page 12.  
Thanks to the generous  
bequest of Denise Erica  
Thomas, a UN pensioner  
and a BAFUNCS  
member. the Fund is  
well-endowed. It was a  
bequest by another lady  
member Esther Simmons  
in 1984 that led to the  
creation of the Fund.

### Compiled by Ben Goffman Membership Secretary

#### New Members

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members who joined the Association between September 2008 and February 2009:

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### Travellers' Tales

Some BAFUNCS members, especially those who have sent in contributions, may be wondering when, if ever, they will see the promised second edition of *Travellers' Tales*. The small working group that has been trying to get this off the ground are sorry to say that so far they have not succeeded.

For various reasons (especially the distances to be travelled so that the group can meet, and illness in the family of one member) progress has been very slow. We sincerely apologise for this and hope that the contributors of articles will understand.

Should any members feel that they would like to take over this interesting, but time-consuming, task would they please contact one of the present group members (Bernadette Rivett, Susan Miller or June Hargreaves-Beer).

Ideally the group should consist of members who live close enough to each other to meet easily. While one or more of them should know something about publishing, the group can always call upon the BAFUNCS Editor for help and advice.

## Corrections and changes to the Membership List 2008

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### E-MAIL ADDRESSES

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## APOLOGIES

Our sincere apologies for errors in the entries for the following members:

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## Resignations

Miss J I HARVEY  
Dr M & Mrs M GRUT  
Dr J ERLER  
Mrs E ELKAN  
Mr W FISHWICK

## Lapses

Miss M J CROSS

## In Memoriam

Deepest sympathy and sincere condolences are extended to the families and friends of members who have died recently:

Mrs E ALVES	IMF	SWT
Miss M CARLIN	UN/WHO	NOR
Mrs M CHEDZELEWSKA	IRO/FAO	KSX
Mr V CHIVERS	ILO	OXF
Mr T G DAVIS	FAO	SRY
Miss M. EMERY	ICJ	NOR
Mrs K ENGLAND	WHO	WMW
Mr C FARNDELL	ICAO	KSX
Mrs P C GATES-BOTTON	WHO	SRY
Mr W F GREAVES	UNESCO	WMW
Mrs D C LINDLEY	FAO	KSX
Mrs M McBAIN	IRO/UNICEF	CAM
Mr W G OWEN	WMO	OVS
Miss E PORRITT	UN	CAM
Mr A J SMYTH	FAO	SRY

## REGIONAL OFFICERS OF BAFUNCS

Contact details for all BAFUNCS officials are in the Membership List

### CAMBRIDGE

Regional Representative/Chairman  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Welfare Officer

Mr Vincent Austin  
Miss Philomena Guillebaud  
Dr Ian O'Neill

### KENT AND SUSSEX

Regional Representative/Chairman  
Treasurer  
Secretary/Membership  
Welfare Officer (Brighton)  
Welfare Officer (Lewes and Haywards Heath)  
Welfare Officer (Kent)  
Welfare Officer (Tunbridge Wells and environs)  
Welfare Officer (West Sussex)

Ms Joan Wilson  
Dr Brian Dando  
Miss Margaret Bills  
Mrs Grania Skeldon  
Mrs Jennifer Brooke  
Miss Ann Miller  
Ms Sheila Cooper  
Miss Margaret Bills

### LONDON

Regional Representative/Chairman  
Vice Chairman  
Secretary  
Treasurer

Mr Walter Hoffman  
Dr Zia Islam  
Mrs Brenda Sutters  
Mrs Lynda Young

### NORTHERN

Chairman ad interim  
Regional Representative and Honorary Secretary  
Honorary Treasurer  
Welfare Officer

Mr Laurie Robertson  
Mr Robert England  
Mr Laurie Robertson  
contact Chairman

### OXFORD

Regional Representative  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Welfare Officer

Mr Bill Jackson  
Mr Cyril Groom  
Mrs Susan Miller

### SOUTH CENTRAL

Regional Representative/Secretary/Treasurer  
Welfare Officer

Mrs June Hargreaves-Beer  
Mr Fred Beer

### SOUTHWEST & CHANNEL ISLES

Regional Representative  
Deputy Regional Representative  
Membership Secretary  
Treasurer  
Welfare Officer (Bath & North-east Somerset)  
Welfare Officer (Bristol area)  
Welfare Officer Cornwall  
Welfare Officer (East Devon, West Devon)  
Welfare Officer (Plymouth and Torbay)  
Welfare Officer (Somerset)

Mr Rosemary ap Rees  
Barbara Whitehead  
Miss Irene Chamberlain  
Mrs Eileen Wait  
Mr and Mrs Peter Lees  
Mrs Joyce Bowen-Ashwin  
Mrs Barbara Pisarski  
Miss Elizabeth Barton  
Ms Barbara Whitehead  
Mr Ron Forrest

### SURREY

Chairman  
Regional Representative (ad interim)  
General Secretary  
Treasurer  
Membership Secretary  
Social Programme Secretary  
Help Line

Miss Tilly Armstrong  
Miss Patricia Brown  
Mrs Alison Husaunndee  
Mrs Isobel Taylor  
Miss Hazel Parsons  
Mrs Pat Mukhtar  
Mrs Pat Mukhtar  
Miss Dell Tierney

### WEST MIDLANDS & WALES

Regional Representative/Treasurer  
Regional Welfare Officer  
Local Welfare Contact, Cheltenham

Mr Duncan Morris  
Mrs Phyl Marshall  
Mrs Sheila Rashed-Angelini

### OVERSEAS

Regional Representative (to be contacted on all matters) Mr Fred Beer

## BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund

### Trustees

*Chairman*  
Cyril Groom (FAO)  
*Clerk/Treasurer* to the Trustees  
Nanda Wijayatilake (UNHCR)

### Members

Fred Beer (WHO)  
Susan Idreos (WHO)  
Susan Miller (UN-IDNDR)  
Geoffrey Shakespeare (UNWRA)  
Brenda Sutters (WHO)

### Correspondence

All correspondence with the Benevolent Fund, is treated as confidential and should be addressed to:  
*Clerk/Treasurer*  
BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund  
41 Riverine, Grosvenor Drive,  
Maidenhead, Berks SL6 8PF  
Tel: 01628 636000

***The Fund** is a registered charity. It welcomes contributions through the Gift Aid Scheme. The Fund can reclaim income tax on all donations as long as a Gift Aid Declaration is completed and the donor has paid income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax the Fund reclaims on the donation during that tax year. Forms and/or further information are available from the Fund's Clerk/Treasurer (see above).*

## BAFUNCS membership

***Members** are urged to recruit friends and former UN colleagues. The annual subscription is £14 for a single membership or £21 for joint membership (husband and wife). Life subs are £140 and £210 respectively. Members receive the Newsletter in March and September and the Membership List in September. BAFUNCS also issues Information Notes:*

- INF1 Guide to BAFUNCS*
- INF2 When a pensioner dies*
- INF3 Accommodation for older people*
- INF4 Planning for retirement in the United Kingdom*
- INF5 Taxation in the UK*
- INF6 Personal information checklists*
- INF7 Guide to welfare support that BFAUNCS can provide*

*Application forms and Information Notes can be obtained from: BAFUNCS Membership Secretary, 6 The Lawn, Ealing Green, London W5 5ER*

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