

Great turn-out for Xmas Lunch

It was a good turnout for the Xmas lunch on 15th Dec. when members and partners enjoyed the festive fare at the Station Hotel.

Retired Members Chair, Sue Chalmers, said "It was good that so many took part. We originally booked for 24 but because of those interested we persuaded the hotel to increase it to 26".

As it was, 2 who booked were ill on the day - so we ended up with the 24 as originally planned.

As the photo below shows a good time was had by all!

We're pushing support for the WASPI Campaign

The Retired Members Section is pushing for greater D&G Branch support for the local "WASPI" campaign group which is fighting to overcome the unfair treatment of all women born in the 1950s who have been affected by the changes to the State Pension Law (1995/2011 Acts).

The 1995 Conservative Government's State Pension Act proposed increasing women's state pension age from 60 to 65 so that it was the same as men's.

WASPI agrees with equalisation, but does not agree with the unfair way the changes were implemented. The 2011 Pension Act made the changes faster than originally

indicated. The women were given no notice or time to make alternative plans. Retirement plans have been shattered with quite devastating consequences.

However, because of the way the increases were brought in, thousands of women born on or after 6th April 1951 have been hit particularly hard.

Many of these women stand to lose thousands



of pounds. There is no question that they have been treated unfairly and unequally just because of the day we were born.

The campaign was started by just five ordinary women who in 2015 got together and decided to fight this injustice.

We think it's time UNISON put its weight behind the local campaign.

For more information on WASPI ... google ... www.waspi.co.uk/

WASPI (Women Against State Pension Inequality)

Retired Members Section Treasurer Fiona Lessells has been involved with the local WASPI campaign told us

"We are angry that we have been treated unfairly and unequally just because of the day we were born.

The Government has imposed significant changes to the State Pension age on us with little or no notice and much faster than previously indicated.

Many thousands of us are suffering financial hardship. We had not enough time to re-plan for our retirement.

Many tell us that they can't believe their retirement age has increased by 4, 5 or 6 years and they didn't even know about it!"

Fiona estimates that there are about 13,000 women in Dumfries & Galloway who have lost out with the pension changes.



Have you travelled on one of those lovely new Stagecoach buses from Dumfries to Glasgow?

Have you travelled on the new Stagecoach X74 buses to Glasgow from Dumfries or Moffat? How did you find them?

Following comments from a number of sources - we wrote to Stagecoach to question the suitability of the coaches for older people. The main seating area is accessed by a very steep stairway. There

are only 2 seats for people with mobility difficulties including older people.

Stagecoach says they are okay - and that they meet the required Heath & Safety standards. We still think the buses leave a lot to be desired and will be raising it with our local and Scottish politicians to put pressure on Stagecoach.



In the meantime ... if you agree with us, why don't you write to Stagecoach and complain about it.

Dates for your Diary

16th February Retired Members AGM
9th March Branch AGM

What's lined up for now until June?

Thurs. 18th Jan. 2018

A FIT & HEALTHY RETIREMENT -

Susan Neal

Retiral is not simply about getting your feet up and watching telly all day. Susan will cover a range of lifestyle issues - covering healthy eating, interests and exercise - which all contribute to healthy retirement.

Thurs. 15th Feb 2018

AGM and BRANCH UPDATE

The Annual General Meeting will hear the usual reports on the Retired Members Section and the main UNISON Branch activities in 2017. The meeting should approve the financial statement and appoint Officers for the coming year.

The Autumn programme went well. We meet on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 10.30 am. Put Spring dates in your diary NOW and come and join us at the Georgetown Library



Thurs. 15th March 2018

Jim Rae - Eskrigg Nature Reserve

The UPPER ANNANDALE RED SQUIRREL PROJECT

We can anticipate to another good talk from Jim Rae. Jim will highlight the work being done in Annandale to protect and develop the colonies of native Red Squirrels which are under threat in the UK.

Thurs. 19th April 2018

Lynda Mackie (D&G Family History Centre)

DUMFRIES LINKS with the SLAVE TRADE

This is one to really look forward to ...

It's hard to believe that Dumfries was a thriving international port in the 17th & 18th Centuries. It was a major centre for the trade in tobacco and cotton

before the large Clyde ports (Glasgow and Greenock) developed.

Local history shows that it also had a darker side - as a player in the North Atlantic slave trade.

Thurs. 17th May 2018

Citizens Advice Dumfries

The COST of SAYING GOODBYE

A look at the Citizens Advice Scotland 2016 report which highlighted the rising and varying cost for burial and cremation fees across Scotland - and the growing problem of "Funeral Poverty".

Evidence shows an increasing number of Scots are struggling to pay for basic funerals. Families throughout Scotland, find themselves in unacceptable difficulty when recently bereaved.

It's been good so far ...

Thurs 21st Sept 2017

Rights and Benefits for Older People

A very useful session led by **Citizens Advice Dumfries**. In particular, the speaker highlighted benefits related to fuel & heating costs and the complexities of getting the best deals.

Thurs 19th Oct. 2017

Do you have the Power and the Will?

In a very informative - but informal session,

Sharon Galloway - Hendersons Solicitors

emphasised the importance of individuals having proper Wills and nominating Power of Attorney.

The latter allows you to appoint someone to deal with decisions about your finances or health treatment if and when you yourself are no longer able to do so.

Thursday 16th Nov. 2017

The Galloway Hoard

In perhaps one of the most interesting sessions we've ever had! **D&G Council Archeologist Andy Nicholson** - gave a fascinating insight into the discovery and excavation of the Galloway Hoard near Kirkcudbright in 2014.

The hoard has over 100 gold and silver Viking objects and has been described as "one of the most significant Hoards ever found in Scotland". Its value is estimated to be about £1 million. It's hoped it will be partly exhibited at the new

Kirkcudbright Art Gallery when it opens next year.

Group Visit to Caerlaverock

This was our first attempt at something additional to the regular monthly meeting. It didn't help that the weather was 'foul' - with the result that a few likely participants called off.

Nevertheless, 7 brave souls scorned the elements and general opinion was that the trip was a success.

Our next Group visit will be Mon. 5th Feb 2018 to DUMFRIES THEATRE ROYAL

This is a follow-up to the talk on the Theatre Royal early in 2017. This outing will give members a chance to visit the Theatre which has recently undergone a major renovation. If you want to come - meet at the Theatre at 10.30am

Open Meetings

Our meetings, and events are open to all UNISON Local Government Retired Members.

However, we welcome spouses, partners or friends who are interested in any of the sessions.