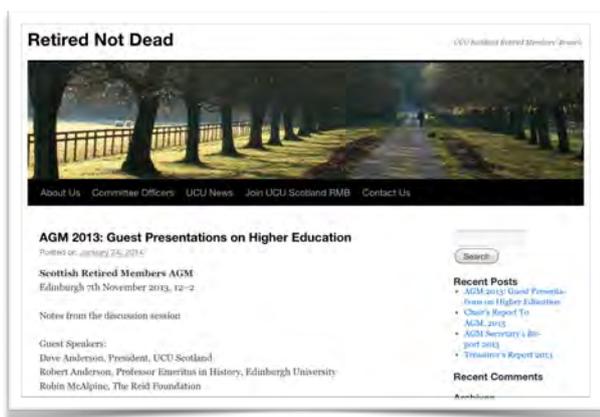


NEWSLETTER

UCU SCOTLAND | RETIRED MEMBERS' BRANCH

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the newsletter for the UCU Scottish Retired Members' Branch (SRMB). We also have a wordpress blog called Retired Not Dead: <http://ucuretirednotdead.wordpress.com>.



We hope the combination of the blog and the newsletter will keep you up-to-date with UCU issues in general and branch topics in particular.

Activities of the SRMB, 2013-14

Officers Meetings*

1st Feb, 21st March, 3rd June, 9th Sep, 25th Nov 2013 and 20th Jan and 12th May 2014

General meetings*

21st March 2013 in Stirling, addressed by Norman Jemison, Chair of the Northern RMB

7th Nov 2013 AGM in Edinburgh, including a panel discussion on HE and Scotland's Future featuring Robin McAlpine of the Reid Foundation, Robert Anderson of Edinburgh

University, and Dave Anderson, UCU Scotland President [there is a report of this on the blog]

17th Feb 2014 in Dundee, addressed by UCU Treasurer Angela Roger on USS and Pensions after the referendum [report to be blogged soon].

Activities:

Apart from the necessary business of setting up the branch and electing officers, we have sent representatives to UCU Scotland and to National Congress and to Edinburgh TUC.

Terry Brotherstone (photo below) was a member of the von Prondzynski report on the Governance of Scottish Universities, and we continue a watching brief on this important subject.



We are currently looking to offer practical support to the SUSPS project (see elsewhere in this newsletter).

Finally, we are engaged in an ongoing campaign to persuade all Scottish Universities to offer automatic continuing rights to retirees who wish to continue active research. We are in active conversation with UCU Scotland to seek ways of encouraging Scottish Principals to agree to this as a right rather than an occasional grace-and-

favour arrangement which is too often dependent on local circumstances.

* Minutes of all meetings can be seen on request to the Secretary or the Chair.

SUSPS Project

Elizabeth Stitt, St Andrews University, explains the purpose, and origin, of the SUSPS project:

"SUSPS (Scottish Universities Supporting Palestinian Students) is a new, Scotland wide initiative aimed at demonstrating practical solidarity to Palestinian postgraduate students. Palestinians often face more than the usual difficulties in achieving a higher education. Being prevented from attending classes by road blocks, checkpoints, crackdowns, curfews and even "administrative" detention for unspecified periods in prison can contribute, together with economic hardship and scarcity of university places, to sometimes more than doubling the length of time needed to achieve a first degree compared to Scotland. Postgraduate students fare even worse as research and teaching facilities do not even begin to meet the need.

We who have a connection with higher education can help. In 2010 the attack on the Mavi Marmara left me wondering what could be done at a local level to demonstrate practical long-term support. As a member of the teaching staff at the University of St Andrews and a believer in the right of each one of us to an education, the path seemed clear to me. I enlisted the support of a colleague Mike Orr and together we approached Principal Louise Richardson with a request for a fee waiver for two Palestinian postgraduate students per annum on taught courses of one academic year (on the principle of making a realistic and achievable request). The University agreed and out of this STEPS (St Andrews Education for Palestinian Students) has now been able to fund two students - one each year since the inception of the project in 2011. 2014-15 will see two scholarships being awarded. Apart from the fee waiver, STEPS meets all other costs. This is a good start. St Andrews has

a restricted range of courses - and only two students can benefit each year. I was now being



approached by colleagues at other universities who wished to start their own groups. Together we can achieve far more and a Scotland wide project is the answer. Much lobbying of MSPs, trade unionists and interest groups led to an exhibition at Holyrood at which Alex Salmond approached our display and pledged government commitment to a Scottish scheme to aid Palestinian students. The government has offered financial and practical help, the STUC unanimously passed a motion of support at Congress, as did both UCU Scotland and the NUS. Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh has now become the first of, I hope, many additional Scottish universities to offer a fee waiver.

Should you wish to add your name to the list of supporters, please contact me at elizabethsttt@yahoo.co.uk or Terry Brotherstone at t.brotherstone@abdn.ac.uk. I am happy to come to talk to any group or to correspond with anyone who would like to be involved in the development of this project."

Retired Members' Branch Committee

Chair:	Alastair Hunter (alastair189@live.co.uk)
Vice chair:	Delia Lomax (delia.lomax@googlemail.com)
Secretary:	Peter Woods (peter.woods02@talktalk.net)
Treasurer:	Ann Kettle (ajk@st-andrews.ac.uk)
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Membership secretary:	John Biggam (johnbiggam@googlemail.com)