



RPOAS
CENTRAL BRANCH
DECEMBER 2021 NEWS



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RELUCTANT RESIGNATION OF BRANCH CHAIRMAN

Sadly, we have lost our excellent Chairman of five years, Bill Culbard. Bill's health has recently given cause for concern and it was with deep regret and much soul-searching that he took the difficult decision to step down from the role. Bill's dedication to the position was evident from his kindness in visiting sick, bereaved and older members and it was unusual for him to be absent from a funeral. We owe him a debt of gratitude for his service to the Association.

BILL CULBARD's update

You may have already heard that I resigned as Chairman of the Branch recently. The reason was simple – health.

On 7 November, the day started like any other Sunday. Church in the morning, Stirling Community Hospital at 5 p.m. for Covid booster and flu jabs. Back home and had our evening

meal. Gwen started getting ready to Skype with her son in Toronto, then things went pear-shaped.

I opened my mouth to make a reasonably intelligent comment but instead, out came a load of unintelligible gibberish. Now, I know what most of you may be thinking, but this was weird. It was just like a load of jumbled up letters were escaping. I knew what was happening, just not what was causing it, so I went through to the bedroom and let Gwen Skype. I stood and talked this language to myself for about 15 minutes until it sorted itself out. I must admit I was worried.

When Gwen had finished Skyping, I told her of the episode. She reminded me that this had occurred twice previously, and she thought it had sounded like the symptoms of a mini-stroke! I was beginning to agree.

The following morning, I phoned and requested an urgent appointment with a GP, and to my surprise, one phoned me an hour later. I went to the surgery a short time later. The following morning found me in FVRH having an ultrasound scan on my neck, then that afternoon, a doctor phoned and we agreed to a telephone appointment.

He agreed with Gwen's 'diagnosis' that it was in fact, a TIA or mini-stroke. Apparently, there is hardening of the arteries in my neck, restricting the flow



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of blood to my brain. This explains a lot of things!!

I have to admit this really scared me, and still does. Because I'd had a couple of previous episodes, this could easily have developed into a full stroke.

Gwen and I discussed the situation and I decided it would be best if I withdrew from the position of Chairman, as there is obviously the chance of a recurrence and it wouldn't look too professional if an episode occurred and the Chairman started talking gibberish!!

Again, although I'm making light of this here, TIA's are very serious and if not treated promptly, can be fatal.

On 16 November, I had an MRI scan at Forth Valley then on 22, an ECG. On 1 December, I attend the Jubilee Hospital in Clydebank, for a CT scan. I'm also on drugs to thin my blood.

Once things have stabilised health-wise, I hope to resume attending lunches etc., but my days of chairing meetings or even serious discussions, are in the past.

The NHS have really looked after me well since I contacted them. Everything has been done quickly and efficiently, and I'm most grateful.

Sorry this has been more of a health report, but I wanted to let you all know my reason for stepping down, and to thank you all sincerely for your

support and friendship over the past few years.

Since this is December's Newsletter, Gwen and I wish you all the very best for Christmas and have a healthy 2022.

Bill Culbard

SECRETARY DUE IN HOSPITAL

I will be undergoing surgery at some point and anticipate being in hospital for up to 10 days. Unfortunately, with all arrangements in place and the newsletter completed, I lost my op date of 7 December at the last minute when all surgeries were cancelled for the foreseeable future.

Since I am hopefully being rescheduled before the next newsletter in March 2022, I would ask that from now on to ensure a smooth transition,

YOU COPY COMMITTEE MEMBER MIKE MILL INTO ALL MESSAGES FROM NOW IF YOU WISH ACTION TAKEN. I WILL NOT HAVE ACCESS TO MY E MAILS IN HOSPITAL AND WE ARE CURRENTLY WITHOUT A CHAIRMAN.

E MAIL MIKE MILL ON
mikemill233@gmail.com

BRANCH COMMITTEE

Vice Chairman **Moira Dunn**
Secretary/Treasurer **Lesley Struth**
Alex Macmillan, Audrey McLeod, Mike Mill and Ian Wright.



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ANNUAL FEE

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL MEMBERS WHO HAVE RECENTLY PAID THE ANNUAL FEE OF £12 previously deducted many years ago by Pensions Department at source annually in July.

There are still a few members with outstanding fees for the year 2021-22. Could you check your accounts to see if payments had been sent to RPOAS Central or if unsure, please contact Mike Mill.

If you believe that you currently have membership fees outstanding, please get in touch with
MIKE MILL on
mikemill233@gmail.com

PAYMENT OF ANNUAL FEE –

TSB Bank Account :
Account No 82075363
Sort Code 87-64-01

If you have set up a Standing Order with your bank for your annual fee or the RPOAS lottery, check that it is being deducted annually and not monthly. Lottery - also £12 and deducted in December can easily be confused with your Branch fee.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to Andrew Fleming, Len Harvey, Alan McCallum and Robert Simpson who joined the Branch recently.

Are you in touch with colleagues who are not members of RPOAS? Please send on an application form to them. Forms can be obtained from Committee member Mike Mill. There are members' benefits on offer on our website, an employment page, a bi-annual Association magazine, Members' Private Lottery, as well as important pension updates and news of former colleagues who have passed away across the twelve Branches.
For only £12 a year, it makes sense to join.

September CPI Published

The ONS have now published the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for September 2021 which shows an increase of 3.1 %. As a result, Police Pensions will increase by 3.1% as of April 2022.

RPOAS WEBSITE

Remember to visit the website regularly to check out updates, past magazines and the all-important



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Obituary page which carries details of members of all twelve Scottish Branches who have passed away.

RPOAS NEWS MAGAZINE

Our next magazine is due out in February 2022. Adverts and interesting articles are always welcome.

TO QUALIFY FOR WARMER HOMES SCOTLAND THE HOUSEHOLD MUST MEET ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- Be homeowners or the tenants of a private-sector landlord
- Live in the home as their main residence
- Have lived there for at least 12 months (unless in receipt of a DS1500 certificate)
- Live in home with an energy rating of 67 or lower and which is not more than 230 square metres in floor size
- Live in a home that meets the tolerable living standard set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 or, where the home does not meet the tolerable living standards, this will not impact on the effectiveness of the measures recommended for installation under the scheme
- Householders must not have received support for energy efficiency improvements through Warmer Homes Scotland funding in the last five years.

MEET ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- Be of pensionable age, have no working heating system and be in receipt of a passport benefit
- Be aged over 75 and in receipt of a passport benefit
- Pregnant and/or have a child under 16 and in receipt of a passport benefit
- Have a disability and be in receipt of any level of Personal Independent Payment (PIP)
- Have a disability and be in receipt of high rate Disability Living Allowance (DLA) (care or mobility component)
- Have a disability and be in receipt of low/medium rate Disability Living Allowance (DLA) (care or mobility component) and be in receipt of an income related benefit
- Be a carer in receipt of Carers Allowance
- Have been injured or disabled serving in the Armed Forces and be in receipt of Armed Forces Independence Payment/War Disablement Pension
- Have an injury or disability from an accident or disease caused by work and be in receipt of Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

THE PASSPORT BENEFITS ARE:

- Guarantee element of the Pension Credit
- Attendance Allowance



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- Universal Credit or any of the benefits due to be replaced by Universal Credit (Income Based JSA, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit)
- Council Tax Reduction (excluding 25% discount for single occupancy)
- Carer's Allowance
- Higher Rate Care or Mobility components of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- War Disablement Pension
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

BEST WISHES TO

Bill Culbard, Mike Kiely, Dorothy MacLeod, Alex Macmillan, Lyn McQuaker, Archie Orr, Tom Rintoul, Jack Wardrope and Inspector Marie White who are experiencing health issues at the moment.

OUR SENIOR MEMBER LESLIE CUMPSTEY

Bill Culbard, senior Branch member Leslie Cumpstey and Mike Mill celebrated Leslie's 94th birthday at a special lunch in Stirling in September.

A regular at our lunches, Leslie was delighted to meet up again and despite

the limited number, a good time was had by all!



Bill, Leslie and Mike

Leslie joined the police in 1949 and recalls when he joined Stirling and Clackmannan Police he had never been in a public house in his life but that was soon to change!

Leslie was sent to Falkirk and learned that an oil refinery was being built in Grangemouth and there were many Irish labourers employed there. Many, if not all, of them were living in lodging houses in the local area. Their way of life amazed Leslie and remembers calling in at one of the lodging houses in Grangemouth Road just as some of the lodgers were getting up in the morning. The attendant asked one of them if he wanted the usual and the Irish man said, yes, whereupon the attendant served him 6 eggs, 1/2 lb of bacon and 1/2 lb of sausages which Leslie was informed was for his breakfast but he would not eat



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anything else that day and would go to bed when he came back in the evening when he had finished work.

Leslie got the impression that in most instances after work they went to the pub and drank themselves stupid; at least that was what appeared to be the case when the pubs closed! That was when the police had to clear up the mess left behind.

That said, Leslie shares that most of the Irish men in the town were good people and showed the police considerable respect.

Leslie has been retired for an amazing 42 years and despite being our oldest member, he still receives correspondence and communicates via E mail. We wish you good health, Leslie, and hopefully a return to our usual lunches in the year ahead.

DIARY DATE

Hello all.

Ian Reid and I would like to offer up a **monthly Wednesday afternoon/early evening meet up at The Rising Sun in Bridge of Allan**. The lounge area will be made available on Wednesdays to all former, and still serving, members who wish to come along and rekindle old friendships, share overly embellished stories from the past, or simply catch up and chat with some friendly, welcoming faces.

The first one was held on **Wednesday 17/11/21** with several members enjoying meeting up and others

showing interest for future dates. We hope to make it a regular monthly meet; however, the area will always be available.

Hope to see some of you along for a catch up.

Ian Arthur

INSPECTOR MARIE WHITE FORTH VALLEY DIVISION

is currently off sick so will not be contributing this time. We wish her well in her recovery.

MEMORIES OF A LOCKDOWN IN FRANCE – A 2021 LOCKDOWN COMPARED WITH 1939

At the end of July, I was fortunate enough to travel to France and stay there for two months. I have a small apartment in Argeles sur Mer which is in south-west France about 20 minutes from the Spanish border. It was extremely hot and I spent many hours on the beach.

The route to Spain from Argeles is a short drive over the Pyrenees, passing through the French town of Le Perthus and entering Spain via La Jonquera, a border town where there was previously – pre the European Union - a Customs Border post.

BELOW LEFT: The beach at Argeles sur Mer with the Pyrenees in the background: 2021 style.



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The beaches in this area stretch for several miles and there are many holiday towns scattered along the coast. It was during one of those hot days that I started thinking of the time when the beach I was on, some 80 years previously had been used as a Prisoner of War camp for refugees fleeing from Catalonia Spain into France during the Spanish Civil War. For those members that are not familiar with this period or war, I will offer some facts.

The end of the Spanish Civil War led to an influx of Spanish refugees into the Pyrénées Orientales area of France.



This exodus from Catalonia occurred when Barcelona was overrun by Franco and his Republican troops. This was known as the **Retirada**.

In early 1939 nearly half a million Spanish civilians and soldiers fled to France which was the biggest single influx of refugees ever in France. Their main route was over the Pyrenees mountains, passing through La Jonquera and Le Perthus.

The French authorities were unprepared and hostile. **Some women and children were allowed in, and then between 5 and 9 February all the “Reds” (so dubbed) were admitted as “foreign undesirables”.** This designation meant they could be imprisoned legally.

BELOW: Argeles sur Mer beach – 1939 style



Women and children were initially sent to accommodation centres and about 60,000 men were herded into internment camps on the beach at Argelès-sur-Mer. Their only welcome was barbed wire fences, 'Gardes Mobiles and brutal Senegalese troops were mobilised as guards.

These camps had no protection from freezing temperatures and biting winds apart from a few improvised flimsy shacks. Most men slept in holes dug in the ground. There was no water, no sanitation and scarcely any food. For



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sport many mounted and armed French guards beat up dying men. Similar internment camps soon followed along this Mediterranean Coast. There was unspeakable squalor in these camps, where an estimated 15,000 died of dysentery and related diseases.

The exiles (the men separated from the women and children) were later moved to designated “concentration camps” spread over the South of France: to Bram (west of Carcassonne), Agde, Vernet in the Ariège – and Rivesaltes where they were to be joined after the German occupation (from May 1940) by other undesirables including East European Jews and “gypsies”.

After the German occupation, the repression of the exiles intensified and thousands of them were exterminated in the Nazi gas chambers – especially at Mauthausen.

Many surviving exiles; however, in spite of their treatment, volunteered to join the French Resistance and contributed substantially as “Guerilleros Espagnols” to the Liberation from 6 June onwards in 1944. On 15 March 1945 the exiles were finally granted the official status of Political Refugees.

A third of the Languedoc-Roussillon’s (now Occitanie) present day population are descendants of these Spanish refugees.

This area of modern day Argeles is now mainly considered a part of Catalonia and many of the people speak Catalan. I have watched a considerable amount of Rugby League matches in Perpignan

(the nearby city), where the Catalan Dragons play. Before the start of their matches, there is always a standing rendering of the Catalan National Anthem.

I hope I have not bored you with my attempt at a “historical” account of war and its suffering which was brought to mind while I was watching our Remembrance Day ceremonies.

Vive La France!

Mike Mill

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Our second oldest member **Willie Winter** will be 94 years in December 2021.

Best wishes to **Archie Orr** who will reach 90 years of age in December 2021. Archie has experienced mobility issues recently and we wish him and Irene well in the months ahead.

LIFE MEMBERS 2022

Alisdair Douglas, John Ferguson, Brian Hencher, Jim Kindness, Brian Mulgrew and Hugh Paterson.

(LIFE MEMBERS ARE EXEMPT FROM ANNUAL FEE SO PLEASE CANCEL ANY STANDING ORDER. YOU BECOME A LIFE MEMBER ON 1 JANUARY 2022).



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OBITUARIES

FAREWELL TO

JIM DONALDSON

1935 - 2021



Jim was born in Inchinnan in 1935. His schooling took place in Renfrew. On leaving school he was employed as a draughtsman with Babcock and Wilcox.

In 1960 he joined West Yorkshire Police (he was too small for Scottish forces!) where he served until 1970, when he transferred to Lothians and Peebles Constabulary and was posted

to North Berwick, East Lothian.

In 1972 he was transferred to Bo'ness, and served there until 1982, when he was promoted Sergeant and posted to Grangemouth.

In 1985, whilst on night shift duty, Jim suffered a massive heart attack and was rushed to Falkirk Royal Infirmary. Due to the seriousness of his illness Jim did not return to work and retired on ill health that same year.

Jim was a life member of RPOAS Central Branch.



He was a longstanding and enthusiastic member of St Andrews Church choir and Falkirk Caledonian Choir. He was also a keen bowler so much so that when he booked up a holiday he always asked if there was a bowling green near to where he would be staying!!!

In recent months Jim suffered from



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Alzheimer's and was admitted to New Carron Court Nursing Home where he sadly passed away on 2 November 2021.

Jim's widow Anna is currently in hospital and to Anna, son Angus and all the family, we express our deepest sympathy.



FRANK DUFFIE

1931 - 2021



It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of Frank Duffie, 90 years, from Falkirk.

Frank passed away peacefully after a short illness surrounded by his family at Forth Valley Royal Hospital on 13 September 2021.

Frank was an active member of the Association since his retirement from Central Scotland Police in 1986 where he served for 30 years. He volunteered as a telephone co-ordinator from 2009 until his death, thereby keeping his non- E mail colleagues up to date with important circulations, including



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deaths of members.

Frank leaves his wife Betty and two sons, Sinclair and Steven and his beloved grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Frank was extremely active since hanging up his chequered band cap, working on with Falkirk Council until he reached 65 years of age.

He was a keen gardener, growing both vegetables and beautiful blooms and enjoyed spending many hours in the garden and greenhouse creating an envious display for him, Betty and the family.

He will be sorely missed and is a sad loss to the Association and I am sure you will join in sending condolences to Frank's family.



WILLIAM KEIR

William Keir, 62 years, passed away at Glenbervie Care Home on 15 October 2021, following a long battle with multiple sclerosis.

I knew Willie well and worked with him early in his career in Alloa in the 1970s where I'm sure he joined as a cadet. I worked with him again for six months in 1985 when he was seconded to a small 'A' Division Resource Unit. Willie, in my opinion, was an excellent police officer who possessed a first-class knowledge of people in the communities in Clackmannanshire where he served. This knowledge was invaluable during the period of his secondment. He was also known for his jovial nature and brilliant sense of humour.

Willie retired early on medical grounds and resided in Tullibody where I had occasion to visit him. I was very saddened to read of his passing.

Ian Cameron



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CHRIS MCCALLION

1952 - 2021



I first met Chris on 22 November 1971, 50 years ago, the day we joined Stirling and Clackmannan Police Force. We attended our Tulliallan and other courses together and became close friends.

At Tulliallan, Chris enjoyed the sport and created a number of records for swimming, which may still be in place to this day.



Chris (far right)

Chris left the police service in the early seventies and joined the Royal Marines. I think he became homesick and it wasn't too long before he was back to the police family.



Chris (far right)

He returned to his digs with Ruby Craig in Colquoun Street in Stirling.



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Chris (right) in 1988 - Getting ready to walk 35 miles of the West Highland Way in aid of Stirling Baby Care Unit.

Chris and I were transferred to Dunblane in 1975 and two years later he was Best Man at the marriage of Jennifer and I.



Chris (far right)

In 1978 Chris had a bad motor-cycle accident resulting in serious injury to his leg, which affected his mobility as years went on.

We kept in contact over the years and he was a regular visitor to Dunblane. Jennifer and I last visited Chris on 25 September 2021, when I had been unable to contact him. He had changed

his telephone number and had forgotten to tell anyone!

Chris was a good and reliable friend and was always willing to help. He thought of others before himself and even though his mobility affected him, he would never say no. His enthusiastic involvement with the Jolly Beggars helped raise thousands for local charities.

As a work colleague Chris was good at his job, thorough and a team player. He was like a dog with a bone when involved in cases or projects.

We all send our condolences to Chris's daughter and son, Erin and Kenneth and are thinking of them at this time.

Mike McHale





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ALEXANDER (SANDY) COUPER STEWART

1936 - 2021



Sandy and his daughter Lesley

Sandy was born in Bonnybridge and attended Denny High School. On completion of his education, he started life as a Pattern Maker at the local Cruickshanks Foundry, Denny.

National Service loomed and Sandy joined the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders based at Stirling Castle. During his Army life he was a keen footballer but excelled at Boxing, representing the Army on several occasions. However, he said that the reason he took up Boxing was because he got better meals than his fellow soldiers!

On leaving the Army, he decided to make a career move and joined Stirling and Clackmannan Police.

He was stationed in a variety of locations, including Stirling, Raploch, Causewayhead, Buchlyvie and Plean.

It was in Plean that I first met Sandy. I had just transferred from the Headquarters Control Room at Randolphfield and was sent to this two- man Police Station. A new experience to me. Sandy was a true gentleman and his professionalism was very obvious. He guided me through this unique type of discretionary hours policing that was prevalent in those early Policing times for which I was truly grateful. It was there that I also met his lovely wife Cathy and their daughter Lesley who was only three at that time.

Sandy served a considerable time in Plean, before being promoted to Sergeant and moving to Stirling. He then moved to Bridge of Allan where he took charge of the policing at that Station.



Presentation of Long Service Medal (Andrew Reid, Angus Smith, Sandy, CC Ian Oliver, Jim (Dunblane), The Hub, Bill Beaton, Tom Russell and David Munro).



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He finally moved back to Stirling where he was the Custody Sergeant before retiring in April 1987.

Sandy was a keen gardener and loved to potter about with his flowers and vegetables. He was also a keen Bowler and a member of the Riverside Bowling Club.

He was not one for idling and took up employment in the local Grahams Building Merchants business in the Riverside where he worked for some years before retiring completely.

Sadly, he lost his wife Cathy to whom he was a carer a few years ago.

Sandy loved his family and Lesley, his daughter, married and had two sons. He was immensely proud of his grandchildren and latterly his great granddaughter.

It would be true to say that Sandy had a full and interesting life and has left his friends and colleagues with many fond memories. I and others will miss him.

Mike Mill

Editor's Note: The details recorded in this publication have been obtained from a variety of sources and while every possible effort is made to ensure accuracy this cannot be guaranteed. Where there has been some inaccuracy, please advise the Editor.

ALEXANDER (SANDY) FINDLAY

Sandy passed away at home on 23 November 2021 at the age of 79 years.

His funeral will take place at 1 p.m. on Monday, 6 December 2021 at Camelon Parish Church and thereafter to Camelon Cemetery. **PLEASE WEAR RED.**

We hope to include a tribute to Sandy in our next newsletter.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to Sandy's son and daughter.





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