



RPOAS
CENTRAL BRANCH
MARCH 2022 NEWS



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A MESSAGE FROM

VICE CHAIR MOIRA DUNN

Hi Everyone

Hoping you are all keeping well after what has been a surreal two years. Who knows if there is more to come? All we can do is take every precaution to keep ourselves safe and well but also to live our lives as fully as possible too.

I am writing this on Thursday 24 February the day Russia invaded the Ukraine and my heart goes out to all living in fear of what that might mean. Worrying times indeed.

In an effort to clear the mind, it seems an excellent time to get back out together and suggest we resume the walking group on the last Tuesday of every month meeting at 11.00 am.

To ease us back in gently I suggest a walk around the path at Sheriffmuir on Tuesday 29 March. This is an easy walk but can be muddy in bad weather.

Meet at the Clan MacRae Monument, where there is some offroad parking or travel just a little further up the road where a larger car park can be accessed. Lunch at the Westlands Hotel in Dunblane.

Please contact me at

mdunno01@mdunno01.plus.com

mobile **07754 316 778** if you want to join the walk and confirm if you will also be lunching. Look forward to seeing you there. Newcomers welcome.

Take care till then.

Moira D

BRANCH COMMITTEE

Our Committee has sadly dwindled away over the past few weeks with the loss of Chairman Bill Culbard, Audrey McLeod and Alex Macmillan. Their past contributions were, of course, greatly appreciated and they will all be much missed.

If you think you could commit to serving the Branch in this way as we begin to fight our way out of isolation and lockdown, please make yourself known to one of our current committee members. We'd be delighted to hear from you! The odd meeting, the odd delivery or visit, and hopefully some very sociable lunches in the very near future! I note with envy from the magazine that some of the other branches have managed to hold reasonably large events in late 2021 but we have exercised caution locally



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and only now as Spring approaches have we agreed to go ahead with a lunch for our Older members.

EXISTING COMMITTEE

Vice Chairman **Moira Dunn**
Secretary/Treasurer **Lesley Struth**
Mike Mill and Ian Wright.

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SECRETARY'S UPDATE

POLICE TREATMENT CENTRE

The latest update from the PTC can be found in the Spring issue of RPOAS News. The good news is the Centre is open for business once again.

ANNUAL FEE

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOW PAID THE ANNUAL FEE OF £12 which was previously deducted by Pensions Department at source annually in July. That was a very long time ago and the service was greatly appreciated. It is a nightmare doing it ourselves within the Branch.

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. Sometimes, lottery payments can be mixed up as the fee is the same. Lottery goes to RPOAS, not the Branch and any queries should be directed to our Admin Assistant Tracy McKenzie. There is also a lottery update within the magazine.

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

PAYMENT OF ANNUAL FEE –

The Branch's TSB Bank Account details are -

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, do check that it is being deducted annually and not monthly. Lottery is also £12 and is deducted in December and can easily be confused with your Branch fee.

PLEASE REMEMBER – LIFE MEMBERS ARE EXEMPT FROM ANNUAL FEE



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NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to Andy Chalmers from Doune who joined the Branch recently. Andy retired in December 2021. Andy's wife Helen is also a member of the Branch.

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. The more members we have, the stronger our voice when lobbying for pension rights, etc.

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 Obituary page which carries details of

members of all twelve Scottish Branches who have passed away.

RPOAS NEWS MAGAZINE

The Spring issue of our bi-annual magazine is now in circulation. The next issue is due out in September 2022. Adverts and interesting articles are always welcome. Please send on to me at

lascentralbranch@gmail.com

Most of our Branch members are happy to receive the magazine by e-mail but as we get older, some of us may decide that a paper copy is more convenient. Please let me know if this is the case. It can easily be arranged.

BRANCH NEWSLETTER

Our next newsletter will be circulated locally in June 2022 and will hopefully contain some updates from the Golf Section.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Details of the new provider with effect from 1 April 2022 can be found within the latest issue of RPOAS News. Existing policyholders will be contacted direct ahead of the renewal date.

Please visit the RPOAS website to read a reply (dated 2 March) from the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, **Simon Clarke MP**, to a letter from the secretary of the PSpC to the Chancellor of 17 December (also copied below) about uprating the Winter Fuel Allowance and Christmas Bonus in response to rapidly rising inflation and energy bills. The reply rules out any



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plans to uprate the allowances, but instead sets out the mitigating measures that are being introduced in April and October to partially offset the 54% increase in energy price cap from April.

RPOAS 75TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

The last Conference took place in April 2019 with the following two postponed until 14/15 April 2022. The event will hopefully go ahead as scheduled at the Westerwood Hotel in Cumbernauld.

Representing the Branch are **Moira Dunn, Lesley Struth** and **Mike Mill**.

RPOAS 75TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED MALT WHISKY

Our 75th Anniversary Annual Conference is due to be held at Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld on 14th/15th April 2022.

To highlight this very special occasion, we decided to commission a special bottle of whisky which we are delighted to note you committed to take part in – thank you!

I am now delighted to announce that following our considered approach to a well-known whisky producer, we managed to secure a top-quality, very limited-edition whisky to commemorate the event. Only 300 bottles will be produced for us and

they will be specially labelled accordingly.

In conjunction with J&G Grant, Glenfarclas Distillery, Speyside, we are pleased to offer you a:

Glenfarclas LIMITED edition with numbered label Highland Single Malt aged 10 years and of 46% volume for £45 per 700ml bottle.

Only 300 bottles will be produced so it will be first come first served to those of you who have already committed to take part. All going well, the cartoned bottles should be delivered to our Conference on 15 April 2022 and from there arrangements can be made with your branch secretaries for uplift.

For those who reserved one or two bottles, you only need to send your remittance of either £45 or £90 via bank transfer payment by:

Account name: **RBS – Retired Police Officers**

Account number: **19030441**
Sort Code: **83-28-45**

Please note in completing the REFERENCE section can you put your first initial and surname followed by your branch initials. For example, “J.Smith D&G”.

Only 19 characters can be entered into the space provided, so please enter enough information as there may be other members of your branch with the same surname.



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PLEASE ALSO SEND AN E MAIL TO RPOAS TREASURER SHONA to rpoastreasurer@gmail.com WITH YOUR NAME AND BRANCH so that she can keep track of purchases.

All the very best and warmest regards to you and yours and thank you for your continued support of RPOAS.

Matt Hamilton

**President RPOAS
Retired Police Officers'
Association Scotland (RPOAS)**

BEST WISHES TO

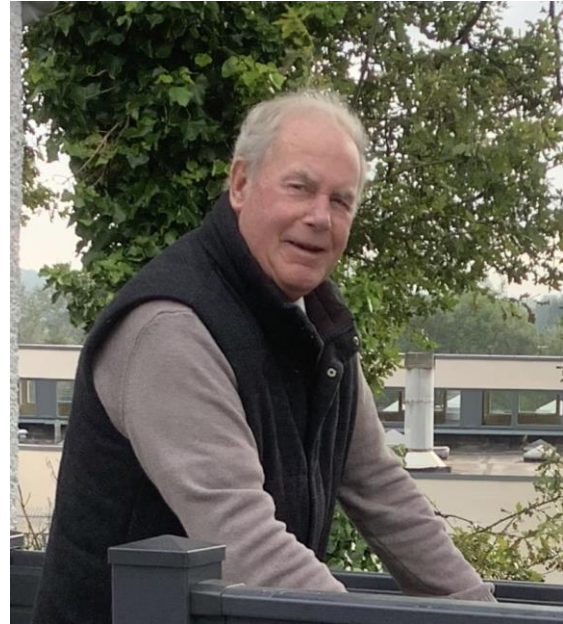
Bill Culbard, Elma Curry, Gus Kennedy, Mike Kiely, Dorothy MacLeod, Alex Macmillan, Lyn McQuaker, Bert O'Donnell, Tom Rintoul and Jack Wardrope who are experiencing ill health or hospital treatment at the moment.

HEALTH MATTERS

MULTIPLE SYSTEMS ATROPHY

An update on life member Bert O'Donnell's condition, from his wife of 60 years, Dorothy.

Bert retired as a sergeant in 1991, having served for 28 years with Stirling and Clackmannan Police, a year with Strathclyde Police at regionalisation in 1975, and the remainder of his service with Central Scotland Police.



Always active, he started his own successful gardening business, running it until his son Craig took over following his own retirement from the Fire Service. It's now in the hands of Blair, Craig's son.

Retirement for Bert meant he could spend more time on the golf course and enjoy his love of Scottish Country Dance Music by playing his fiddle with The Stirling Strathspey and Reel Society, The Milton Fiddlers, and the Accordion and Fiddle Club. For years he had been an active member of the CSP Scottish Country Dance Band.

He kept good health over the years, and rarely visited a doctor.

It was at an Accordion and Fiddle Club meeting that Bert became aware that he couldn't keep his bow on the fiddle strings. A visit to his doctor resulted in



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him being prescribed Valium as she thought it was just “nerves “or “stage fright”, despite him having performed for years. The Valium didn’t help the shakes. Bert’s second visit to a GP, because his speech had become distorted, resulted in the GP referring him to a neurologist as he was sure it was a neurological problem. An MRI scan showed ‘degeneration of the Cerebellum’, an area at the base of the brain which controls co-ordination, mobility, balance and speech. The neurologist pulled no punches when he explained to us what Bert’s condition entailed and the problems it would inevitably bring. Nerve cells in the cerebellum had deteriorated and were dying off. He was told that there was no cure, and no medication would help. Quite a brutal diagnosis, and hard for us both to take. At the time, there was no specific name for Bert’s condition.

Because we had been advised that the condition would not respond to medication, Bert gave acupuncture a try, but after 16 sessions with a private practitioner, we stopped as there was no obvious benefit.

As Bert’s mobility deteriorated, and his co-ordination worsened, we adjusted our thinking and looked to the future, focussing on what he was still able to do, rather on what he was no longer able to do.

A big decision, which came with a lot of ill-feeling, was him giving up driving. It was pointed out to Bert that he wasn’t as good a driver as he had once been, but he disagreed. We all think about how the world opens up when we get our licence, but the opposite is also true, so it was a very tough decision for him to make.

Because of his lack of balance, in 2016 we parked Bert’s electric bike for the last time and replaced it with a motorised scooter. It was great that he could still get around the Wee County by himself again (sometimes with me in tow on my electric bike!)

We managed a further two cruises with Bert using another set of 4 wheels, this time a walking frame with a seat on it, which he used to carry his dinner plate at the buffet. Our last holiday abroad before Covid 19 struck was to The Hard Rock Hotel in Tenerife. It was fabulous....But don’t take our word for it....just visit and find out for yourself!

Covid was a shock for everyone, but especially for us, when a locum GP (who had never met Bert) phoned us at home to advise that he had been put on a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) register. A real body blow, and extremely upsetting. We know we weren’t the only ones who had to deal with this phone call to many who were considered a heightened health risk. It was explained to us ‘that Bert would not survive if he had to be



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resuscitated'. That insensitive phone call was hard to accept.

Following his last consultation with his neurologist, Bert's condition is now classified as MSA, Multiple Systems Atrophy. He is battling this rare condition with all its limitations but continues to laugh a lot. Usually this is instigated by me when I don't always understand what he's trying to say and get the missing word wrong (the blame lies with me and my deafness!) Typically, he never complains about his condition, and just gets on with what he is able to do.

We now have the support of carers who visit in the morning to get Bert washed and dressed, and in the evening to get him ready for bed. We have also had some help from Social Services and Occupational Health, who have suggested equipment to help as his condition worsens.

So, our lives have changed a lot since MSA arrived but with the help and support of our wonderful sons Grant and Craig, and their caring and loving wives Gail and Hazel we will continue to deal with this awful illness as best we can.

MSA is explained by Google far better than I have done. Check it out as Bert's condition ticks most of the boxes.

He sends his best wishes to all his fellow retired members.

Kindest Regards,

Dorothy O'Donnell

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**. 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

**UPDATE FROM
INSPECTOR MARIE WHITE OF
POLICE SCOTLAND, FORTH
VALLEY DIVISION**

Greetings to you all from Division,

I hope all of you are keeping well. I am writing this on the day that Storm Eunice is upon us and we are bracing ourselves to see what this brings. So far not a lot of issues within the



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Division, and aside from a few snowier roads North of the Division we are doing okay for now.

I am pleased to say that Covid restrictions have been reduced again and our resourcing picture is looking far better than it did a few months ago and this week particularly has shown significant improvement. We are starting to get more planning applications for Spring/Summer events and our planning departments are getting back to work; I suspect we will see a steady increase of planned events in the coming months. Our Liquor Licensing Department have also seen a steady increase in applications for events and our officers for the first time in a while have been policing the pubs and clubs.

Over the past few months, officers have been doing a lot of work with partners in trying to reduce drug related deaths within the community. As you have probably seen in the press, Scotland has the highest rate in Europe, and we have been doing our best locally to do our bit to reduce these. Our officers sadly go to suspected drugs deaths in the community frequently. A number of officers within the Division have taken part in a **Naloxone trial**. This is a drug that can be administered to those who we believe have taken a serious overdose and has had excellent results in preserving life until medical professionals can intervene. There are

a number of success stories. The Chief Constable only yesterday announced that due to the success of the pilot, it will be rolled out for all operational officers to carry routinely; more and more, Police are the first at the scene of these types of calls.

Aside from this, we continue our Drugs enforcement work. We only yesterday executed a search warrant for drugs at a property with a very successful haul recovered. Within the custody setting we ensure that drug dependency support is provided and that individuals are referred to external agencies for onward support.

In terms of other on-going work, we continue to deal with and try to prevent Anti-Social behaviour via various initiatives and are doing a lot of work at the minute trying to alert people to online scams. This type of crime is often really difficult to investigate due to complex technology used, and although the majority of people who fall victim to this type of crime are vulnerable, we are frequently seeing lots of the public being duped due to sophisticated and believable techniques used. Every week there seems to be a new method used.

Meanwhile more conventional crime continues - there is never a dull moment, but the working day goes quickly!

Best wishes to you all, **Marie White**



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CENTRAL BRANCH WALKING GROUP

Our first walk will take place at Sheriffmuir at **11 a.m.** on **Tuesday 29 March 2022**. This is an easy walk but it can be muddy in bad weather. Meet at the Clan MacRae Monument, where there is some offroad parking or travel just a little further up the road where a larger car park can be accessed. Lunch at the **Westlands Hotel in Dunblane**.

Please contact me at mdunno1@mdunno1.plus.com mobile **07754 316 778** if you want to join the walk and confirm if you will also be lunching. Look forward to seeing you there. Newcomers welcome.

Moira Dunn

LUNCH FOR OLDER MEMBERS

We are delighted to share that we have booked a lunch at Torwood Garden Centre, Larbert on **Tuesday, 5 April 2022** for members of **80 years and over**. Our last lunch for older members took place at the same location in March 2020.

If you are interested in attending this event, please get in touch to add your name to the list. There are already 18 names on the list.

We will perhaps arrange a second date to accommodate those who have expressed an interest but cannot make the first date.

If you require transport this will be arranged by our younger volunteers. If you prefer that a family member assists you, they will be made welcome.

OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

Pics sent in by Mike Mill – there's a clue!





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NEW LIFE MEMBERS FOR 2022

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

(LIFE MEMBERS DO NOT PAY AN ANNUAL FEE SO PLEASE REMEMBER TO CANCEL ANY STANDING ORDER YOU HAVE FOR PAYMENT OF ANNUAL FEE. YOU BECOME A LIFE MEMBER ON 1 JANUARY 2022 AND ARE THERAFTER EXEMPT FROM FEE).

How many can you recognise? Drinks are on Mike!!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

To all members who celebrate a birthday over the next few months of Spring and early summer.

Good health for the year ahead.

And may we all move cautiously forward towards more normal times



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OBITUARIES

FAREWELL TO

**ALEXANDER (SANDY)
WATT FINDLAY**

1942 – 2021



Born in Finlayson Street Fraserburgh on 4th September 1942 to Sandy and Jean Findlay, Sandy was the eldest of four children.

The family moved around the north-east of Scotland due to his father working as a police officer living in Cults, Aboyne, Banff, and Inverurie.

Sandy's first job was at Hayes in Inverurie before he moved south to join the Police cadets at the age of 16. He was stationed at Stirling, Kilsyth, Lennoxton and Banton. He then joined the police stationed at Stirling, Falkirk, Grangemouth Road police station, and joined the CID around 1972. On promotion to sergeant, Sandy

was transferred to Denny, Stenhousemuir, Maddiston and Falkirk.

Sadly, Sandy lost his beloved wife Madge in February 1997.

He retired from the post of Falkirk Custody Sergeant in 1997.

My first encounter with Sandy (who was at that time a very scary, hardened detective) was as a very young and naïve constable at Falkirk (1980) I was delegated to accompany him on a mission to Glasgow to team up with 'plainers' in the search of 'doss houses' for a local Falkirk itinerant who had assaulted an officer at Dennyloanhead. We failed to track him down but cemented Strathclyde/Central cooperation in a local establishment which was an eye opener. I recall Sandy relating the story of a young Constable seeking his assistance to burst a guy who'd done his meter.

Sandy liked having to be called upon to show off his renowned interview skills and experience. As they entered the cell to speak to the suspect the young constable swung the door behind them just a little too hard and it closed, locking all three in the cell. The look of disgust on Sandy's face was only matched by the beaming embarrassment of the young constable. The suspect thought it was hilarious and all credibility on the part of the police was lost. No worries though, the cell buzzer would come to



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the rescue. Unfortunately, it was lunch time at the station in question and no-one was for getting up to see what the suspect's problem was.

It was quite a while before they felt forced to enquire into the cause of the incessant buzzing. Imagine their surprise when opening the door to give the suspect a mouthful only to find Sandy and the embarrassed young constable. As a footnote the suspect admitted the crime to Sandy and the young Constable took onboard a valuable lesson.



Sandy always looked after his troops on and off duty. Whilst at Denny he oversaw the 'tuck shop' and the proceeds were used in organising the Christmas dance and pantomime trips for families and was instrumental in the organising and running of numerous station social events at local venues with Tam Stewart and Andy Differ. Two young 'keen' cops on his shift heard a radio message that a

Glasgow team had done the post office in St Ninians, they went to the motorway at Pirnhall and waited for them to pass, chased them and with dog and traffic vehicle forced them to stop and effected an arrest. Chuffed to bits they returned triumphantly to Denny and related the story to Sandy - who then brought them back down to earth with a scolding for going off their beat without telling him! All was good in the end when they suggested it could be the same guys who had rammed Sandy and Cammy Shanks a few months earlier and he promptly raced through to Stirling to 'interview' them!

A real character, Sandy passed away at home on 23 November 2021 with his loving daughter Elaine and son Graham by his side.

Remembered always with great affection: Frank Thomson, Paul Fleming and Dougie Hamilton



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IRENE ORR

1933 - 2022



Irene was born in 1933 in Strathmiglow, Fife and her first job was as a grocer with the Co-operative.

Irene and Archie were a devoted couple, married for 65 years, and had three sons, David, Liddell and Kenneth. When youngest son Kenneth went to High school, Irene returned to the workplace, firstly at Bairds in Falkirk High Street, and later at a pre-school nursery. Much later in life Irene successfully passed her driving test and her final job was delivering meals on wheels.

In common with Archie, her passion in life was Muiravonside Church where she worked alongside Archie as a church elder.

Irene also devoted time to her hobbies of knitting for charity, crosswords and

bowls.

Both Irene and Archie enjoyed bus tours, visiting almost every country in Europe.

In recent years, Irene was a familiar face at Branch lunches and events, including the annual Seagull Trust Sail.

Irene underwent surgery in Forth Valley Royal Hospital where she sadly passed away in January 2022.

A quiet, kind, caring lady, she will be sadly missed.

The deepest sympathy of Central Branch is extended to Archie who is now resident in Haining Nursing Home in Maddiston, and all the family.





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LIFE MEMBERS

JIM PATON

1941 – 2022

and

WILLIAM WINTER

1927 - 2022

have also passed away since our last newsletter.

May they rest in peace.

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.



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