

BAFUNCS

British Association of Former United Nations Civil Servants

NEWSLETTER



Number 75
March 2019



In this Issue:

UK taxation
update

Preview of 2020
Annual Reunion

Former UN staff
honoured

News from
the regions

Health in
later years

BAFUNCS

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Cover

Anne Hathaway's cottage, Stratford-upon-Avon.

 Designed and printed in Wales

Corrigendum

In Newsletter No.74 of September 2018, an appreciation of **Joy Mitra**, the former Membership Secretary who died last year, was published. Inadvertently the picture included was not of Joy but of **Ziaul Islam**, another longstanding contributor to the work of the BAFUNCS Executive Committee. We apologize for this mistake, and have done so in person to Ziaul who, we are happy to report, is in sprightly form.

The BAFUNCS website takes off!

The BAFUNCS website now has more than 300 registered users and the number continues to grow. Not only does it have an active members' area with access to up-to-date information about BAFUNCS activities, but it also issues periodic website bulletins intended to highlight the latest news. If you have not already registered for it and wish to do so, you can either:

- **Register yourself** at <https://bafuncs.org/?p=1382> or
- **Request assistance at** website@bafuncs.org

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

I refer to the form relating to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which was circulated last year to all members, and which is being redistributed with this issue of the Newsletter. The GDPR is basically an agreement to share limited personal information within the BAFUNCS membership (such as name, address, telephone number and e-mail) in the context of the Membership List and/or the members' only area of the website. It will never be shared with anyone outside the Association.

Those of you who have already completed this form or have otherwise indicated your agreement with GDPR (such as via the Application Form or website registration) can ignore this message. But for those who have not yet done so, and if you agree to its contents, it would be greatly appreciated if you would complete and return the GDPR form enclosed, as indicated, at your earliest convenience.

With many thanks

Anne Gunning

Membership Secretary, BAFUNCS

Contact the Editor

The deadline for contributions to the September issue is 31 July 2019. If you wish to try out an idea before writing, the Editor can be contacted: by phone at 01554 753217; by letter at 2B Harries Avenue, Llanelli, SA15 3LE; or, preferably, by e-mail (editor@bafuncs.org) easily accessed by clicking on the link on the contacts page of the BAFUNCS website.

Note from the Editor



Dear BAFUNCS Members,

I should like to introduce myself as the newly appointed Editor of the BAFUNCS Newsletter. The photo should help you to identify me at future annual reunions, or for those who might already know me from former days, to recognize me.

I joined WHO's Regional Office for Europe in Copenhagen in 1978, and spent from 1982 to 1984 at the UNEP Office for the Mediterranean in Athens. In 1985 I moved to WHO headquarters in Geneva where I worked in a series of positions related to WHO's scientific and statistical publications. From 2003, I worked as liaison officer for WHO/FAO. I retired from WHO in 2006. After first living in Luxembourg, the country of origin of my husband, we moved to Wales in 2014, at which point I joined BAFUNCS.

I hope this new-look Newsletter will meet with your approval. You will notice some innovations, including the feature *Health in later years*. Other issues related to ageing are being followed by Colin Davis, newly appointed as the BAFUNCS liaison with Age UK. He reports in this issue on their conference *For later life* held in September 2018.

I would encourage readers to provide me with feedback, most especially in these early days when I am still finding my feet in a new "job". Contributions from readers, even very short ones, are always welcome (see contact information on p.2).

This being my first experience of working with the Executive Committee to produce the Newsletter, I would like to share with all Members my admiration for the complete commitment, permanent hard work and unfailing professionalism of all its officers. They deserve our thanks and appreciation for unfailingly going the extra mile.

On behalf of all readers, I should also like to thank the former Editor Clyde Reynolds, who has toiled on our behalf for many years. I can only hope I will be able to serve as ably as he has.

Mary Roll-Vallanjon

BAFUNCS Newsletter
Number 75 - March 2019

Web: <http://www.bafuncs.org>
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4
Taxation in the UK

5
Regional activities

10
Report on Age UK

11
Health in later years

13
Book review

Contents

Number 75
March 2019

14
A steady trickle

15
Former UN
staff honoured

16
Life on death row

18
Report of the
Executive Committee

23
Financial report

28
In memoriam

30
Membership news

32
AR2020

Taxation in the UK

After considerable to-ing and fro-ing with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the latter has now accepted that we can use the UK/USA double taxation agreement to claim a reduction in the UK taxable amount based on the individual's and in some cases the UN's contribution to the pension fund. HMRC has apparently notified its regional tax offices to this effect.

The UK Upper Tribunal case of *Macklin vs. HMRC* [2015] established that the World Bank pension scheme should be considered to be established in the USA for the purpose of the UK/USA double taxation agreement. Based on that case, HMRC now also accepts that the UN pension scheme is established in the USA for this same purpose. It is this case that has changed the tax treatment of UN pensioners in the UK. The UK/USA treaty allows the UK to tax the pension only to the same extent that the pension would be taxed under the US tax system.

Under the US tax system, the pension contributions made by a UN employee can be claimed against tax. This requires that the UN retiree be able to show, definitively, the amount of his or her contributions that form part of his/her pension pot on retirement and the length of service during which these contributions were made. This can be found in the statement that was given to all pensioners at the time of retirement or, if this has been lost, by contacting UNJSPF and requesting an *Attestation of contributory service*.

The exemption is based upon that part of the retiree's pension that is considered to be a return of the original contributions made while in UN employment. This will usually include not only the employee's contributions but also the contributions made by the UN. Retirees will recall that although they received a net salary while working, their pension contribution was based on a "pensionable gross" level, and that the pension contribution was shared: one-third being paid by the staff member and two-thirds being paid by the organization. The employee's one-third contribution qualifies for tax relief under US law. The same approach can be applied to the pension of a surviving spouse.

An individual who is not a US citizen or never worked in the USA whilst in the employ of the UN (or if they did work in the USA never paid US federal tax) will also be able to claim exemption in respect of the two-thirds contributions made by the UN on their behalf. The number of years over which the tax-free amount can be attributed is based on a US annuity table and can vary from 13 to 34 years. The number of years is based on age at retirement, and whether or not the pensioner has a qualifying spouse. In US tax law, a qualifying spouse is defined as one who is *not* a US citizen or who holds specific work-visas or a green card.

It should be noted that where a lump-sum was initially taken, then part of the contributions made are considered to have been returned as part of the lump-sum received. The fact that a lump-sum has been taken does not affect the amount that is treated as exempt from UK tax each year, but it does mean that there is a smaller total amount which ranks for exemption and this will mean that the amount is "used up" over a shorter period.

The calculation itself needs to be done with some knowledge of the US system for the reasons stated above. In essence, those with short service or early retirement qualify for less of a rebate than those with long service. The rebate that HMRC will allow is an annual amount based on the US calculation. This amount, once agreed, can be deducted annually from the UN pension to ascertain the taxable amount in the UK. Unlike the prior 10% allowance, any amount claimed does not continue indefinitely since, once it has been deemed that the original contributions have been returned, then the whole pension reverts to being taxable.

In some cases, this rebate will exceed the 10% rebate eliminated in the 2017–2018 tax year, but in other cases it may not be as much as 10%. If you wish to claim under the new proposal, you can request a backdated adjustment for the past four tax years; however, the 10% rebate already granted will be deducted from any adjusted amount due (Paul Webb believes a maximum of six tax years can be considered, given the UK/USA double-tax treaty allows a six-year period of claim). We believe that this different interpretation is because when the UK/USA Double Tax Agreement came into force in 2004, the normal UK period of back claims was six years, but under UK domestic law this has now been reduced to four years. As at the date of this note, it means tax years as far back as 2012–2013 can be considered. Some pensioners may find that they have been in receipt of their UN pensions longer than the potential 13–34 years over which they could treat some of the UN pension as exempt from UK tax.

Members should be aware that, while this principle seems now to have been accepted by HMRC, there is still little case history of practical application on which to draw. With this in mind, we have established a discussion group in the Members' Area of the BAFUNCS website (<http://www.bafuncs.org>) and would invite members to share their experience with others.

BAFUNCS cannot recommend any specific accounting company to members, but we would wish to thank Paul Webb of Thomas Westcott (Exeter) for his help in pursuing the test case undertaken by a BAFUNCS member, and of course, the member himself for pursuing this claim. Mr Webb's contact details are: e-mail: paul.webb@thomaswestcott.co.uk; tel.: 01392 288 555.

Regional activities in 2018

compiled by **Sheila Macrae**, Regional Convenor

Cambridge Region

Nichola Rodgers

Our first meeting in 2018 was held on 8 March at the Thomas Paine Hotel in Thetford. As well as this being our AGM, information was provided, and I gave a brief update on the Benevolent Fund. Fifteen members attended.

In June we explored the stunning Ely cathedral with its famous Octagon Tower and fascinating stained glass museum with depictions of poignant stories from the past. Twelve members attended, including Richard Sydenham from KSX region.



Visit to Ely cathedral CAM

Thanks to Gillian Allard, a volunteer at the Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation Museum and a trustee of the River Waveney Trust, we enjoyed a day out to both venues in September. The visit was of particular relevance to many of us who have family connections with the RAF. Following lunch at the Buck Inn, we relocated to the Earsham Wetlands Centre where Gillian gave a lively talk on the conservation work carried out by the volunteers of the River Waveney Trust. Fourteen members attended, including Sheila from London and Richard from KSX.

Our Christmas lunch was held on 6 December at the White Hart Inn Fulbourn, following a gathering at Nicky's residence. There was a turnout of 20 members and we were delighted to welcome David and Sue Stephen who recently relocated to our region. We also welcome to our region the following new members: Ivy Scales, Larry Keen and Tomiko Shimomura. We were sorry to lose David Insull, who has relocated to South West Region. Sadly we learned of the passing of John Bolton Maggs in April and of John Mainprize in June.



Visit to Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation Museum, Flixton CAM

The next meeting will be our AGM on 7 March 2019 at the Thomas Paine Hotel, Thetford.

Kent and Sussex Region

Joan Wilson

On 26 April, Sheila Cooper arranged a visit to the Tulip Festival at Pashley Manor Gardens. There had been a lot of rain earlier in the year and although the tulips were beautiful, the ground was very wet and the rain started again as we left after lunch.

On 27 June, Sheila Cooper and Joan Wilson attended the Foreign Office reception and service of commemoration and dedication marking the 200th anniversary of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, held in St. Paul's Cathedral, and were fortunate to visit the Margaret Anstee room before going into the reception. There they met BAFUNCS President, Sir Kieran Prendergast, our ex-ambassador to Moscow, Andrew Wood, as well as a number of other interesting people.

The ceremonial service, which took place on 28 June, was very well attended. The Band of the Household Cavalry played, the household cavalry and yeomen of the Guard marched, and it was all very thrilling. Unfortunately at the last moment the Queen was unable to attend, although we saw her lady-in-waiting processing back from the altar

Terri Jezeph kindly arranged a tour of the Harvey's brewery in Lewes on 2 October. Nine members got together for an early supper in the John Harvey pub adjacent to the brewery and then joined about 50 other enthusiasts for the tour, which was led by Miles Jenner, the head brewer and joint Managing Director of Harvey's brewery. The group spent an interesting and most rewarding two hours, culminating in testing the outstanding products.



Visit to Harvey's brewery, Lewes KSX



Inside Harvey's Brewery KSX

For United Nations Day on 24 October, Michael Askwith arranged for a lunch at Prezzo in Chichester. Once again the group was treated to a splendid lunch in delightful surroundings and a good time was had by all.

Forthcoming events: we are still meeting for the usual bar lunch at Dean's Place hotel on the second Thursday of each month.

London Region

Pauline Barrett-Reid

The London Region held its Annual General Meeting on 2 May 2018 at the Sherlock Holmes hotel, Baker Street. Eighteen members attended and there were 10 apologies. The Chairperson, Pauline Barrett-Reid, reported on activities. Behrouz Shahandeh was ratified as Honorary Treasurer. The meeting discussed the organization of activities and the position of Welfare Officer and agreed to return to the issues later in the year.

The region arranged a visit to the Supreme Court on 13 April which was well attended and members found it to be of great interest.

The usual lunch was held to celebrate UN Day at the Bella Italian restaurant in Baker Street, with 24 members attending. This year the theme was *Remembering the life of Kofi Annan*. Martin Barber gave an insightful and comprehensive presentation on the life and work of Kofi Annan. Members concluded that Kofi Annan was the most distinguished Secretary-General in the history of the UN.



UN Day lunch at the Bella Italian restaurant, Baker Street LON



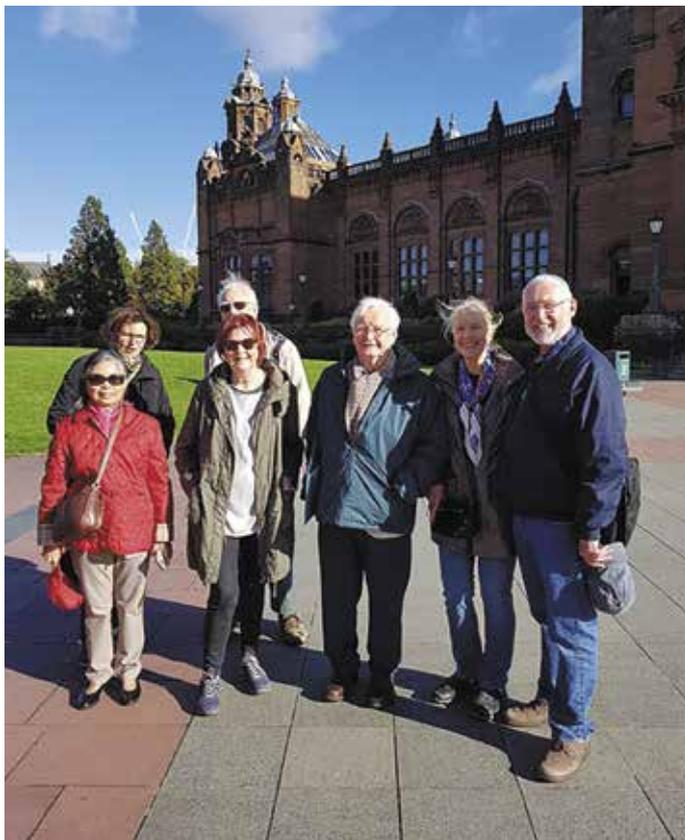
The speaker, Martin Barber, and members at the UN Day lunch LON

Finally the annual Christmas lunch was held on 10 December at the Milestone hotel in Knightsbridge and was well attended. Martin Barber gave a short presentation as it was the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration on Human Rights. Members were of the view that at this difficult time in world history, the principles enshrined in the Declaration continued to be of importance. Members had a convivial and festive lunch with crackers, wine, good food and pleasant company.

Northern Region

Duncan Barclay

The 2018 NOR gathering was held in Glasgow from 23 to 25 September, and was well attended by 24 participants. Feedback was very positive, and a good time was had by all. The company and the food were rather good, the programme was relaxed and provided ample opportunity for participants to pursue their particular interests, individually or in a group.



Members visiting the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow NOR



Gala dinner at Cail Bruich restaurant, Glasgow NOR

The 2019 NOR gathering is planned for Newcastle, and more details will be published when available. As always, members of any region are welcome to come and join us for next year's fun.

The issue of regional subventions has always been a subject of particular interest (and concern) to the Northern Region, given the wide geographical distribution of its members and the resulting costs in outreach, and the logistics of organizing events. We were therefore particularly happy that the Executive Committee decided to bring forward its consideration of this matter to the AGM at AR2019 for discussion and review. In the meantime, some lower-spending regions have indicated their solidarity by expressing willingness to release some of their funds to the less well-off ones on a case-by-case basis, and NOR would like to publicly express its gratitude and thanks to the South Central Region for their generous subsidy of £200 to support NOR's activities. It came with the caveat that it should be "spent well". It was, and much appreciated by all who benefited.

Overseas Region

Coby Sikkens

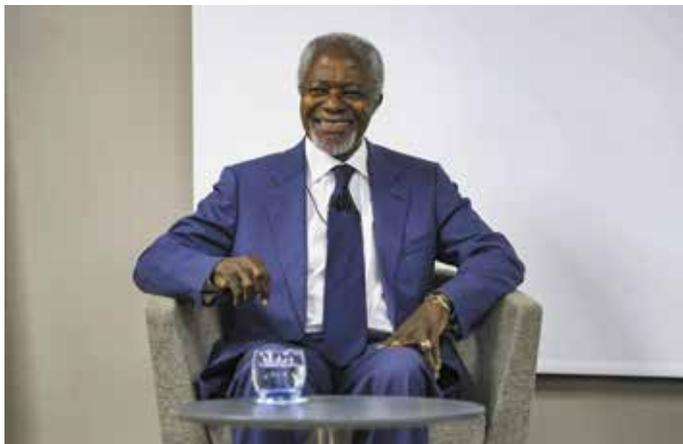
2018 was a very busy year in the OVS Region. In the first few months, the Organizing Committee stepped up its already quite intense activities to get AR2018 on its feet, and from January until May we lived and breathed BAFUNCS. However, before we got this far, we held our spring lunch on 13 March in the Café Papon on the Ramparts of Geneva's Old Town. Then May came and with it our big event. On the morning of Friday 11 May, the UN flag was raised atop the flag pole of the Novotel in Geneva, and we were ready for the influx of BAFUNCS members from around the globe.



UN flag at Novotel, Geneva for AR2018 OVS

And come they did! There were 115 members and guests to enjoy the speakers, the food and the excursions. A novelty was the satisfaction survey which we had prepared to find out if members had been happy about having an AR outside of the UK, and its arrangements. The response was overwhelmingly positive. It was a terrible shock to all of us when on the morning of 18 August, we heard of the demise of Kofi Annan who had been our star speaker in May and who was at that time

still so alive and well. While being interviewed by the BAFUNCS President about some of his actions during his time as Secretary-General, he gave us his wisdom, wit and humour, and we are deeply grateful that what no doubt was one of his last public appearances, was with us.



Kofi Annan addressing the participants at AR2018 OVS

On 20 August, we held the OVS summer lunch in restaurant Le Reposoir which is situated right on Lake Geneva. The weather was brilliant and the lunch wonderful. Everyone could choose what they liked, but the traditional *filets de perche* and the cold roast beef turned out to be favourites. The last OVS event in 2018 was lunch on 19 November in the Ariana at the Place des Nations, very kindly organized by Mary Hamouda, while I was gallivanting about in Spain.

We have welcomed four new members in the OVS Region during 2018. It remains for me to say how happy I am that so many OVS members volunteered to help with the AR which greatly added to its success and happy atmosphere.

Oxford Region

Vicky Haeri

The Beast from the East, with its heavy snowstorms, forced postponement of our 2018 AGM on 1 March, but finally 20 of us met at the Coach and Horses in Chiselhampton for an enjoyable lunch, combined with the AGM, on 15 March.

About a dozen of our members attended the very well organized Annual Reunion in Geneva, and so were privileged to be at one of Kofi Annan's last public appearances. We are now discussing possible venues for a reunion in the Oxford Region, but finding a suitable location of interest to the membership at large and enough enthusiastic younger members to take on the organization required is proving quite a challenge.

Our Christmas lunch coincided with US Thanksgiving on 22 November. Thanks to Cyril Groom's excellent bargaining skills, the Oxford Belfry treated us both

royally and economically, so 23 members could enjoy a three-course festive meal, complete with crackers, for £22. As a *digestif*, Michael Davies gave us a very lucid and helpful talk on the question of taxation of UN pensions in the UK, a paper on which has been disseminated to all members. After careful evaluation of length of service, etc., some of us will be following up with the accountant who presented the successful test case.

In August we were very sorry to have to say goodbye to our good friend and colleague, Joy Mitra, who died suddenly of a heart attack. After losing his much-loved wife Vicky, he had been spending more time in India and so had given up the post of BAFUNCS Membership Secretary that he had served so faithfully for many years. Our Region also lost Leatrice Beeson, who passed away on her 94th birthday. She was a longstanding member, a retiree from UNESCO, who had once been Regional Representative, but more recently was unable to participate in our activities due to ill-health.



Christmas lunch at the Oxford Belfry OXF

South Central Region

Claudine Pichon

Four luncheons were organized in 2018: in April at the Globe in Christchurch, a pub recommended by Vera, a cheerful gathering despite the grey skies. In May, five SCL members attended the Annual Reunion in Geneva. The highlight of the reunion was the good-humoured discussion between Kofi Annan and Sir Kieran Prendergast.

In July, we met at the Railway Inn (Botley) and, during lunch, held a brief AGM. Those present agreed to continue with quarterly lunches and discussed potential locations, keeping in mind the importance to meet throughout the Region (from Dorset to East Hampshire) to give an opportunity for all to attend.

Early in October, we had lunch in France without crossing the Channel, i.e. at La Parisienne, a French bistro in Romsey. A small gathering, but everyone enjoyed the food and we most probably will go back. Unfortunately, our pleasure was marred by the news of Vera passing away.

The Christmas lunch was at the Cloud hotel (Brockenhurst) on 10 December. Under new management since the end of 2017, the Cloud was given a new lease of life and offered a comprehensive festive menu. The

lunch was well attended with a visitor from another region and a family member. Unfortunately, four members cancelled due to poor health. As usual, the raffle was much appreciated.

Looking forward to 2019, I am planning to try out a couple of places between Emsworth and Havant.



Christmas lunch at the Cloud hotel, Brockenhurst SCL



Christmas lunch at the Cloud hotel, Brockenhurst SCL

South West Region

Rosemary ap Rees

We have had a quiet year. A few of us gathered at the Strode Arms for a lunch in April, which was fun.

Barbara Whitehead had a stroke just over a year ago. She is home, with a live-in carer, and can go out and about a little bit. She has lost her e-mail address as her computer was updated and is trying to get a relative to sort it out for her. She also lost her BAFUNCS address book. I have had one sent to her and the new one will be out shortly. So please old friends, do phone her and make contact. She also lost her son unexpectedly a couple of months ago, so it is a sad time for her. I sent our condolences.

I had a heart attack in June. A week in hospital, a small stent put in and home the following day with a friend

to look after me for a few days here in the house. Then my local long-suffering friends did my shopping, the garbage, and general cheering up for the next two months until I was allowed to drive again.

The last lunch was the Christmas one on 13 December. Eleven of us present; it should have been 17 but illness took over. We were pleased that Sheila Macrae joined us.

The next lunch will be on 11 April 2019 at the Strode Arms, West Cranmore. I am looking for a new Treasurer, as Eileen Wait would like to retire after 15 years. Also, I am looking for a replacement for me. Offers gratefully received.



Christmas lunch at the Strode Arms, West Cranmore SWT

Surrey Region

Ann Chaplin

On 8 March, we held our AGM and lunch at the Berrylands Public House, attended by 18 members and one guest. The Committee was re-elected for another year and we were delighted that Mrs Stella Simmons was formally voted on to the Committee and subsequently accepted to become our Assistant Social Secretary.

Several proposals for an outing in the early autumn were put forward. In the end, a visit to the Musical Museum in Brentford was selected (a full account of this visit can be found on the BAFUNCS website).



Visit to the Musical Museum, Brentford; the Wurlitzer organ SRY

A pack of notelets and season's greetings cards were sent to those members who are semi-housebound or whom we have not heard from or seen for quite a while, to let them know they are not forgotten.

Our Christmas lunch was again held at Hart's Boatyard overlooking the River Thames on 13 December, and we were pleased to welcome 15 members.



Christmas lunch at Hart's Boatyard, Surbiton SRY

As the upstairs area of Hart's Boatyard was selected for use this year and there is no lift or ramp, the Committee decided to take Barbara Purvis – who needs wheelchair access – for a meal in a pub near to her care home in Richmond the following day.

We are sorry to announce the death of Dr Omar Mukhtar in October, and will surely miss his smiling face at our various activities. We welcome Mrs Christine Humphreys and Mr Kabir and Mrs Yasmine Shaikh to Surrey Region.

West Midland and Wales Region

Michael Davies

In the past year we have met twice for lunches. The first, in spring, was in the Crown and Sandys, Ombersly, which was the Worcestershire dining pub of the year. It was well attended and we enjoyed a fine selection of dishes.

We bade farewell to the O'Learys who were in the throes of moving to the South Central Region, and who had been regular attendees. In the autumn, 12 WMW members met at the Weighbridge Inn in Nailsworth to sample their two-in-one pies, which certainly seemed to pass muster.

The number was slightly down on our usual turnout due to illness and other commitments which was disappointing, but we welcomed our current President and Lady Prendergast to their first regional lunch. The lunch provided us with an opportunity to be briefed on UK-US double taxation agreement.

We will not be holding a spring lunch in 2019 as a number of our regular participants will be involved with the Stratford-upon-Avon Annual Reunion, but we are encouraging WMW regional members to join us at Stratford as non-resident participants. Despite having no lunch we will, however, be sending out our regular semi-annual newsletter.

Report on Age UK Colin Davis

Age UK held the *For later life* conference on 5 September 2018 at the Church House conference centre in London. Topics included: building financial resilience; care in a changing world; who will pay for care; what is fair for older people. Notes from the sessions can be found at: www.ageuk.org.uk/conferences/for-later-life.

Age UK is currently working to influence decision makers on TV licenses to remain free for the over-75s (note BBC executives just awarded themselves 30% pay rises!). It is estimated that there are 2 million over-75s, half of whom have a disability and for whom the TV is the main source of companionship. Other issues being addressed are: *Care in crisis* that deals with the government's attitude to funding painful journeys (e.g. how the elderly get to and from hospital appointments); and loneliness of the elderly in our communities, in collaboration with the Jo Cox Commission.

Age UK are working with the Care and Support Alliance to pressure government for increases in national insurance and income tax, so as to be able to increase funding available for care and support.

The annual *Talk money* week was held on 12–18 November 2018. Anyone experiencing financial difficulties was able to contact Age UK for advice. The website link for this is <https://talkmoneyweek.moneyadvice.service.org.uk>.

A free book is available from Age UK, specially developed for recording: important names, addresses, telephone numbers, money and will information; where important documents are kept and what they are; possessions and final wishes; etc. It is called the *Life book*, and Age UK will post it free of cost. It can be obtained by calling 0345 685 1061 or applying through their website at www.ageuk.org.uk/lifebook.

Health in Later Years

This article is reproduced with kind permission of the author Dr David Cohen and the Association of Former WHO Staff Members (AFSM) Quarterly News Magazine, QNT 113, October 2018. Membership of AFSM is open to all former WHO staff, see <http://www.who.int/formerstaff/en/>.



“My back hurts” Dr David Cohen

This very common complaint relates to pain affecting various parts of the spine: cervical, dorsal, lumbar, and which can radiate as far as the legs (sciatica).

Back pain affects about 80% of the world's population at some time during the lifespan. Remaining seated all day in front of a computer favours back pain, which has become a real epidemic. Apart from sedentary office work, other occupations potentially harmful for the back include hairdressing, dentistry, removals and construction work.

Back pain is one of the most common reasons for making a medical appointment.

The structure of the back is complex. Muscles, ligaments, tendons, discs and bones work together to support the body and allow movement. Problems with any of these components can cause pain. The cause sometimes remains unclear.

Symptoms

The main symptom is pain in one segment of the back, sometimes extending along the buttocks and down the legs, and even to other parts of the body, depending on the nerves affected. The pain often disappears without treatment.

However, you should be concerned and consult a doctor if the pain persists, if it is accompanied by weight loss, fever or inflammation; if rest brings no relief; and if the pain radiates to the knees and lower in the legs.

Diagnosis

To identify the cause of the pain, examinations such as radiography, scans, MRIs, or electromyography may be necessary.

Causes

In older people, strength and muscle mass decrease gradually, and inevitably, with age.

Between 70 and 80 years of age, the loss of strength and muscle mass can reach 50%. For this reason back pain is more common in elderly people. There are various possible causes of back pain including:

- lifestyle: poor posture during professional life, in front of a computer, in the garden, or on the couch, carrying heavy loads, wearing of high-heeled shoes, long periods of standing or sitting; all mechanical stress on the bone structure leads to compression or pinching of vertebrae resulting in more or less long-term pain;
- intervertebral disc when broken or damaged causes increasing pressure on nerves, and slippage of the disc into the spinal canal (herniated disc) resulting in sciatica, an acute intense pain spreading through the buttocks and down the back of the leg;
- arthritis can be responsible for pain in the joints of the hips, lower back and other places;
- spinal stenosis: narrowing of the spinal canal;
- abnormal curvature of the spine: kyphosis or scoliosis;
- sports: if practised excessively, especially after 45 years of age;
- osteoporosis: bones become fragile and porous, increasing the risk of compression fractures;
- long periods of driving without pauses;
- mattress: too hard or too soft;
- stress, or any condition that leads to a drop in muscle tone, may cause vertebral compression: posture is poor, curvature of the spine becomes worse, and vertebrae are poorly supported; a state of *depression* can also be the source of vertebral pain;

Other causes

Some medical conditions can lead to back pain:

- cancer affecting the spine: the tumour can press against a nerve, resulting in back pain;
- infection of the spine: fever, accompanied by sensitivity and heat in an area of the back caused by the infection;
- disorders of the kidneys: kidney stones or infection of the kidneys can cause back pain;
- shingles: can cause back pain depending on the nerves affected.

Risk factors

The following factors are associated with increased risk of developing lower back pain:

- sedentary lifestyle
- poor physical condition
- advanced age
- obesity and excess weight
- tobacco and alcohol that favour osteoporosis
- sleep disorders: people with sleep disorders are more likely to suffer back pain
- lower back pain tends to be more common in women than men, perhaps due to hormonal factors.

Prevention

The prevention of back pain in seniors involves a review of the lifestyle with advice on its improvement if needed, including developing awareness of correct posture, changing any negative habits, and learning and practising daily exercises to maintain a straight back. Among the sports that are suitable for older people, swimming is highly recommended.

Treatment

Apart from cases caused by infection or tumour, the treatments usually prescribed are analgesic and anti-inflammatory medication, and possibly thermal cures. Self-medication should be avoided, including with most products sold over the counter; however, paracetamol may be taken in doses not exceeding a total of 2 grams per day.

The services of physiotherapists, chiropractitioners or osteopaths can be helpful.

Surgery may be necessary, especially in the event of a herniated disc.

In conclusion, the crucial importance of prevention needs to be stressed, a healthy lifestyle, appropriate exercise and, as always, an optimistic approach to life.

Sources

Creapharma.ch: mal de dos
Mayo Clinic: back pain

SIMPLE PHYSICAL EXERCISES TO PREVENT BACK PAIN

1



Put your knees on your chest
Repeat 3 times,
Maintaining this position
for 3 seconds

2



Raise your head while lying
face down and breathe deeply.
Repeat 3 times, during a
period of 30 seconds

3



Lie on your back. Raise your hips by
pressing on your heels. Hold this
position for 2 seconds and
then relax. Repeat 3 times.

These exercises should be repeated 3 times

Book review Bill Jackson

Desert locust plagues – Controlling the ancient scourge

by Colin Everard

I.B. Tauris, London, 2019, ISBN 978 1 78831 435 0

If you have dipped into the *Guide to researchers* on the UN Career Records Project you may be aware of the distinguished record which Colin Everard had with the International Civil Aviation Organization. Already author of two aviation-related novels, this holder of ICAO's Gold Award has now produced an eminently readable 200-page account of his earlier career in desert locust control. *Desert locust plagues* describes one of the great triumphs of the 20th century – how this age-old scourge that caused catastrophic damage to crops and grazing, with ensuing hunger, even starvation, has been brought under control.

The facts and statistics that he provides to set the scene are mind-boggling. A single swarm can extend over 100 square miles. Twenty-one countries were regarded as "frontline" affected, and another 27 as open to "invasion". In still air, a swarm travels at 12 mph, at 20–30 mph with a tailwind. The mature *Schistocerca gregaria* locust needs to eat half its own weight every day, which means that the swarm can destroy 30 000-40 000 tons of vegetation in 24 hours. "Locusts on the line" can even disable rail transport in the same way as our fabled autumn leaves.

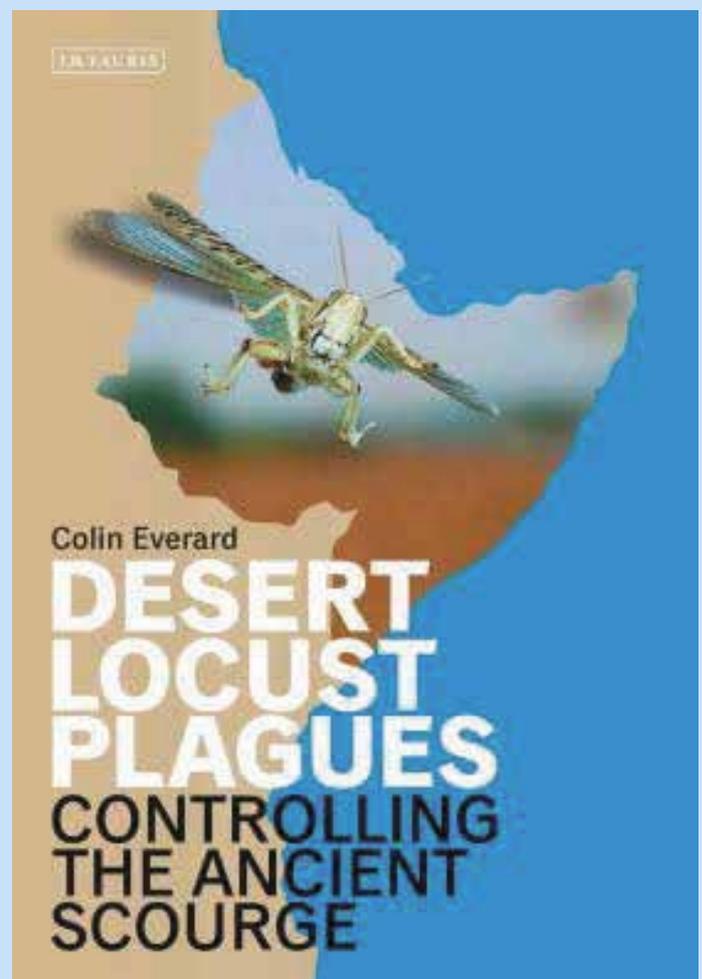
Following National Service in the Horn of Africa, in 1952 Everard joined the Desert Locust Control – part of the evolving structure for administration of East Africa, as the countries of the region moved towards independence. The key need was to be able to predict the precise whereabouts of locust concentrations and prevent their breeding or maturing through the five instars or larval stages. (One hilarious note was struck when the author, having reported a swarm of breeding mature locusts "copulating hard", had a communication from the Control headquarters in Hargeisa: "For Everard: Your message re. locust swarm received. Please, stop copulating and kill the locusts!")

It sounds simple, but could turn into an extremely dangerous business when local elders strongly believed that extensive laying of bait of bran with a 1% admixture of lindane, to destroy the swarm, would lead to failure of the rains. They correctly associated the arrival of locusts with rainfall – they travel on monsoon winds.

Your reviewer did not formally count how many lives the now 88 year-old Everard had, but it seemed like nine at least. Indeed in the final few paragraphs he reflects

philosophically on the subject of danger. The book traces the earlier simple scouting and intelligence approaches to the biblical scourge, through to an epilogue updating us to the still vital air spraying of today, FAO-coordinated and satellite-aided. In terms of controlling outbreaks, the use of satellite technology has revolutionized control methodology. Nowadays, an area of 16 million square kilometres is kept under constant surveillance; screen imaging enables rapid action to be taken to investigate, detect and destroy any locust activity.

The book is non-technical, very much for general readership. It is an enthralling account for anyone who remembers how tough and yet supremely fulfilling it could be to brave deserts, mountains, the elements and hostility in order to further a crucial cause. If your patch included any of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya or Somalia, it is nigh-on compulsory reading.



A steady trickle

Bill Jackson

The autumn of 2018 was a good one for the BAFUNCS UN Career Records Project. We received a steady trickle of contributions of material – including no less than four brand-new autobiographies or memoirs and two comprehensive collections of reports from members who served with the World Food Programme and UNDP for some 30 years each. Details of all will appear by May 2019 in a first *Supplement to the guide for researchers* that can be accessed as an e-book via the BAFUNCS website. Meanwhile, here is a flavour of these fresh donations.

Colin Everard is already known to us as the author of two excellent novels based on his extensive experience with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Whereas air safety was their dominant theme, his latest book retains a link with flying, but as a key element in addressing an age-old problem. The title is self-explanatory: *Desert locust plagues – Controlling the ancient scourge*. It provides insights into the ultimately successful struggle and, along the way, fascinating descriptions of the natural world of the Horn of Africa (see review elsewhere in this Newsletter).

Peter and Diana Simkin have contributed their memoir *To travel hopefully – Journeys and adventures on four continents*, based largely on Diana's regular letters home to her parents from their dozen or more WFP and UNDP duty stations.

Not to be confused with Colin Everard's work, *The locust years – Annals of a UN wife* by **Maureen McBain**, came to hand more by chance. It was published back in 2002. Her husband worked for UNICEF for some 40 years, again in varied postings. The blurb describes it as "a book for those who have lived overseas to empathize with, and for those who stayed at home to marvel at".

From Hollywood to holy wars is a wonderfully readable account of "hounding celebs, dodging bullets, raising a family abroad". It is written by **Cherie Hart**, a journalist who was pivotal to UNDP's public presentation of its work over three decades, first at headquarters and then largely in Asia. It is fun, and by turns critical of faults in the UN system, such as sexual harassment.

Most recently we received from its author, **Sam Oglesby**, *Encounters: a memoir – Relationship journeys from around the world*, an outcome of his 30 years with UNDP. He is trenchantly critical of some fellow UN staffers on the take, or seeking to apply concepts of aid and development as foreign to the host cultures as they were ineffective. The memoir is rendered all the more empathetic and convincing by being written by an avowedly gay man.

John Loftus donated a copy of his account of the setting up of the New International School of Thailand. Economist and statistician **Arif Mohammad Farazi** contributed papers

and reports relating to data sources, information gaps, harmonization, and data-sharing (processing, dissemination and distribution of surveys and censuses). Finally, **Allen Jones** has made available an extensive selection of useful papers and reports from his time with the World Food Programme; as has **Francis O'Donnell**, formerly Resident Coordinator for UNDP in Serbia, Ukraine, etc. And **John Seaman** has provided a full account of his interesting career with the International Maritime Organization and since retirement.

All good stuff. Keep it coming, please!



Cherie Hart

Former UN staff honoured by the UK

Michael Askwith

Dame Rosalyn Higgins: GBE,* for services to international law and justice.

Dame Rosalyn's journey to the most prestigious legal position in the world, President of the International Court of Justice, entailed a long apprenticeship on the workings of the UN, practice at the Bar, and an involvement at all levels of academia. She was elected to the Court in 1995, re-elected in 2000 and ended her second term in February 2009. She was the first female judge to be so appointed and became its President in 2006. She was awarded the Hague Prize for her extraordinary contribution to the study and practice of international law, given that for more than 50 years she had distinguished herself as a legal scholar, barrister, judge and arbitrator. She gave the main address at the BAFUNCS Annual Reunion in 2013, entitled *The International Court of Justice – an anomalous principal organ of the United Nations*.



Dame Rosalyn Higgins, GBE

Michael Keating: CMG,* for services to international diplomacy, conflict prevention and human rights.

During his career Michael has had roles and responsibilities spanning a broad spectrum – in the areas of humanitarian affairs, development, the environment, human rights and politics. This was mostly for the UN in the field, including Afghanistan, Malawi, the Middle East and Somalia, and stints working for other bodies addressing global issues, including Chatham House and the Africa Progress Panel, chaired by Kofi Annan. He also led a team to look at ways in which the UN could strengthen its role in anticipating and preventing massive human rights abuse. This work resulted in the *Human Rights Up Front* initiative being adopted a few years ago. He served as a Panellist in the BAFUNCS/ UNCRP UN@70 Witness Seminar on Humanitarian Issues in October 2015.



Michael Keating, CMG, with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

J. David Whaley: OBE,* for services to the promotion of reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

Since retirement from UNDP in 2000, David has devoted much of his time to assisting in the promotion of peace, reconciliation and human rights in Sri Lanka during and after the Sri Lankan Civil War (1983–2009) between the Government and the Tamil Tigers. In this context, he served as advisor to external partners of Sri Lanka such as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other multilateral and bilateral institutions, international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), the International Crisis Group (ICG) and The Elders, in consultation with representatives of civil society from all communities in Sri Lanka and from various diaspora groups. Prior to this, he had a distinguished career, *inter alia* as the first UN Resident Co-ordinator in post-apartheid South Africa, as well as UNRC in Algeria, Benin and Kenya. The OBE was awarded in recognition of his significant, sustained, voluntary contributions both to diverse communities in Sri Lanka and to the capacity and credibility of the UN Human Rights Council. He participated in the UN@70 Witness Seminar on Development Cooperation in May 2015, contributing a keynote article on *The role of human rights – the UN's elusive third pillar*.



J. David Whaley, OBE

It is good to see that the work of three former senior UN staff members has been acknowledged in the 2019 New Year Honours. We extend our warmest congratulations to them.

* GBE: Dame Grand Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire; CMG: Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; OBE: Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Life on death row

Beryl M. Kutschera

It was probably near the anniversary of my daughter's passing that I went into St Peter's church in the city of Nottingham in the summer of 2018 for a time of reflection. On my way out I picked up the current parish magazine and read an article about the experiences of writing to someone on death row in the United States. I decided to look into this because I like writing letters, a change from e-mails and sending text messages.

I received the information from LifeLines, a website in the United Kingdom which promotes correspondence with the occupants of death row, and an application form. Although the guidelines were quite scary and made me very angry – I felt these people were being treated like animals, nor did I like the attitude “they are going to die anyway” – I decided to apply to write to someone. Charles D. Raby, #999109, date of birth 22 March 1970, was allocated to me; he had been born three weeks after my daughter and has been trying to prove his innocence for 24 years.

Our correspondence started in August 2018. It soon became a fortnightly exchange. He told me that he was a member of the Choctaw tribe and that he had a website (savecharlesdraby.com). It was very comprehensive, and included his art works, which I found very expressive. I could sense the despair, humiliation, frustration, depression and resignation.

Despite being dyslexic, he has written a book (being prepared for publication), and his articles about his personal life, his life on death row and his legal battles told me a lot. And made me determined to try to do something to help this man get out of the hell hole he had been sucked into. I looked at the wider picture – human rights and racial discrimination. As a retired international civil servant I felt justified in taking up his cause and that of others in the same boat, raising awareness where I could. I couldn't sit back and watch such a gift for painting pictures, let alone the man himself, being annihilated, especially now that I understand his case is due to come up before the Supreme Court. These people may be accused of murder, but are the executioners themselves not murderers?

I am inspired, sometimes amused, and also humbled, by Charles' letters. I admire the way he has stuck it out for such a long period of time without (apparently) going insane, surviving the cat and mouse games that go on to wear a person down psychologically. Putting up with

cells which are never painted and which are unbearably humid when the air flow isn't working properly, the noise of people arguing and shouting, surviving on a bag of sandwiches a day with no access to supplementary food supplies during lockdown, when full-scale searches are made for weapons, drugs, mobile phones, etc. and, the monotony.

“Life on death row is nothing like our concept of it”.



World report on ageing and health published by WHO*

Comprehensive public health action on population ageing is urgently needed. This will require fundamental shifts, not just in the things we do, but in how we think about ageing itself. The *World report on ageing and health* outlines a framework for action to foster healthy ageing built around the new concept of functional ability. Making these investments will have valuable social and economic returns, both in terms of health and wellbeing of older people and in enabling their on-going participation in society.

In the preface to the Report, the WHO Director-General highlighted *inter alia* the following issues:

“At a time of unpredictable challenges for health, whether from a changing climate, emerging infectious diseases, or the next microbe that develops drug resistance, one trend is certain: the ageing of populations is rapidly accelerating worldwide. For the first time in history, most people can expect to live into their 60s and beyond. The consequences for health, health systems, their workforce and budgets are profound...”

As the evidence shows, the loss of ability typically associated with ageing is only loosely related to a person's chronological age. There is no “typical” older person. The resulting diversity in the capacities and health needs of older people is not random, but rooted in events throughout the life course that can often be modified, underscoring the importance of a life-course approach. Though most older people will eventually experience multiple health problems, older age does not imply dependence. Moreover, contrary to common assumptions, ageing has far less influence on health-care expenditures than other factors, including the high costs of new medical technologies.”

The main conclusions include:

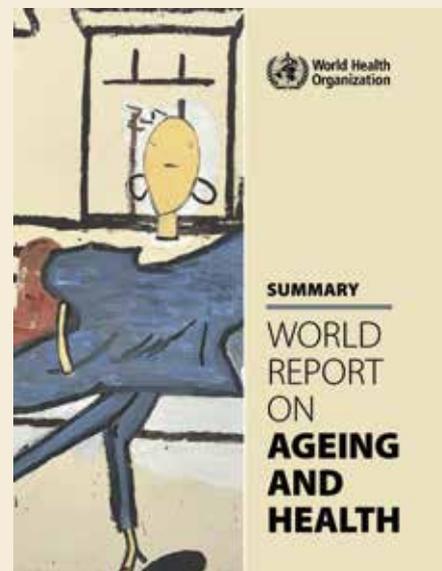
- There is no typical older person.
- Diversity in older age is not random.
- Older age does not imply dependence.
- Population ageing will increase health-care costs – but not as much as expected.
- 70 is not the new 60 – but it could be.
- Expenditure on older populations is an investment, not a cost.

The report also seeks to define “what is ageing” and what is “healthy ageing”. It distinguishes between two important concepts: “The first is *intrinsic capacity*, which refers to the composite of all the physical and mental capacities that an individual can draw on at any point in time. ... The other is the environments they inhabit and their interactions with them... This combination of individuals and their environments, and the interaction between them, is their *functional ability*, defined by the report as the health-related attributes that enable people to be and to do what they have reason to value”.

Building on these two key concepts, the report defines healthy ageing as *the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age*.

The report then goes on to discuss a public health framework for healthy ageing, including: aligning health systems to the needs of the older populations they now serve; developing systems for providing long-term care; creating age-friendly environments; and improving measurement, monitoring and understanding.

The report outlines “a public health framework for action that is built on the concept of *healthy ageing*. This societal response to population



ageing will require a transformation of health systems away from disease-based curative models and towards the provision of older-person-centred and integrated care. It will require the development, sometimes from nothing, of comprehensive systems of long-term care. And it will require a coordinated response from any other sectors and multiple levels of government. It must be built on a fundamental shift in our understanding of ageing to one that takes account of the diversity of older populations and responds to the inequities that often underlie this. And it will need to draw on better ways of measuring and monitoring the health and functioning of older populations”.

The conclusion is that “Comprehensive public health action on ageing is urgently needed, and there is something that can be done in every setting, no matter what the level of socioeconomic development”.

* Based on: *World report on ageing and health (summary)*. World Health Organization, Geneva, 2015. (WHO/FWC/ALC/15.01).

The full report, or the executive summary, can be downloaded from the WHO website www.who.org.

Report of the Executive Committee for 2018/19

1. Chair's report (*Robert England*)

Although this is formally our report for the ExCo electoral year, i.e. May 2018 – May 2019, it is actually being prepared at the beginning of the calendar year for inclusion in the March Newsletter. It therefore covers mainly 2018. It's been a busy and productive year for BAFUNCS.

At its heart was a highly successful **Annual Reunion in Geneva** which, to our pleasant surprise, was attended by a record 120 members, the great majority of whom came from the UK. So this first excursion beyond the UK was a resounding success, partly due to the city itself, partly due to several outstanding speakers headed by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, but also due to excellent organization by *Coby Sikkens and her OVS organizing committee*. A big thanks to them for making it such a success.

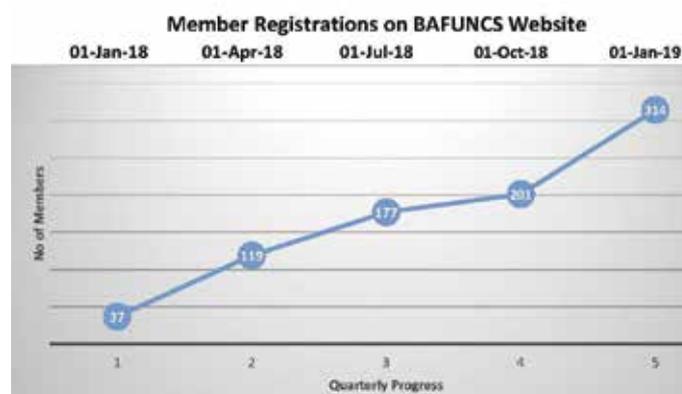
Of course, the aftermath of the event was saddened by Kofi Annan's sudden and premature demise, but the values, attitude and approach which he projected reminded all those present of why we were, and still are proud to have worked for the United Nations system. His full session – in the form of a Q&A session with our President Sir Kieran Prendergast – can still be read and/or viewed on the Association's website, as well as in the September 2018 Newsletter.

BAFUNCS tries to provide a wide range of services to members. An important element of this is certainly the social events, at both national and regional level. However, ExCo is well aware that most of our members will seldom attend such events, so communication to all members is important. There are a variety of vehicles for this: the bi-annual national *Newsletter* has traditionally been the mainstay of this, complemented by a range of *information notes* on topics of special interest. These latter now number 10 and are listed on the inside back cover of this Newsletter. Most have been updated in the past 12–18 months, and all are under regular review.

More recently, however, the **BAFUNCS website** has been elevated in importance, with an active *Members' area* introduced at the end of 2017 and now featuring all of the above information, as well as much more current and interactive content. During 2018 this was further expanded by the periodic *website bulletin*, sent to all registered users of the website and highlighting the latest content.

A good example of the website's potential is its treatment of the latest development in the UK's taxation of UN pensions (see p. 4). Not only can registered users access the latest guidance prepared by Michael Davies, who monitors development in this area on a continuing basis (many thanks, Michael!) but there is a *discussion forum* in which members can share their own experiences of making it work. And the website bulletin will alert them to any important new developments, as they occur.

At the time of writing we have 320 members who are registered on the website, and who therefore receive the Bulletin as well as having online access to everything on the website. This constitutes roughly 40% of our membership and we are hoping to increase this to perhaps 65% during 2019. Having said this we are conscious that some of our members, perhaps one-third, will not wish to use the website. These members will continue to receive the Newsletter, regular communications from their respective regions and have the ability to request specific information notes. However, it is inevitable that registered members will have access to more – and more timely – information.



Such development of our member services requires a lot of hard work by our Executive Committee and others, but it also costs money, as we complement our own in-house skills with professional IT support as well as for newsletter production, layout and postage; of course, other costs have also increased since we last raised subscriptions in 2003, 16 years ago (!) – even though the great bulk of the work done is done voluntarily by our members. We are therefore proposing a 50% increase in our membership dues and we are also proposing an increase in the one-off cost of life membership to reflect the greater longevity of our members. The Treasurer's Report provides more detail on this proposal, which I hope will be approved at AR2019. I think BAFUNCS will still offer great value to our members.

BAFUNCS is extremely fortunate to have a **vibrant regional structure**, which brings the Association closer to its dispersed membership. While we are currently reviewing respective regional footprints and may propose some adjustments for the endorsement of AR2019, the more important story is that most of the regions have active and enterprising regional committees whose efforts we should all appreciate. Of course, individual regions wax and wane and several are in need of new blood to sustain them. So please let us – or the applicable regional representative – know if you are willing to help.

The Association is also unusual in that its members can benefit from the **BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund (BBF)** thanks to the generosity of several former members. While the Trustees' Report is provided elsewhere in this Newsletter, I would like to pay tribute to the seven trustees who, under the longstanding leadership of *Cyril Groom*, give their time and careful thought to the work of the Fund. Apart from appointing the trustees themselves, ExCo's policy is not to interfere with the administration of the Trust, but nonetheless to ensure complementarity with the member support services (a.k.a. welfare) overseen by *Nicky Rodgers* and her regional team.

2019 will also see a continued **"changing of the guard" in ExCo**, as we bring in new blood to replace long-serving members who have conscientiously served the Association for many years and earned a break:

- *Annie Kean* has been our Hon. Secretary since 2007 when she took over from Sheila Cooper. Throughout this 12-year period she has been indefatigable in managing and documenting our meetings, as well as nurturing and sustaining our relationship with IMO, where we hold our regular meetings. Annie's competence and good spirit will be greatly missed. So much so that, at the time of writing, we are still looking for the best replacement for this important role. Volunteers?
- *Clyde Reynolds* has been editing our bi-annual newsletter for nine years and 18 editions, i.e. since 2010. He has put both creativity and style into these publications, which I know are appreciated by all our members. Over the past several months he has been assisting with the induction of Mary Roll-Vallanjon to replace him in this important role; indeed, this is her first edition in charge.
- *Enid Steward-Goffman* joined the Executive Committee in 2014 and for the past five years has overseen our support to the annual reunions, a period which has seen some remarkably successful events, thanks to her guiding hand in the background. Enid has also been an important contributor to many other issues, not the least being our relationship with FAFICS. She is currently in the process of handing over her AR duties to Coby Sikkens, fresh from the success of the Geneva AR.

In conclusion I would like to thank all members of ExCo and the regional committees for their support and specific contributions; BAFUNCS is a surprisingly active, complex and diverse association which runs because of the voluntary effort put in by many people – both nationally and at the regional level. In particular, I would also like to thank *Sheila Macrae* who, as Vice-Chair as well as Regional Convenor, has provided me with invaluable support and advice throughout the year.

2. Administration (*Annie Kean, Secretary*)

(a) Meetings of the Executive Committee

On 13 May 2018, the Executive Committee held an *ad hoc* meeting at the Novotel, Geneva, Switzerland, under the chairmanship of Robert England. During that meeting, the Executive Committee approved the co-option of Marilyn Carr as UNA Liaison Officer, Michael Askwith as Coordinator of the UN Career Records Project, and Nicky Rodgers as Welfare Officer.

The Executive Committee held its main meetings at the headquarters of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in July, October, January and March. The Executive Committee wishes to thank IMO for welcoming those meetings to its building and for providing storage for BAFUNCS records, as well as a permanent postal address.

With the exception of the January 2019 meeting, which was led by the Vice-Chair, Sheila Macrae, all meetings were chaired by Robert England. Patricia Brice, Richard Saynor and Coby Sikkens, representing BAFUNCS overseas members and the AR2018 organizing committee, attended the May meeting.

Michael Davies, as well as being Hon. Treasurer, represented the West Midlands and Wales Region in which capacity he kept the Committee informed of progress made in planning AR2019 and attended all meetings.

Sheila Cooper, as well as being an Hon. Vice-President, represented the Kent and Sussex Region at most meetings and kept the Committee informed of progress made in planning AR2020.

Mary Roll-Vallanjon, who had kindly agreed to take over the role of Editor of the Newsletter, attended the October 2018 meeting. It was agreed on that occasion that Mary should become a co-opted member of the Committee.

Towards the end of the year, Coby Sikkens was co-opted in anticipation of her taking over the role of AR Coordinator. However, the first meeting she will be able to attend will be in March 2019.

(b) Responsibilities of ExCo Members

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

Elected National Officers

Robert England	Chair and Website Manager
Sheila Macrae	Vice-Chair
Michael Davies	Treasurer (also health insurance adviser)
Annie Kean	Secretary

Elected Members

Anne Gunning	Membership Secretary
Carolyn Murphy	Pensions, tax and health insurance
Clyde Reynolds	Newsletter Editor
John Stares	Subscription Secretary
Enid Steward-Goffman	Annual Reunions Coordinator
Richard Sydenham	Assistant Secretary and Archivist

Co-opted Members

Michael Askwith	Coordinator of the UN Career Records Project
Marilyn Carr	Liaison officer with UNA and universities
Colin Davis	Liaison with Age UK
Nicky Rodgers	Member Support and Welfare Officer
Mary Roll-Vallanjon	Assistant Editor and Editor-designate
Coby Sikkens	AR Coordinator-designate

Others assisting the Committee have included:

Duncan Barclay	Member of the website sub-committee
Sheila Cooper	Website Adviser

3. Treasurer's Report (*Michael Davies*)

The Treasurer's Report, with the Association's accounts for 2018, budget for 2019 and the draft resolution on membership subscriptions is provided elsewhere in the Newsletter.

4. Membership (*Anne Gunning*)

Overall the Association's membership numbers continue to be healthy, although we are planning a membership drive in the year ahead.

At the end of 2018 overall membership stood at 779, a net reduction of 11 members over the figure at the end of 2017. Changes during the year comprised 14 new members, a figure offset by 19 deaths, 5 resignations and 1 lapsed membership. A regional breakdown of this figure is provided below. BAFUNCS is unique among UN

retiree associations in having this regional structure, and retirees continue to disperse around the UK and beyond. However, over the years, the London region has certainly taken a progressively larger share of our members.

Summary of membership distribution by region at 31 December 2018

Year's end 2018										
CAM	KSX	LON	NOR	OVS	OXF	SCL	SRY	SWT	WMW	Total
72	67	138	116	85	61	50	62	67	61	779

During 2018, as I found my feet as Membership Secretary, I undertook a comprehensive review of the membership data and found an over-statement of 22 members as at 31 December 2017. This has now been corrected and the Association's total membership at the end of December 2018 stood at 779. I am confident that this is the correct figure.

During 2019 we are also planning to introduce an online membership application process, since we expect most new members to register on the website. A paper-based system will also be maintained for the time being.

5. The regions (*Sheila Macrae*)

In my capacity as Regional Convenor, I have continued to liaise with the 10 regional representatives and to share with them information from the Executive Committee (this year particularly on the important issues of GDPR and the taxation of UN pensions) and also to encourage the regions to share their own news with the rest of the membership. In previous years, this information from the regions was largely focused on reports for the bi-annual Newsletter, but this year has seen the advent of the new website. I have therefore been particularly busy helping regional representatives to submit information to the website on forthcoming events and to report on them afterwards, in addition to notifying their own members.

As a member of the website sub-committee, I am charged with posting these regional contributions on the website. I also take every opportunity to encourage members to look at the website and to read these postings – and all the other interesting and pertinent items now uploaded onto the website. This continues to be a "work in progress" since the website represents a significant change of culture within BAFUNCS, one which has not yet been fully adopted by all the regions.

During the year I also participated in some regional outings (e.g. with LON to the Supreme Court and CAM to the RAF Museum, Flixton) and joined several lunches, not only in my own region of London, but also in SWT and SCL.

A summary of the year's events in the regions is given on p. 5 of this Newsletter.

6. Pensions (*Carolyn Murphy*)

Apart from providing individual members with support and guidance when they need it, I have also given priority to ensuring that the best up-to-date information is available to all our members. Thus, Information Note #5 on UK taxation was updated in June 2018, and Information Note #2 – What to do when a pensioner dies – was also updated in November 2018. Both are available on the website, or upon request.

Some BAFUNCS members experienced delays in the Pension Fund's client services in 2018. However, when brought to the attention of the Geneva office, through BAFUNCS, they were resolved very quickly. Although the Fund gives priority to survivors' claims when a pensioner dies, it is worth remembering that, if you have not heard from the Fund within a week of sending the death certificate, it would be prudent to contact them to ask if they need any other documents. In this respect, planning ahead can save a lot of time and stress. If you did not, before or on retirement, prefill a Pension E/2 form designating a beneficiary in the event of your death, you should do so *now*, including the bank account number of the beneficiary/spouse. You should keep the completed E/2 in your pension file at home but forward copies of your marriage certificate, both your birth certificates and your spouse's passport to the Fund.

The Fund has confirmed that it does, exceptionally, recognize a power of attorney in the UK as long as it receives the full documentation and a copy of the signature page of the applicant's passport. Once an individual's power of attorney vis-à-vis a retiree has been recognized, the pension will be paid into that person's account and correspondence sent to their address.

In 2018 the list of UK retirees whose certificates of entitlement were not received by the Fund was even longer than usual. While only two were BAFUNCS members, we tracked down as many as possible, not least because, vis-à-vis the Fund and the Pension Board, the National Associations represent *all* retirees. *Inter alia* this suggests that we have a considerable number of *potential BAFUNCS members* living in the UK.

I attended the FAFICS Council in Rome in July on behalf of BAFUNCS; it proved to be a contentious meeting, especially with regard to its relationship with the Pension Fund. In spite of the election of a new President, the relationship between the UN New York staff associations, on the one hand, and FAFICS and the Pension Board, on the other, looks as if it will continue to be acrimonious and, therefore, detrimental to the reputation of the Fund. The main cause for concern was how ACABQ and the Fifth Committee would react to the OIOS (Office of Internal Oversight) recommendation that the election of retirees' representatives to the Pension Board be direct

rather than the current process through the National Associations and the FAFICS Council. Subsequently, the UNGA – in resolution A/RES/73/274 of 22 December 2018 – has noted the OIOS recommendations on governance of the Fund and specifically in paragraph 14(b) requests the Pension Board itself to ... *review* the composition and size of the Board including the role of retiree representatives and the modalities for directly electing them to the Board and report back to UNGA. The resolution, *inter alia*, also *decides* to replace the post of CEO of the Fund by two distinct and independent posts, namely Pension Benefits Administrator and Secretary of the Pension Board, no later than January 2020.

However, in financial terms, the Fund was exceptionally strong at the time of the Council meeting whether viewed in the short or the long term (see feedback from the 47th FAFICS Council on the BAFUNCS website and the communiqué on the 65th Session of the UN Joint Staff Pension Board on the FAFICS website). Because of the high number of beneficiaries and the decline in active participants, the Fund relies increasingly on investment income. While investment in armaments and tobacco is already proscribed, the Council endorsed the view that the Fund should ensure that the companies it invests in embed robust anti-corruption measures as well as environmental standards.

7. Member support and welfare (*Nicky Rodgers*)

While many of us are still enjoying a rich and active life, an unexpected turn of events can catch us unawares even with the best-laid plans.

Many members have appreciated and benefited from the BAFUNCS support network which can ease the challenges of bereavement, finance, health and any other change in circumstances. Your member support team or any regional officer can confidentially refer you to the relevant UN officers and/or external agencies such as Age UK, which can offer a holistic, localized and bespoke approach. A huge thanks to all those who have worked tirelessly to support members in the last year.

We also act as a conduit to the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund for which any former UN employee may be eligible for grants/loans.

Many regions have been proactive in connecting with the members we don't meet at social events by phone, greetings cards and the trusty grapevine, sending gifts or flowers to bereaved, elderly or sick members, while we aim to respect those who prefer their privacy. Lifts to regional events have been offered and website registration support given.

WANTED! We rely on your continued goodwill to help us in this respect and welcome volunteers to cheer someone up with a visit or alert us to a member in need of assistance.

8. UN Career Records Project (*Michael Askwith*)

UNCRP continued to receive contributions during 2018. During the course of the year, good progress was made in the preparation by Bill Jackson of an e-book Supplement to the *Guide for researchers* of the UNCRP, which will be launched at the Annual Reunion at Stratford-upon-Avon in May 2019. This contains additional information relating to 20 existing contributors and 14 new ones, including a number of autobiographies, described in Bill Jackson's article *A steady trickle* (see p. 14).

We are extremely thankful for these contributions, and continue to urge former UN staff, whether BAFUNCS members or not, to consider making contributions to enrich the collection.

In September 2018, UNCRP's main Weston (Bodleian) counterpart, Senior Archivist Michael Hughes retired, and was replaced by Jeremy McIlwaine. A first meeting was held with him in Oxford on 13 October 2018 to discuss pending issues, including the need for cataloguing contributions, and raising funds for this purpose. In 2019, a summer intern will start work on the cataloguing of Dame Margaret Anstee's papers, and a UNCRP@30 anniversary appeal is envisaged to complement the £20 000 generously included in a legacy from an anonymous donor.



L. to R. Jeremy McIlwaine, Bill Jackson, Tom Rowlands and Michael Askwith, Oxford, 13 October 2018

As the UNCRP enters its 30th year, steps are under way to increase awareness and use of the collection by students and researchers as well as to support universities' careers events, promoted with the help of Marilyn Carr, Oxford University. UNA has shown particular interest in this area following a meeting with its former President, Tom Rowland. 2019 thus starts on a promising note.

9. Relations with UNA-UK and universities (*Marilyn Carr*)

Collaboration between UNA-UK and BAFUNCS on talking to university students about UN careers is now nearing the end of its fourth successful year.

At the London School of Economics (LSE), where the model programme was first developed, an evening event was held in October 2018 where a panel composed of Maggie Heraty, Michael Davies and Richard Sydenham was attended by 150 students. This was followed in November by an informal presentation where Martin Barber talked about experiences from his career with about 20 students. Both events have received very favourable feedback. The final presentation of the current academic year is to be held in February 2019, at which Ron Skeldon will talk about current immigration issues as well as his own career in the UN.

At the University of Kent, which first approached us in 2017 about replicating the LSE model, Ron Skeldon gave a very favourably received evening presentation to over 100 students in November 2018; and during the latter part of 2018, the UN Society of the School of African and Asian Studies (SOAS) in London approached us about possible replication of the model there. Following two meetings between the SOAS team and Marilyn Carr in the latter part of 2018, it was agreed that a one-off event would be organized in January 2019 – an evening panel given by Maggie Heraty and Martin Barber – to be followed by a full programme during the 2019–2020 academic year.

In the meantime, following discussions between Laurel Hunt at UNA-UK and Marilyn Carr, it was decided to try to formalize this programme as a way of moving forward. This is to be done by linking interested UN Societies within universities around the country with members of BAFUNCS who could “adopt” them and help them to organize annual programmes along the lines of the LSE model. To date linkages being planned include those for: Brookes Oxford with Michael Davies and Bill Jackson; Aberdeen with Ron Skeldon; and Reading with Colin Davis. Michael Askwith has offered to adopt Kent University and Marilyn Carr will continue to work with LSE and SOAS. But more volunteers are still needed to help continue and expand this useful programme.

For further information on the programme, see the BAFUNCS website; and to discuss your participation, please contact Marilyn Carr at marilyncarr55@aol.com.

Please remember to bring this Newsletter with you to the Annual Reunion in May 2019 as the documents required for the AGM are contained therein. No spares are expected to be available.

Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2018

Although expenditures were at the level projected in the 2018 budget, income from subscriptions has declined faster than anticipated. This situation will start to be rectified if the General Assembly approves the proposed subscription increases (*Resolution 2019/6a*) but it is also indicative of the need for the Association to undertake a periodic recruitment drive using the mailing facility provided by UNJSPF. In 2019 it is expected that the cost of travel to Executive Committee meetings will further increase as a result of more ExCo members coming from outside the Home Counties. Expenditures in currencies other than Sterling are also expected to increase as a result of the deterioration of the exchange rate due to Brexit, and because the next FAFICS Council will be held in New York.

Michael Davies

Treasurer

Report

**on the accounts of the British Association of Former United Nations Civil Servants
for the year ended 31 December 2018**

I have examined the accounts of the Association for the year ended 31 December 2018 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 2018.

Signed:



E. Raymond

BAFUNCS accounts for the year ended 31 December 2018

	See Note:	£	£	£
Receipts:				
Balance brought forward from 2017				54,876
Subscriptions		8,641		
Interest	1	112		
Annual Reunion 2018		392		
Miscellaneous	2	140		
		<hr/>	9,285	
Payments:				
Executive Committee	3	3,879		
FAFICS subscription		855		
Publishing		5,740		
Information Technology		2,769		
Regional subventions		1,024		
Annual Reunion		0		
Miscellaneous		209		
		<hr/>	14,476	
Deficit payments over receipts				-5,191
Other deposited funds (AR 2018 deposited in 2017)				-152
				<hr/>
Balance carried forward as of 31/12/2018				49,533
Balances in hand as of 31/12/2018				
Barclays Community a/c			2,758	
Barclays Business Reserve a/c			17,988	
Barclays Reserve (Annual Reunion)			2,002	
HSBC current a/c			239	
HSBC deposit a/c			6,956	
HSBC Bond	4		20,058	
Debtors and creditors	5			
			<hr/>	-468
				<hr/>
				49,533
Movement of funds:				
General Fund:		£		
Balance as of 31/12/2017		53,333		
Surplus/deficit 2018		-5,191		
Transfer to Shirley Phillips Fund		-140		
Balance as of 31/12/2018			48,002	
			<hr/>	
Liabilities:				
General Fund		48,002		
Shirley Phillips Fund		1,683		
Other deposited funds		-152		
		<hr/>		
Balance carried forward		49,533		
Assets:				
				£
			Barclays Bank	22,748
			HSBC Bank	7,195
			Debtors/creditors	-468
			HSBC Bond	20,058
			<hr/>	
				49,533
Notes				
1	Interest due but not received is not included			
2	For deposit to Shirley Phillips Fund			
3	ExCo charges were:		Communications 197	FAFICS Council 1036
			Miscellaneous 126	Travel 2519
4	2-year fixed term bond HSBC			
5	Debtors and creditors £468 cheques not cashed at year-end			

Proposed budget for 2019

As approved by ExCo at its January 2019 meeting

2018 budget	Item	2018 actual	2019 budget
Receipts			
8,800	Member subscriptions (1)	8,641	8,300
50	Bank interest (2)	112	130
0	Surplus from Reunion	392	0
30	Miscellaneous (3)	140	30
<u>8,880</u>		<u>9,285</u>	<u>8,460</u>
Expenditures			
100	General administration	0	100
1,500	Executive Committee travel	2,519	3,500
150	Executive Committee other	323	300
2,700	Information Technology (4)	2,769	3,400
1,120	Other organizations	855	1,100
1,000	Travel to FAFICS (New York)	1,036	2,000
5,900	Publishing	5,740	5,900
1,720	Regions	1,024	1,720
100	Reunion	0	100
50	Miscellaneous and Taxation	209	150
<u>14,340</u>		<u>14,475</u>	<u>18,270</u>
-5,460	Difference between receipts and expenditure	-5,190	-9,810

Notes:

- (1) The life membership fund has been wound down and subscription deficits draw on reserves
- (2) A 2-year fixed-term bond was opened with the bank with interest paid at the bond's term
- (3) 2018, £140 credit to Shirley Phillips Fund
- (4) Continued upgrade of the BAFUNCS website

A proposal to increase BAFUNCS membership dues

In accordance with the Association's Constitution, the 2019 General Assembly will be requested to approve an increase of 43% in the Association's annual membership dues and a change to the basis for calculation of the life membership payment. The new level of membership fees would take effect from 1 January 2020 for current members, but apply to prospective new members from 1 June 2019. Existing Life Members are unaffected by the proposal contained in the resolution below.

Membership dues were last increased 16 years ago, although life membership was increased in 2010. Life membership has decreased in importance over the years and, due to continually increasing life expectancy, the Life Fund is depleted. Despite previously making changes to the term underlying the life membership calculation it continually falls behind actual experience. Consequently we are now proposing to increase the term behind the life membership calculation to 25 years.

The principal justification for raising membership dues is that the Association needs the funds to develop and support a wider range of member services, including using professional services where necessary. The great bulk of the Association's work will continue to be done by members on a voluntary basis. However, BAFUNCS cannot depend on volunteers to cover all the elements of its work, often because the relevant skill is unavailable within the membership.

These are some areas which would benefit from an increase in the association's cash flow:

- layout, production and distribution of the Newsletter;
- layout, production and distribution of the Membership List in both hard copy and electronic formats;
- maintenance and further development of the website;
- development of member support services (welfare);
- enhanced financial support to the regions; and
- participation in FAFICS processes.

Following is a summary of what is being proposed.

Type of Membership	Current	Proposed
Single	14	20
Joint	21	30
Single Life	210	500
Joint Life	315	750
Associate	14	20

Resolution 2019/6a

"The General Assembly hereby approves an increase in annual membership dues to £20 (Single and Associate) and £30 (Joint) and corresponding increases in the life membership fees to £500 and £750. The new fees will take effect for new members from 1 June 2019, but the annual subscription increase will only apply to existing members from 1 January 2020."

Information notes available on the BAFUNCS website (www.bafuncs.org)

1. A guide to BAFUNCS
2. What to do when a pensioner dies
3. Accommodation for older people
4. Planning for retirement in the United Kingdom
5. Taxation in the United Kingdom
6. Personal information checklists
7. Guide to welfare and member support
8. Wills and succession
9. United Nations Career Records Project (UNCRP)
10. Guide to the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund

**Don't forget to register to gain access to
up-to-date information about BAFUNCS activities!**

Report to the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund to 31 December 2018

An abridged version of the Fund's provisional accounts is given below. We acknowledge with thanks donations amounting to £345 with the associated Gift Aid claim to be paid in 2019 by HMRC. 2018 was an active year with grants totalling £6,660 covering a stairlift, taxi fares and medical expenses. We have been pleased that more Regions have taken advantage of their Petty Cash Funds to provide encouragement to the sick and housebound.

Our investments with CCLA/COIF Investment Fund have shown a slight decline in value of 1%.

Geoffrey Ward
Clerk/Treasurer
February 2019

Statement of Financial Activity for the year ended 31 December 2018

Incoming Resources

	2018		2017	
	£	£	£	£
Donations		345		5,390
Gift aid tax reclaimed		58		-
Bank interest received on COIF Deposit Fund		31		18
		<u>434</u>		<u>5,408</u>

Resources Expended

Grants paid	6,660	4,925
Postage, printing & stationery	-	147
Independent examiner's fee	900	900
Trustees expenses	350	533
Regional representatives cash disbursements	<u>725</u>	<u>375</u>
	<u>10,635</u>	<u>6,880</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	(10,201)	(1,472)
Increase/(decrease) in value of COIF Investment Fund	(3,467)	89,453
Accumulated surplus brought forward	671,812	583,831
Accumulated surplus carried forward	664,878	671,812

Balance sheet as at 31 December 2018

Current Assets

COIF Charities Investment Fund	651,668	658,201
Cash in bank	14,110	12,511
Petty cash	-	2,000

Debtors

Loans receivable	-	-
	<u>665,778</u>	<u>672,712</u>

Current Liabilities

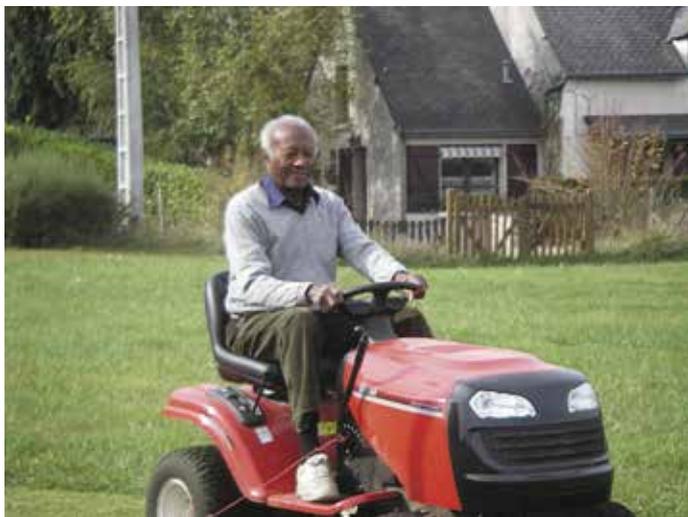
Independent examiner's fee	900	900
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Net Assets

	664,878	671,812
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS		
General Charity fund		
Accumulated surplus	664,878	671,812

In Memoriam

Omar M. A. Mukhtar 1931–2018



Omar died peacefully in the presence of his wife and daughters on 2 October 2018, shortly after his 87th birthday. In Omar we lose a kind man of great intelligence, purpose and energy, who served various international development organizations in an ever-ascending career. The institutions he helped create and his scientific publications have made a lasting contribution in the countries where he worked, and a number of his 12 consultancy reports and soil maps are still in use.

Born in Sudan and schooled in Omdurman, he graduated with a university diploma in agriculture. In 1959 he earned a B.Sc. in botany/chemistry at the University of Aberdeen and in 1962 a Masters in soil pedology/fertility at Aberystwyth University. It was there that he met and married his wife, Patricia. In 1970 he added a Ph.D. in soil chemistry at Texas A. & M. University to his academic qualifications.

In 1963, the government of Sudan seconded Omar to the FAO/UNDP Jebel Marra Project Phase 1 as Counterpart Soil Scientist. It was a major natural resources survey of the

Darfur Region, a largely undeveloped, inaccessible, sparsely inhabited area. That is where I met Omar. The following year he was reassigned to a six-year FAO/UNDP/Sudan joint project for the establishment of a Soil Survey Unit. He became its Director in 1970–1975. In 1975, he was seconded to the Tanzanian Ministry of Irrigation to assist with a multi-disciplinary team to establish an Irrigation Division. In 1977, he was offered a post with the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) based in Damascus, Syria. Many of his scientific publications date from that time.

In 1981 Omar started working for FAO in Lesotho as the Chief Technical Advisor/Team Leader for the development of a planning institute for rural areas and the establishment of district units. He also sometimes acted as FAO Representative. He went on to work for FAO as Project Manager/Soil Science Advisor in Bangladesh, in particular to strengthen the Soil Resources Institute. From here he went to Liberia as Chief Technical Advisor/Project Manager in the FAO/UNDP project on land resources assessment for land use planning. Owing to civil upheaval, all UN staff were evacuated from the country in 1990. After Liberia, Omar spent six months of 1990 as FAO Country Project Officer for Yemen, based in Rome.

From 1991, in retirement, he established a research programme on the computer analysis of data with the Department of Computer Science at Exeter University as a research fellow.

In the course of his career and afterwards, Omar also developed several inventions and has three British patents registered, as well as seven scientific publications. The most important invention is a device for the innovative use of saline/sea water with a potential for cooling and desalination aimed at hot arid zones, using adaptive plastic-house agriculture. As a dedicated field man and scientist, he was working on a project for environmental flood control up until the day before he died. Omar brought the same passion, commitment and sense of fun to his family and his hobbies (gardening) as he did to his science. In recent years we saw Omar and Pat regularly at BAFUNCS events, and it was always a pleasure to meet again.

Gerard Teunissen



Michael Priestley, CMG 1927–2018



Mike Priestley had an international career that spanned three distinct phases: British foreign service in Zambia; UN development cooperation in Africa, Asia and the Pacific; and UN humanitarian operations in Ethiopia and Sudan.

Born in Axminster and educated at Radley College, Mike served in the Welsh Guards from 1945 to 1948. He then studied geography at Pembroke College, Oxford and colonial administration at Cambridge. In 1953, he was assigned to Northern Rhodesia, and he then advanced steadily in his chosen career.

While he was there in 1961, he met Irene Peltenburg. Their very happy marriage and successful partnership lasted 54 years. Irene, who died two years before her husband, played an invaluable role in Mike's career, managing their perpetually peripatetic household, including bringing up two sons; hosting a wide variety of official functions in each posting; and over the decades, building an impressive global network of friends inside and beyond the UN family. Mike and Irene were the epitome of a UN "two-fer" – two for the price of one.

Mike's move to the United Nations was a natural progression. Starting with WFP in Nepal, he soon gravitated to UNDP, which he was to serve for the rest of his career, some 26 years. This agency's diplomatic, managerial and administrative role within the UN system played to all of his considerable skills.

He first served in Samoa, before becoming the UNDP representative successively in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Ethiopia and finally Sudan. Mike excelled at leading the UN's work at country level, being both liked and respected by all his many collaborators.

He was known for his punctilious approach to whatever he did: organized, disciplined and scrupulously conscientious. He connected to the nationals of the countries in which he worked, developing a sympathetic understanding of the host country while forming long-term friendships in the process.

In the mid-1980s, Mike participated in a vast humanitarian mobilization effort in Ethiopia. He was one of the pioneers for improving coordination within the UN family, while facilitating a shift from humanitarian aid to sustainable development. In the process he rose to the rank of Assistant Secretary-General.

In 1990, Mike Priestley's country-level work came to an end following a disagreement with the government of Sudan over the Darfur crisis. Mike was a man of principle and a lifelong advocate for UN values. He stood up for them at all times and, when the clash with national policies became too much, he knew which side he was on.

Mike and Irene leave behind two sons, Mark and Stephen, and five grandchildren.

Gisela G. Meier 1926–2018

Miss Gisela Meier died in London on 28 August 2018 at the age of 92. She was one of the earliest members of BAFUNCS (LON), having joined in October 1978. We knew her primarily as a former UN staff member, but her niece, Judith Hughes QC, has kindly provided us with some of her own memories of her Aunt Ella, giving further insights into her life. Some of these are shared below.

Ella was the fourth of five children living in Stettin, now in Poland, but then in Germany. The lives of the whole family were to become appalling and chaotic when Ella's parents were put into a concentration camp. By that time the children were safely in England, Ella having arrived in October 1938 when she was 12 years old. She was placed with a vicar and his wife, where her younger sister Erika joined her a year later. Times were difficult for the girls, not least because of the war and the internment of their brothers in England, but also not knowing for long periods what had happened to their parents. Ella moved to London in 1947 when her mother, Gertrud Meier, finally reached England.

In 1956 she obtained a job with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva. She started in the typing pool

but later became the personal assistant to a senior official where her work involved using the three languages in which she was fluent (English, French and German). She loved her work, during the course of which she was able to visit the Americas, India, Japan, the Vatican and the Far East. She was presented to Pope Paul VI, Haile Selassie, Pandit Nehru and Indira Gandhi. In 1971, she left ILO and returned to England where she continued her secretarial career until her retirement in 1980. Together with her beloved sister Erika, Ella then enjoyed many years dining out, going to the theatre and cinemas, entertaining family and friends and travelling extensively. She threw herself most enthusiastically into learning Spanish and working in the Cancer Research shop in Finchley Central, as well as raising funds for research into osteoporosis.

Judith remembers her aunt as a most elegant woman with amazing style, both in her clothing but also in the way she presented. Among her many other qualities, she was kind and considerate and always willing to help anyone. Her death, while sad, came at the end of a long and fulfilling life. May she rest in peace.

Membership news

Anne Gunning, Membership Secretary

The Membership List is issued with the March Newsletter. Please let me know of any errors or omissions. My contact details can be found on p.2 (inside front cover).

The following changes to the BAFUNCS membership have taken place since those published in the September 2018 issue of the Newsletter; these cover the period to end-January 2019.

New members

Mr Denis Aitken, formerly ADG with WHO until retirement in 2009. Then in 2013–2015, Denis was ADG at FAO. He currently resides in London (LON).

Ms Jean Backhouse, formerly with FAO (Administration in United Republic of Tanzania) until retirement in 1999. Jean currently resides in Aberdeen (NOR).

Mrs Florence Bhose-Lafon, formerly with IMO (Senior Reviser) until retirement in 2018. Florence currently resides in London (LON).

Ms Diana Hubbard, formerly with UNIDO (Deputy Director, PSD Branch) until retirement in 2009. Diana currently resides in London (LON).

Mr Khaliqad (Khaliq) Khan, formerly microfinance specialist and then microfinance consultant with UNDP until retirement in 2007. Khaliq currently resides in London (LON).

Mr Larry Meek and *Mrs Tomiko Shimomura*, joint members. Larry's last assignments were as Chief IT Architecture with the Inter-American Development Bank, and Principal Information Officer with the World Bank (IBRD) until his retirement in 2016. He and Tomiko currently reside in Norwich (CAM).

Miss Ivy Scales, formerly with UNCTAD (secretary) until her retirement in 1996. She currently resides in King's Lynn (CAM).

Mrs Judith Taylor, formerly with UNCTAD and latterly counsellor with GATT/WHO until 1995. Judith currently resides in Witney (OXF).

Ms Pamela Williams, formerly with UNHCR (senior secretary) until retirement in 2016. Pamela currently resides in Wales (WMW).

Resignations

Mr Findlay Houston and Mrs Jan Houston	SCL	WFP
Miss Anne Tiger	LON	IMO
Mr Niranjata Wickremsinghe	LON	UNICEF
Ms Sheila Woodward	LON	FAO

Lapses

Mrs Hannah Graham	SWT	IAEA
Miss Mary Sadek	LON	WHO

In memoriam

BAFUNCS extends its condolences to families and friends of all these members

Dr Winston Alston	SCL	IAEA	December 2018
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(his spouse Enid remains a member)

Mrs Jean Arnold	LON	WHO	March 2018
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Mrs Leatrice Beeson	OXF	UNESCO	July 2018
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Dr P. D. L. Guilbride	OVS	FAO	December 2013
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(we just learned of his death in South Africa; his spouse remains a member)

Miss Gisela Meier	LON	ILO	August 2018
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Dr Omar Mukhtar	SRY	FAO	October 2018
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(his spouse Patricia remains a member)

Mr Mike Priestley	LON	UNDP	September 2018
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Mrs Vera Schwarb-Jackson	SCL	ITU	September 2018
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Mrs Joan Griffiths has very graciously accepted our apologies for wrongly announcing her death in the September 2018 issue. Joan is very much alive and well, and remains a highly valued member of BAFUNCS (NOR).

Corrigendum

In Newsletter No.74 of September 2018, an appreciation of **Joy Mitra**, the former Membership Secretary who died last year, was published. Inadvertently the picture included was not of Joy but of **Ziaul Islam**, another longstanding contributor to the work of the BAFUNCS Executive Committee. We apologize for this mistake, and have done so in person to Ziaul who, we are happy to report, is in sprightly form.

Regional officers of BAFUNCS

as at end-December 2018

Contact details for all BAFUNCS officials are in the Membership List

CAMBRIDGE

Regional Representative/Secretary	Nicky Rodgers
Treasurer	John Stares
Member support	Nina Zealey
Member support	Therese Bruce

KENT AND SUSSEX

Regional Representative/Chair	Joan Wilson
Treasurer	Sheila Cooper
Deputy Treasurer	Elsa Brathaug
Welfare officers	Sheila Cooper
	Kent: Joan Wilson
	East Sussex: Terri Jezeph
	West Sussex:

LONDON

Regional Representative/Chair	Pauline Barrett-Reid
Deputy Chair	Tekeste Ghebray
Secretary	Nguyet Anh Ho
Treasurer	Behrouz Shahandeh
Welfare/Social Support Officer	Asha Singh-Williams

NORTHERN

Regional Representative	Nikki Feirn
Secretary	Duncan Barclay
Treasurer	Sarah Mehta
Edinburgh sub-region	Hossein Khermandmand
Welfare officers	Scotland: Grania Skeldon
	Rest of NOR: vacant

OVERSEAS

Regional Representative	Coby Sikkens
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(to be contacted on all matters)

OXFORD

Regional Representative	Vicky Haeri
Secretary/Treasurer	Cyril Groom
Welfare Officer (central)	Latifa Noman

SOUTH CENTRAL

Regional Representative	Claudine Pichon
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(to be contacted on all matters)

SOUTH WEST

Regional Representative/	Rosemary ap Rees
Membership Secretary	Eileen Wait
Treasurer	David Nott
Helpline	Rosemary ap Rees

SURREY

Regional Representative	Ann Chaplin
Treasurer	Marilyn Carr
Secretary	Alison Husaunndee
Helpline and Social Secretary	Patricia Mukhtar
Assistant Social Secretary	Stella Simpson
Membership Secretary	Hazel Parsons

WEST MIDLAND AND WALES

Coordinator <i>ad interim</i>	Michael Davies
Treasurer	Elizabeth Searle
Regional Welfare Officer	<i>contact Coordinator</i>
Local Welfare Contact, Cheltenham	Sheila Rashed-Angelini

BAFUNCS Membership

BAFUNCS exists to facilitate communication between former UN employees both for social purposes and to provide practical help and advice. Members are urged to recruit friends and former UN colleagues. Members receive the Newsletter in March and September, and the Membership List in March. BAFUNCS has also issued the following information notes:

1. A guide to BAFUNCS
2. What to do when a pensioner dies
3. Accommodation for older people
4. Planning for retirement in the United Kingdom
5. Taxation in the United Kingdom
6. Personal information checklists
7. Guide to welfare and member support
8. Wills and succession
9. United Nations Career Records Project (UNCRP)
10. Guide to the BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund

Membership application forms and information notes can be obtained from the BAFUNCS website (bafuncs.org) or from the BAFUNCS Membership Secretary, membership@bafuncs.org, 23 Schaw House, 69 Schaw Drive, Bearsden, East Dunbartonshire, G61 3AT.

BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund

Trustees

Chairman: Cyril Groom (FAO)
Clerk/Treasurer to the Trustees: Geoff Ward (ILO)
Members:
 Philip Daniel (IMF), Dr John Doherty (FAO/IAEA),
 Susan Idreos (WHO), Penny Ratcliffe (WHO)
 Terri Jezeph (FAO/ESCAP)

Correspondence

All correspondence with the Benevolent Fund is treated as confidential; please address it to:
 Clerk/Treasurer
 BAFUNCS Benevolent Fund
 Margalla
 Higher Gunville, Milborne Port
 Sherborne, Dorset, DT6 5AW
 Tel.: 01963 250 206

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).



... and last but not least, please save the date for the

Forty-third Annual Reunion and AGM

Friday 15 to Sunday 17 May 2020

Kent and Sussex Region will be organizing this event at the East Sussex National, Little Horsted (eastsussexnational.co.uk).

The East Sussex National is a purpose-built hotel and golf club situated in a country setting a few miles north-east of Lewes, the historic county town of East Sussex. The meeting room and all of the bedrooms, some with balconies, look out over the two international level golf courses. There is also a health club and spa with a lovely 20 m pool, as well as ample free parking.

For the Saturday excursions we will be organizing:

- a guided walking tour of Lewes, with its many landmarks and Tom Paine connections;
- a guided tour of the Brighton Pavilion, a sumptuous former royal residence and later seaside pleasure palace for the Prince Regent, who became King George IV; and
- a guided visit to Wakehurst, Kew's botanic garden in Sussex and home to the Millenium Seed Bank.

There may also be a walk on the Sunday afternoon, and an informal golf tournament, if there is sufficient interest.

If you are able to extend your stay, there are other attractions in the area, such as: Standen House, an Arts and Crafts family home with Morris & Co. interiors and a recently restored 12-acre hillside garden with extensive countryside views; Sheffield Park and the Bluebell Railway; and Michelham Priory – all well worth a visit.

Full details will be provided in the September Newsletter, and in the meantime updates will appear on the BAFUNCS website.

