



# SCOTTISH PENSIONS ASSOCIATION

## 70th Anniversary National Conference Bulletin



**5th June 2007**  
**Special Edition**

**Scottish Pensions  
Association  
Head Office**

207 Pleasance  
Edinburgh EH8 9RU  
Tel: 0131.668.1001

Email: spahq@aol.com  
Scottish Charity No.  
SCO31988

Welcome to the City of Edinburgh's prestigious Assembly Rooms and to our 70th Annual Conference. We have what we believe an excellent agenda with first class speakers, and of course our conference would not be complete without Tommy Carson and a grand troupe of entertainers to send us all merrily on our way home.

Most of the artistes are professional performers who are giving of their time to help make our day. To all of them we extend our sincere and grateful thanks, with a special thank you to Tommy Carson our Social Convenor and Comper who has worked so hard to bring about this pleasing and happy event.

### OBITUARIES

Continuing the practice of the last three conferences we will be celebrating the lives of our departed members by having a brief standing ovation.

### Announcements

The Assembly Rooms with an adjoining Music Hall is a very large building and possibly confusing to first time visitors, the President will be giving information regarding facilities, medical assistance, and should we require to vacate the building. Please listen carefully to what he has to say.

### Indebtedness

The Scottish Pensions Association membership express sincere thanks to the City of Edinburgh Council for hosting this event, and to all those who have worked so hard to make it a success, namely, the Lord Provost's Secretariat, the Catering staff, the Manager of the Assembly Rooms and Council staff for the preparation of the conference venue.

## Keynote Speakers

In the past we have been fortunate in having excellent speakers to address our delegates, this year's conference is no exception. We are indeed privileged to have with us today speakers who are not only outstanding in their field but worthy of everyone's undivided attention. All of them are exceptionally busy people who are giving valuable time to be with us, therefore please ensure they receive a very warm and sincere SPA welcome and ovation.

## Badges

Our new badge, has attracted considerable interest and considered very attractive, it highlights our Scottish heritage and our very long history as a campaigning pensioners' organisation. Each badge costs £1.50 and can be purchased from our stall. Buy one and wear it with pride.

## Management Committee Elections

To comply with our constitution any one who has held the same office for a continuous period of ten years must stand down. It is therefore with regret that John Wilson our President for that period of time has to vacate that post.

We are also seeking nominations for the post of Treasurer, General Secretary and Management Committee Members. The Management Committee meet six times a year and it has been decided to increase the number of members by inviting branches and Area Councils to nominate delegates from their own particular area. Conference delegates are invited to submit their nominations no later than immediately after the lunch break.

## General Secretary - George Henderson OBE

As you may be aware George stood as a candidate for the Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party, unfortunately he wasn't able to win a list seat for the Lothians, nevertheless he has to be congratulated for putting up a courageous campaign on behalf all senior citizens and it is to be hoped that whoever takes over the Scottish Parliament will recognise that the pensioner's movement will continue to gather momentum and will no longer quietly accept crumbs from the rich man's table.

Regrettably George is unable to be considered for re-election as he is standing down from his post of General Secretary, but he will remain a member of SPA and will continue to project the aims and ambitions of pensioner's organisations through his involvement with the National Pensioner's Convention. We wish him every success.

## Tommy's Stall

Tommy Carson our Social Convenor will be staffing our stall at the entrance to the conference hall. He has made all the entertainment arrangements and whilst the performers are seeking only a nominal charge to cover expenses etc, those costs have to be met out of limited funds. He is asking everyone to contribute as generously as possible by purchasing raffle tickets, donations are also sought from the sale of Caps and T-shirts. These articles of clothing normally sell for £10.50, but Tommy is asking only £5.00 for both. So there's a chance to pick up a bargain.

Also available is the current issue of Mature Times, there is no charge for this newspaper, but a donation would be very welcome.

You will notice a number of other stalls around the banqueting hall, there is something of interest to all. Please visit them and talk to those in charge

## President's Report

Good morning delegates and visitors welcome to the Scottish Pensions Association 70th Anniversary Annual Conference. An opportunity to renew old acquaintances, and make new friends. I reiterate what I have said in the past, use this day not just for conference business, but also to discuss with other members what is happening in their branches and perhaps pick up some pointers that may be useful in your own branch

Sadly, as your President this is my last conference and of course my last report. I will miss the cut and thrust of joining with our sister organisations in our discussions with Westminster Parliamentarians and members of the Scottish Parliament in our attempt to alleviate the disparity in the quality of life experienced by the elderly. We have the deserved recognition as a respected credible organisation recognised by Parliaments both at Westminster and Holyrood and kindred pensioner's groups throughout the United Kingdom.

We now have part-time paid administrative staff, enabled by a generous bequest by one of our late members but we still have to operate with limited finances. Major funding agencies have been approached on a regular basis with no success. We have to rely on some small grants from a few local authorities, the Scottish Secondary School Teachers Association and our member's contributions amounting to just £2.30 annually or 4½ p per week, but that is not preventing us from further depleting our meagre savings. Whilst our Constitution allows for an honorarium to be paid to the President, Treasurer, and General Secretary, no one has accepted any payment over the past eight years. I ask delegates to bring this report to your branch membership with a view to discussing our financial position and perhaps offering advice and assistance to your elected officials.

SPA has an outstanding history as a movement that has been strongly linked to the trade unions and other working class organisations, but it has also reached out to other sectors of Scottish society. Over 70 years ago its original members were motivated to act by the extremely low level of state pensions. The grinding poverty of the 1930s may be in the past but the issue is as alive today as it was then, in Scotland, but also in the UK as a whole.

Society is disfigured by poverty and inequalities, but a larger proportion of older people suffer from low incomes than does any other population group. As people get older and frailer so the burden intensifies. There are higher levels of benefits dependency and difficulties in maintaining a social and sociable life, known today as social exclusion.

Of course the picture is not all dark, there have been improvements. Scotland has its own Parliament, yet pension's policy continues to be determined at Westminster. State pensions stay low and current government proposals fall far short of what is needed.

Pensions are only part of this scenario. There is an underlying ageism in our society, for instance age discrimination in the NHS. Privatisation of this or that public utility often comes to mean a loss of service, and people being charged for what was free at the time it was required. The swingeing cost of travel insurance for the elderly has put holidaying abroad out of reach for a vast number of those over 65 years.

I want to offer my sincere thanks to all who have assisted me in my period as your President, it has been a long hard slog but we have many achievements to be thankful for and hopefully many more will be attained in the future. I wish the new President every success and trust that a new Management Team working with renewed energy and co-operation will project the Scottish Pensions Association to new and greater heights. Though I am relinquishing the reins I am available to assist and to offer advice if required.

In the meantime have a good conference and return to your homes with renewed vigour and determination to succeed.

John C Wilson, National President

Scottish Pensions Association  
70th Anniversary Conference  
5th June 2007



Some of the Entertainers at this years Conference



President John Wilson with Social Convenor Tommy Carson



General Secretary George Henderson OBE was a Scottish Parliamentary Candidate for the Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party