



FORMAT

Spring 2020

Issue 72

(The Official Newsletter of the Federation of Retired Members' Associations of the NASUWT)
Distributed to thousands of retired members in the UK, Channel Islands and Europe.

Incoming President

Our picture shows incoming FRMA President David Mehaffey, who will take up office at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in March.



Hi, colleagues. It gives me great pleasure to introduce myself and give you a brief background to myself and my thoughts for my coming year as FRMA President. It is an especial pleasure to be following my good friend Lottie Ewing, who was the first FRMA President from Northern Ireland and, incidentally, the first female to hold the post.

I grew up in Omagh in the west of Northern Ireland. My wife, Margaret, and I met at training college. Our two daughters both teach in different schools in Kent.

In my past, I worked in different sectors at home and abroad with time out for further study and a period as a local education authority (LEA) officer.

Fortunately, towards the end of my career, I became aware of the many benefits for our wellbeing of RMA membership when I was a guest at a few events organised by the Northern Ireland RMA (NIRMA).

Upon retirement, I was elected to the NIRMA Committee and held posts of Northern Ireland President and then Secretary. I began attending FRMA meetings and acted as the Association's Conference Co-ordinator at the 2019 NASUWT Conference in Belfast.

Many of next year's agenda items are already identified for the team of experienced colleagues with whom I will share responsibility for the promotion and oversight of our activities. We shall continue to progress discussions with the NASUWT on matters of mutual interest, based on our members' opinions garnered via our regional structures which serve us so well. We are committed to regular reviews of our financial arrangements. We will continue to work with the NASUWT and others in campaigns that address issues of particular importance for the quality of life of older people and our working colleagues.

David Mehaffey, FRMA Incoming President

Contact Details

Officers Posts AGM 2020 will be: *President*: Dave Mehaffey; *Vice-President*: John Rimmer; *Secretary*: Deanna Selby; *Treasurer*: Bill Matthew; and *Development*: Roger Darke.

Further details can be obtained from the NASUWT Website. (See Editorial on page 2.)

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Editorial

Welcome to the Spring edition of **FORMAT**, which I hope contains interesting reading and information about up-and-coming events. Please send any articles, letters, comments and information to myself for possible publication in a future edition of **FORMAT**. I have not received any letters for some time and cannot believe there is nothing happening of interest, nor for discussion, you wish to raise.

As you may recall, I agreed to take on the role of Editor on a temporary basis and am now seeking a volunteer to take on this role.

All articles, reports and letters can be sent to myself using post: Bill Matthew, 15 Seymour Street, Dundee DD2 1HD. E-mail: bill.matthew2@btinternet.com. Tel: Mobile: 07538 787549 or 01382 660810.

(Apologies to our Members from Salford Quays. A misspelling in Issue 71 which I, a Scot from far away, failed to notice.)



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

*Published letters do not necessarily reflect the view of the Editor or that of the NASUWT Federation of RMA's. **The opinion of writers may include errors of fact.** Letters for publication should be sent to the Editor of **FORMAT**. These should include the name of your RMA (if you have one).*

Dear Sir

Frank Smith was a founder member of the Malta Association of the NASUWT and was the Malta President from 1969-72. Frank taught Geography at Tal Handaq in Malta. He then moved to Germany, to the Weser Valley Association, and taught at Prince Rupert School (PRS) in Rinteln. He held a Commission and as Captain Smith, ran the school Combined Cadet Force (CCF). In 1989, he resigned from his post as Secretary of the German Federation when he returned to the UK.

He remained a member of the Union until he lost his fight against Parkinson's disease in September 2019.

Many thanks.

Patricia Smith

(Editor's note. I should be delighted to hear from any of our RMA colleagues who were members of the Non-UK associations of the NASUWT).

NASUWT Website

As you are no doubt aware, increasing amounts of information will become available through the NASUWT website rather than in print. For this reason, I trust the following will be of assistance.

Go to the NASUWT Home site at: www.nasuwt.org.uk. You will be asked 'Is this your personal device?', enter accordingly. (You may wish to 'personalise' this part, entering England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. This is optional and can be done at any time.)

You should now click on 'Login' and enter your e-mail address and personal password. (If this is your first time and you do not have a password, click on 'Forgotten my password' and follow instructions.)

Once logged in, scroll down to the bottom section under 'Useful links' and click on 'I am a retired teacher'. This takes you to the retired teachers' section where more specific information can be found. On the right-hand side of this page, you should see under 'In this section' a number of headings such as '**FORMAT** retired members' magazine' you can click on.

Should a large article such as 'Tollpuddle Marchers' appear in a condensed form in the magazine, the full article will be available here.

How to delete your Facebook Account

There are many individuals who are becoming increasingly concerned about social media and its impact on their lives.

Facebook has come in for other criticisms whereby a lot of people wish to delete their presence and all stored information, but few people know how to do this. The following is for those individuals.

It is easy to find the button to 'deactivate' your Facebook, but you need to know where to look to eradicate it completely. Go to the drop-down bar at the top right of any Facebook web page and click 'your Facebook information' – a function that saves all your data (pictures, birthday and messages) into a zip file on your hard drive.

Many of you will be surprised at the quantity of data this reveals. Then click 'View' on the 'Delete your account and information' section and, on the next page, hit 'Delete my account'.

You will no longer have an account and all your data should no longer be available for others.

Benefits of Ageing?

People often imagine that there are no benefits of ageing, but that is not always the full story.

Allergies. You can develop an allergy at any age, admittedly – but it does seem that hay fever symptoms, in particular, often tend to dwindle over time.

Empathy. A University of Michigan study found that college students are 40% less empathetic than those of 30 years ago. Today's students, for instance, are less likely to agree with statements such as "I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective."

Risk of some cancers. Although the risk of many cancers – including the most common types – increases with age, some are more prevalent in younger people. Two examples are: the highest rates of cervical cancer are found among younger women (with more than half diagnosed in the under 45s), according to Cancer Research UK (<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org>); and almost half of testicular cancer cases are diagnosed in men under 35.

Decision making. Faced with a tough choice, older adults are far better at weighing up the long-term pros and cons of each option, according to a study published in the journal *Psychological Science*. The reason? As we age, we are less inclined to be impulsive, and more likely to use our pre-frontal cortices – the areas of the brain where more rational and deliberative thinking is controlled, say the

researchers. Plus, of course, we have the wisdom of experience to guide us.

Migraines. These debilitating headaches are most common between the ages of 30 and 40. Generally, migraines improve as we reach our 50s and 60s – with around 40% of people no longer suffering attacks at all by the age of 65, says The Migraine Trust.

Sleep. Sleep quality (that is how well you feel you have slept, and whether it has a knock-on effect on your health) appears to improve with age according to a survey of 155,000 adults at the University of Pennsylvania. Aside from a peak in sleep-related problems during middle age, it seems our chances of regularly enjoying a good night's slumber improve as we age. People in their 80s reported the best sleep.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). IBS is most common between the ages of 20 and 45. It is twice as prevalent among women, and some researchers believe it may be linked to changing hormones during the menstrual cycle, which is why risk plummets after the menopause.

Stress. The older you are, the less anxious and stressed you are likely to be, so says a recent study, published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*. Researchers analysed mental-health data collected from 1,546 US adults, aged between 21 and 99. While people in their 20s and 30s tended to report the highest levels of depression, anxiety and stress, those in their 90s were clearly the most content.

Did You Know?

Anyone who took out a Power of Attorney (the donor) in England or Wales between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2017 could be due a partial refund of between £34 and £54 on their fees. The donor should search at: www.gov.uk and search 'power of attorney refund'.

The number of people over the age of 65 has increased by 300% in the past 20 years.

Beware of tooth-whitening strips containing hydrogen peroxide, which damages dentine – the layer of teeth below the enamel.

Independent Age

Advice and Support for Older Age

Independent Age is a charity founded over 150 years ago to provide individuals and their families with clear, free and impartial advice on care and support, money and benefits, and health and mobility.

They issue free booklets on topics such as:

- Caring for someone. How to get the support you need.
- How to find the right care home. Where to start and what to consider.
- Choosing where to live. How to find the right option for you.
- Paying for your care. Funding your own care at home or in a care home.
- Getting help at home. Ways to stay independent.

For more information, contact: Independent Age at: 18 Avonmore Road, London W14 8RR. T: 020 7605 4200; E: charity@independentage.org W: www.independentage.org; Helpline: 0800 319 6789.

NASUWT Benevolence

The following information was taken from the Annual Report given to National Conference last year.

A total of 306 new applications were dealt with throughout the year.

This remains in keeping with previous years and shows how demand for assistance from the Union's Benevolent Fund remains consistently high.

Many applicants continue to face escalating financial difficulties, mortgage and rent arrears, unmanageable loans and credit card debt due to a

number of circumstances reflecting the ongoing difficulties teachers are facing.

A total of £282,479 was paid out from the Central Benevolent Fund in the form of grants to applicants. These grants were for single payments, convalescence, holiday, educational, and rent/mortgage payments, sometimes monthly.

Two training courses were held for Benevolence Visitors over the past year. Further courses will be available and can be found on the website.

Please see Benevolent Fund section on page 6.

Round the RMAs

Lincolnshire RMA – Wine Tasting



Tucked away in the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is Ovens Farm Vineyard, near Louth. Positioned on a south-facing slope and protected from cold northerly winds, it is an ideal spot for growing quality grapes. Hosted by Simon White, the enthusiastic, knowledgeable owner, some 30 members, over two days, enjoyed touring the vineyard as the grapes were almost ready for harvesting. We saw the winery and naturally ended up in the tasting room. Here we enjoyed five wines named after the grapes grown just metres away: Bacchus and Solaris white wines, Rondo and Pinot Noir red wines, plus Harrington Rosé. These were accompanied by a platter of traditional Lincolnshire delicacies: pork pie, haslet, plum loaf and local cheeses. We all went away very happy, clutching our bottles of the excellent wines we had just tasted.

Another claim to fame for Lincolnshire – Quality Wine.

Picture by Fergus Redford; Notes by Anthony Dent (2019 Lincolnshire President)

Avon RMA – The Birds of Prey Visit

A great day was had by all who visited the Birds of Prey Centre, once they had found it! We were given an introductory tour by Tom who gave us a new respect for vultures, a very maligned and misunderstood bird. He spoke with enthusiasm and knowledge about all the birds to which we were

introduced. There were three flying displays, all quite fascinating. The first showed some of the larger birds, like eagles. The second included four yellow-billed kites swooping over our heads to fly in and catch food thrown in the air by the staff, which is to mimic the birds catching insects on the wing. They also showed a pair of turkey vultures who seemed more interested in walking than flying. The third included a falcon attacking a radio-controlled crow.

All the flying displays showed the birds at their best. All the staff were very knowledgeable and informative during the displays. Jemima Parry-Jones, the owner of the Centre, commented in her own inimitable way, with asides like why would anyone bring an injured pigeon to a Birds of Prey Centre? The weather was perfect for a very enjoyable day out.

Mike Lloyd, Avon RMA

Cheshire RMA visit to the National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port

Cheshire members enjoyed a day out at what used to be called the Boat Museum but which now has national status within the Canal and River Trust. Our tour was mainly based on outdoor features and we soon learned why it was built where it was, with the Ship Canal and River Mersey adjacent providing easy access to national and international customers for freight which had travelled along what became known as the Shropshire Union Canal. Liverpool, for example, was clearly visible over the water.

The Ellesmere Canal, as it had been known, created the name of the village at its end, which then rapidly expanded to become docks and a port. Of course, the history of canals is part of the history of Great Britain. Members heard of the rapid development of the canals (the motorways of their day) before growth slowed (regular traffic ceasing on the 'Shroppie' in the 1950s), they fell into disrepair, and were revived for wildlife and as leisure

pursuits, with the Boat Museum's preservation beginning in the 1970s. The range of boats on display was remarkable, from the more predictable narrow boats and barges, steam propelled, 'box' mine (for coal), composite boats, tugs, ice breakers – and even a concrete boat! Engineless boats were pulled by horses and sometimes even tractors.

Similarly, the range of occupations and skills required to service such a boatyard was enormous and members gained insight into boat repair and restoration. Members were able to view blacksmiths at work and the Power Hall. Boating became a way of life with whole families working long days and being responsible for a boat and its freight, somehow all living in the most tiny of spaces on board. Despite the harshness of this working life, families loved the sense of community that resulted. Oh, and we also learned why boaters referred to travelling 'Up North' – canals in England are downhill when moving South! Later, near to the site of the museum, Ellesmere Port was seen as useful to other commercial opportunities: Vauxhall opened a car factory; an oil refinery was developed; and Cheshire Oaks shopping complex was opened. After our visit, members had their hunger satisfied and thirsts slaked at a local carvery.

Richard Sayle, Cheshire RMA

Staffordshire RMA – 10th Anniversary Celebration

Twenty members gathered at the Moat House, Acton Trussell, near Stafford to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the re-founding of Staffordshire RMA with a special lunch. The Moat House was the venue for the initial inaugural meeting held in 2009 with FRMA officers to see if there was support for a branch. So ten years on...



After the lunch, a special edition of 'Desert Island Discs' was held with myself as the castaway. I was interviewed by Peter Kelly (Staffs President). I relived some aspects of my life (so far!) from my childhood in the Second World War, through my teaching and Union careers and into retirement. My choice of records were somewhat unusual and included 'Wuthering Heights' by Kate Bush, 'The Gas Man Cometh' by Flanders & Swann, the poem 'Night Mail' by WH Auden, and 'Don't Cry For Me

Argentina' by Julie Covington, the latter two reflecting my love of trains and the Falkland Islands. It is interesting to note that over the ten years, 40 issues of *Knotty News* (the newsletter) have been published and sent to members, and over 100 venues and pubs in and around Staffordshire have been visited or frequented.

Staffs RMA is now looking forward to its next ten years when we all hope to meet again at the same venue to celebrate the 20th anniversary.

Mike Inman, Staffordshire RMA

PENSIONS UPDATE - - - PENSIONS

Family Pension Benefits Campaign

The Pensions Update in Issue 71 of **FORMAT** included details of the NASUWT's campaign against continuing discrimination over survivor pensions for widowers from heterosexual marriages. **FORMAT** is available on the NASUWT's Retired Member webpages.

The National Executive thanks all retired members who have engaged with their MP, or with a Government Minister, over this campaign. The National Executive urges retired members to continue to engage with their MPs to secure full equality in adult survivor benefits.

Obtaining Pension Assistance

The NASUWT offers an unparalleled service to all members and retired members of the Union. This includes providing assistance on issues which relate to members' periods of full membership, not least on pension issues. However, before contacting the NASUWT, retired members, or surviving partners of NASUWT members, who have a query about their teachers' pension should contact their pension scheme administrator in the first instance. The contact details are:

The Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme
Address: Teachers' Pensions, Waterside House, 75 Duke Street, Gobnascale, Londonderry BT47 6FP
Tel: 028 7131 9000 E-mail: teachers.pensions@education-ni.gov.uk.

The Scottish Teachers' Superannuation Scheme
Address: The STSS, Scottish Public Pensions Agency, 7 Tweedside Park, Tweedbank, Galashiels TD1 3TE
Tel: 01896 893000 E-mail: via 'General Enquiries' on the SPPA website: www.sppa.gov.uk.

The England and Wales Teachers' Pension Scheme
Address: Teachers' Pensions, 11b Lingfield Point, Darlington DL1 1AX
Tel: 0345 606 6166
E-mail: tpmail@teacherspensions.co.uk
Web: www.teacherspensions.co.uk.

NASUWT benevolent fund

What is the NASUWT Benevolent Fund?

Experiencing financial difficulties?

Can it help you?

Support from the NASUWT Central Benevolent Fund is available in the form of grants to members, retired and former members and their dependants, including the dependants of deceased members, in financial hardship.

Sometimes members experience financial hardship through no fault of their own and as a result of unforeseen circumstances.

This is funded from a small part of your subscription. It is like an insurance premium. Some members never call on it, others are very happy that it is there when they need it.

Assistance includes:

- Monthly grants for cost of living allowance or convalescence.
- Education grants for those under 16 or over 17 in full-time education to first degree level.
- Lump sum/single payment grants to help people with disabilities purchase special needs equipment or undertake house adaptation and repairs.
- Lump sum grants to make special purchases for the wellbeing of the applicant, e.g. spectacles and domestic appliances.

Other forms of Benevolence Assistance/Advice include:

- referral to money advisor/debt specialist service (e.g. Payplan);
- referral to an occupational therapist for further assessment, particularly where an applicant may have specific needs;
- direction to other agencies/bodies that may be able to offer advice or assistance (e.g. Turn2us).

Applicants with excess of £5,000 in savings or investments would normally be deemed to be outside the scheme, although special consideration can be given to applicants where such excess funds are tied up and not accessible.

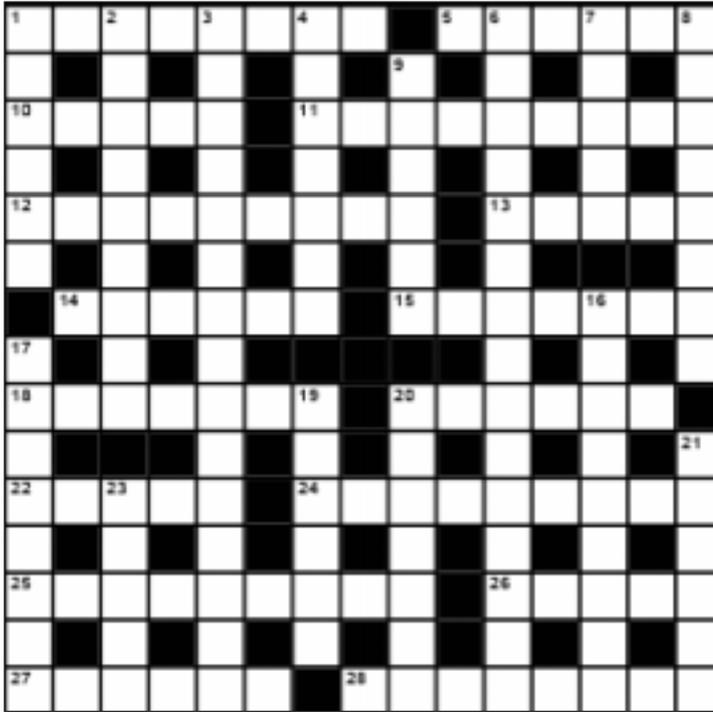
Becoming a visitor

If you do not need assistance, could you give it? Current retired members are welcome to become Benevolence Visitors. The NASUWT is very grateful to retired members who give up their time to become Benevolence Visitors. For more information, contact the Legal and Benevolence team at Rednal or your Regional Centre.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD COMPETITION ISSUE 72

**A £35 MARKS & SPENCER VOUCHER FOR THE WINNER,
COURTESY OF NASUWT FEDERATION OF RETIRED MEMBERS' ASSOCIATIONS**

Crossword kindly provided by Colin Garside – Wirral RMA. SEND YOUR ENTRY TO: Sharon Childs, FORMAT Crossword, Hillscourt Education Centre, Rose Hill, Rednal, Birmingham B45 8RS. Closing date – Monday 1 June 2020.



The correct answers for Crossword 71 were:

D	O	W	N	C	A	S	T		A	M	U	L	E	T			
R		A		H		C			A		E		A				
O	U	T	R	I	G	H	T		F	R	U	G	A	L			
W	S		D	E		E			G		B		K				
S	T	O	N	E	C	R	O	P		A	C	R	E	S			
Y		N				Z			I		R	E		H			
						H	A	L	O		C	H	I	C	A	G	O
H		C		S							N		K				W
U	S	H	A	P	E	D			S	E	E	K					
M		A		E		U			E					M			S
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B		R		S		E			U		C		R				A
A	D	O	N	I	S				D	R	E	A	D	I	N	G	
C		O							E		M		N				E
K	I	M	O	N	O				P	R	O	P	H	E	T	S	

THE WINNER OF CROSSWORD 71 WAS:

Mr Jan H Bronsema of Morpeth

Across

- 1 Improvement concerning officer i/c? Absolutely! (8)
- 5 Where part of clutch gets broken (3,3)
- 10 It's hard to answer someone who puts on airs (5)
- 11 Eastern people in temporary accommodation want flats (9)
- 12 Posh élitist, one giving benefits (9)
- 13 Investment in 12, say, or animals (5)
- 14 Low numbers using motorway's main exchange (6)
- 15 How the clumsy act, in particular (7)
- 18 Burnt offerings served, reportedly, in style (7)
- 20 A foreign agent related to father, possibly (6)
- 22 Trip starts and finishes in a tent, we're told (5)
- 24 Revolutionary US college, one to fill special posts for utopians (9)
- 25 Page in notice is unclear for a start (9)
- 26 Thatcher saw him as the competition (5)
- 27 Last goal certain after second gets discounted (6)
- 28 Special importance of piano in new version of Messiah (8)

Down

- 1 Disposes of papers containing grave letters on drink (4,2)
- 2 Spanish and Italians riot after opening ceremony (9)
- 3 Attractive wall-covering gets damaged – receiving repair (8,7)
- 4 Nastier sort of wine (7)
- 6 Plucky resistance secures English striker's final victory (4,3,3,5)
- 7 Wounded NCO on leave in the country (5)
- 8 Openers get through test on the islands (8)
- 9 International body is central to iconic agreement (6)
- 16 A suggestion for dirty old sailors? (4,5)
- 17 Donations raised to inspire famous fighter (8)
- 19 Sexy shows in the Trocadero – tickets needed (6)
- 20 It means the opposite of not many, somehow (7)
- 21 Very large flag depicting ancient deity (6)
- 23 Stepped in something sticky, by the sound of it (5)



Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines

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Step aboard *Brabant* in 2020 for an unforgettable journey along Europe's spellbinding rivers and canals.

NASUWT have teamed up with award-winning Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines to give you a very tempting discount. Existing Fred. Olsen customers save up to 10%, with a 5% Club discount in addition to their 5% Oceans Loyalty Club discount*. New to Fred. Olsen customers can also save 5% – on their first sailing with them – and that's on top of any current offers.



To book using your discount code **ONASUWT5** call **The NASUWT** booking hotline **0800 0355 108** or visit **fredolsencruises.com**

*All bookings are subject to Fred. Olsen's (FOCL) standard terms & conditions, available on our website & on request. All prices quoted under the NASUWT members discount offer are exclusive to qualifying members & their travelling companions only, members must quote their discount code at time of booking. Membership discounts cannot be applied retrospectively. Bookings must be made via the booking hotline number 0800 0355 108. Proof of membership will be required at the time of booking. Offers cannot be extended to any unrelated third party, are subject to availability and may be withdrawn or amended at any time without prior notice. From time to time FOCL may run special offers which cannot be combined with this discount, including selected group travel deals. All guests booked under this scheme are requested to refrain from disclosing the fare paid whilst on board. Fred. Olsen Oceans members are entitled to a 5% NASUWT discount, subject to the same terms & conditions, to be applied after the standard Oceans discount, where applicable. In this instance, Oceans terms & conditions apply. New to Fred. Olsen guests can also save 5% through their NASUWT membership, subject to the same terms & conditions. Flights are excluded from any discounts. Offer ends 31/12/2020. E&OE.

