

Chairman's Newsletter #2 January 2013

Newsletter #2: Jan 2013

Thank you to the many members who contacted us to say that you enjoyed the first newsletter; I will try to keep them coming every month but, for the full story, you will have to wait for the next copy of Justice in February.

Thank you too to all who contributed to the Action Fund when renewing membership. We rely on funds flowing in from membership dues, which have not increased in 20 years, and also into the Action Fund to be able us to continue the fight. You will see below some of the CABP initiatives that are being funded by the your memberships. In addition CABP, and BPiA (British Pensioners in Australia), are the major funders of ICBP and the initiatives in the UK, where ultimately this battle has to be won.

CABP's work and the fight for frozen pensions never stops, in spite of the business of the holiday season. Here is what has been going on:

Recent ICBP Activities

As I mentioned last month, we had been strongly recommended not to proceed with a campaign involving veterans, not on Remembrance Day itself, but even beforehand. But we believe that the image of those veterans who have sacrificed so much for Britain and are now being treated with such disdain is an important one. Tony Bockman has spearheaded a campaign involving a veteran from Ottawa and his image, wearing medals in a very forlorn, cold looking background which has been sent as a "Season's Greeting" to all UK Members of Parliament and Members of the House of Lords and also, newspapers. The basic image was produced professionally and pro-bono, so we are very sincerely thankful to the professionals who donated their time and expertise. We particularly want newspaper editors to use this image rather than the one of "expats" in deck chairs, drinks in hand when writing articles on frozen pensioners.

This image has also been used in Canada (see below).

We have suggested a question to be asked in the House of Commons relating to the possible increases to some widow's pensions based on the Yates judgment (also see below).

There have been over 2700 responses to the online survey that many of our members completed. These are being analysed for story angles that can be used for making and promoting our cause in the UK.

Recent CABP Activities

You will have received by email a copy of the photograph of the CABP member and veteran in the snow. This same "Season's greeting" was sent to all Canadian Members of Parliament and Senior civil servants who deal with the frozen pension file. It will also have been sent to some newspaper editors in Canada in the New Year. We are already receiving some responses from MPs, which we will follow up shortly.

Thank you to the CABP members who have sent in appreciative comments and also forwarded the image to friends and relations in the UK.

We will also send it to some newspaper editors in Canada in the near future.

Unfortunately, we do not have a real handle on the Canadian Press. It would be a tremendous help if there is a member out there who does and who could help us to compile a list of press contacts. I'd appreciate hearing from you at my new personal address: chairman@britishpensions.com

However, please feel free to forward the photograph to your local newspaper.

Our tireless Communications Director, Richard Hart, has advised us that he will not be standing for re-election at the AGM in June. Richard has been part of the CABP Board for three years and has been instrumental in revamping our website completely. He was responsible for launching the CABP & ICBP Facebook & Twitter pages, for sourcing new computers and technology for the National Office, for setting up Skype for conference calls, for sending out bulk emails and for generally troubleshooting anything to do with technology. And he has done all this with huge energy and enthusiasm. Thank you, Richard. We are all grateful for your contribution. He has given us this notice in order to work with us to find his replacement. If there is someone in the Greater Toronto Area with a technology background who would be interested in joining the Board, please let us know. The job is not nearly as onerous as the one Richard took on as the website and the social media are up and running and the new database upgrades mean that bulk emails could be handled by the office.

We are also really sorry to report that Anne Hoepfner, the wonderful Manitoba representative, has told us she wants to step down for health reasons. Anne has worked tirelessly to "spread the word" for us and we will miss her very much. We wish her well in her "second" retirement. If anyone in Manitoba is able to take on this responsibility, please let me know at: chairman@britishpensions.com

The Marketing Committee have been working on a dynamic short television advertisement which will play to what we believe is a strongly British not-yet-pensioners catchment at a relatively inexpensive time slot (Premium league soccer games on the Sportsnet channel) in the New Year.

Here is the link: check it out: CABP on YouTube. We think it is terrific and will monitor its success through our membership data and if it is successful, possibly repeat in the fall.

We are following up on the Frank Yates judgment on the "frozen widows" situation.

We have asked our pro bono lawyer, Phil Tunley, to take a look at the case and the Appeal Tribunal judgment. Close scrutiny from us tells us what we think is right, but even the Tribunal judge was of the opinion that it was difficult for him to understand: so it is certainly quite complex.

Meanwhile I have been in touch with the Department of Work and Pensions who have not responded on the matter. We have also identified a widow who is in the same situation pretty much as Frank Yates' late stepmother and have helped her to write a letter to DWP claiming increased pension based on the Yates judgment. She is our test case and although we know that the DWP does not move quickly, we are hoping for something positive from them too.

We are delighted that the new PayPal renewal option has been very widely used by our members. It really does cut down on paper in the office, so we appreciate your using it.

If you still have not renewed, please check your membership renewal date and if you have not yet renewed for 2013 (you can tell this by the date at the top of this email), I would urge you to do this. Here is a link for the: online payment options

Members are our lifeblood. We need you to:

Give us clout with the Canadian and British Governments

Help us spread the word to other British pensioners, and yet-to-be pensioners living in Canada

Engage in internet and letter writing campaigns

Energise us and give us fresh ideas on how we should move forward

Join us in the Board work and activities

Give us the funds to be able to carry on the fight for Pension Parity

With best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year – British Government willing!