Dear Colleague,

Many retired members attend our retired members conference held in March each year, and 16 are elected to the BMA’s Representative Body – which next meets for the ARM in June. The RB is the BMA’s policy making body, and additionally meets for extraordinary general meetings. RB seats are also allocated to the RMC’s chair and deputy chair, and Brian Guttridge and I much look forward to assuming our two-year term of office at the commencement of the next BMA session, which starts at the end of the ARM. Additionally, the RB comprises the membership of a number of other retired members who represent divisions and regions. It is unusual for an enthusiastic member not to be able to secure a seat in one way or another!

Our current chair, Robin Arnold, has given account of recent developments at RMC 2017 and in a report to the ARM. Although not widely appreciated, retired members (RMs) comprise a branch of practice (BoP). The RM Forum was initiated 13 years ago, and has developed since under the chairmanships of Connie Fozzard, Frank Wells, Ian McKim Thompson, Geoffrey Lewis, Kanwar Panesar and, currently, Robin Arnold. Robin received warm acclaim for his efforts from members at RMC 2017, but I write now to widen the mandate for a heartfelt vote of thanks to him from us all.

We have submitted an application to the next meeting of the organisation committee in October 2017 for our branch of practice to be granted the status of a standing committee – the RMC. So, the RMC would become the RMC! This proposal will be put to the RB in ARM motion 48, but the request for a standing committee has been subsumed by the ‘starred’ motion which omits that specific demand. I am submitting an amendment to specify what we want, and ask you to ensure you are present for the debate (16:50 on Monday 26 June). Please consider speaking to motion 48, and lobbying all those you can.

Currently, we retirees are the only members who are not represented by a standing committee, and our representation is inhibited thereby. Yet we bring significant subscriptions to the coffers, and even though retired from clinical practice, we need effective representation for a number of facets of our ongoing professional lives. The BMA gains considerably by retaining us in membership, and having us support its responsibilities for all other members.

Recently, a small group of us have met informally and dined together during ARM. I now write to ask (if you reasonably expect to attend ARM 2018), whether you would consider attending a more formally organised ‘Retired Members Dinner’, to be held alongside the other ‘tribal dinners’ on the Monday of ARM Brighton 2018. I seek no obligation or commitment at this stage, but for planning purposes, an indication: ‘Probably’; ‘Possibly’; ‘No’ – sent to myself directly would be most helpful: richardrawlins2@gmail.com. Also, an indication of the maximum amount you might be prepared to pay (including reception and dinner wines) - bearing in mind current BMA expenses allow £35, and some ‘tribes’ are now at £90! Fish ‘n chips or fine dining? Dress code: ‘Cardigans and slippers’!

If there is anything else with which I might help, please do not hesitate to contact me directly or Lizzy Dijeh - who keeps an eye on us all, and to whom we are most grateful! ldijeh@bma.org.uk.

Every best wish,
Yours sincerely,

Richard Rawlins