Pensioners' Newsletter – August 2026

News from the South

Phew! I am writing this as the outside temperature is showing 34 degrees. It seems somewhat churlish to complain, given what is happening in France and Spain, but I cannot break the habits of a lifetime!

On other matters the recent trips have been well attended, and I am glad to report that bookings for those yet to occur are extremely pleasing. The Stockwood Park exhibition, extended until early August, is featured elsewhere but it has been a thumping success.

Well, nothing else to report so I will join my neighbours in a rain dance! Keep healthy and happy.

Norman McGregor

Vauxhall Stockwood Exhibition

At our committee meeting on 28 July Toni and Aisha gave us feedback as to how the event unfurled. Rather than anything else they were invited to write the article below:

For those of you who are not familiar with our project, Luton Made: Vauxhall is a heritage project funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, celebrating the history of Vauxhall Motors here in Luton.

Over 12 months, we worked with the local community to co-design an exhibition, which opened at Stockwood Discovery Centre in May this year. Along the way, we recorded oral histories, uncovered archive material, collected objects and memorabilia, and worked to make this heritage accessible to the public.

Our aim was to tell a different side of Vauxhall's story. Rather than focusing solely on the vehicles, we wanted to explore the people who built them and the community that grew around the factory.

Due to popular demand, the exhibition was extended until Sunday 9th August and welcomed more than 22,000 visitors in its first two opening months. Through oral histories, photographs, film and objects, it follows the many journeys' people took into Vauxhall and explores the production line process, from pressed panels to finished vehicles. Thanks to funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, we were able to uncover previously untold stories, restore and digitise archive footage, and make historical material publicly accessible for the first time.

The Vauxhall Pensioners Association has been at the heart of the project from the very beginning with people generously sharing their memories of working at the plant, loaning photographs, objects and memorabilia, as well as offering invaluable knowledge, feedback and guidance throughout the research and curation process. Your first-hand experiences helped ensure the exhibition reflected the reality of life at Vauxhall and captured its history through the voices of those who lived it. We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who took part in our project for their generosity and continued support throughout the project.

Young people growing up in Luton today are the first generation not to have experienced Vauxhall as a working factory. Through the support of the Vauxhall Pensioners Association and our exhibition, we have been able to pass this history on, helping future generations understand the significance of the factory, the people who worked there, and the impact it had on the town.

We hope the success of the exhibition demonstrates the importance of preserving Luton's industrial heritage and highlights the public appetite for these stories to continue being told. Although this project is coming to an end, we are already looking ahead. Our ambition is to secure further funding to continue exploring Luton's industrial heritage and ensure these important stories continue to be shared.

Toni and Aisha receiving a thank you gift from Nigel Smith and David Kirke

Tony Hunt

You may recall that we ran a feature giving a back-ground to committee members. Since stopping there has been a few changes to our membership so it is thought appropriate to bring this feature back. Below you will find, in his own words, what you need to know about Tony Hunt.

"In 1971 I was working for London Transport as a guard, it was a lovely job with benefits. With my first wife we lived in a large flat in Dalston East London, and life seemed fine, then my wife got thinking that life could be a little better for us. She had seen an advert in the local paper that the Greater London Council was offering a brand-new house and a job at Vauxhall Motors. So, we went through the process and got a house just outside

Luton. After moving I went to get the job at Vauxhall.

"Sorry" the Personnel Department said, "we don't have a job for you." John Ladyman went away to have another look and came back with "yes I have one vacancy." I didn't think this was for me, it was in the Heat Treatment Department, I had no choice but to take it.

The job was hot and dirty at times, but it did have benefits as regard overtime, etc. My first Foreman, Dave Bowen, was a great chap and when I retired, he was one of the managers in the Press Shop.

I stayed there until 1974 when I had a heart attack and was advised to get a lighter job if I could. I was in rehab with Roy Cullis, from there I had various jobs in AJ Block working with some lovely people then on to production control scheduling and finally the Press Shop, bringing in the steel ready for production runs. I was on the Staff Joint Office Committee for Tass union for many years and was also on the IBC Charity Committee.

I don't know what I would be now if I had not made that initial change, but one thing is certain I would still be supporting my beloved West Ham United. It's 76 years since I first went to see them, so as the song goes 'you will never take the East End' out of me.

People I must thank for my Vauxhall journey; Dave Bowen, Roy Cullis, Bill Brown, Roy Scanlan, Mike Rawson, Steve Howard, Peter Blanking, and all the wonderful crew of the Press Shop 2001."

Thursday, June 18 – Singles Championship at Harpenden Common Golf Club

The Golfing God's not only arranged to bless the Harpenden Common Golf Club with warm and sunny weather conditions they also proved that they move in mysterious ways.

The ideal golf conditions were sufficient however, for Jim Heaney to be a runaway winner for the VPA Singles Championship with a huge margin of nine points was a tale of the unexpected…

Jim scorched around the tricky eighteen-hole golf course with a Stableford score of 46 points which is a record for this competition. In second place was short handicapper Paul Davies who played exceptionally well to score 37 points. In third place was newcomer to the group Bob Ferguson with 35 points, and in fourth place with 34 points was Alan Currington.

The nearest to the pin prizes were closely contested, and event winner Jim Heaney won the short 135-yard 5th hole, whilst Alan Currington won the difficult 147-yard 18th hole.

After the game, the fourteen sun tanned players adjourned to the nineteenth hole to rehydrate, share time with ex-work colleagues and to enjoy a late lunch, followed by the Prize presentation of the IBC trophy.

Mike Roberts presenting Jim Heaney with trophy

Thursday, June 4 – Seaside visit to Wells-next-the-Sea

37 VPA members set off from Luton heading for the seaside Wells-next-the-Sea. It was a sunny, although a little windy, day, with the opportunity for fish and chips, or an ice cream.

Everyone had a great time, a big thankyou to Jane and Dave for organising it and Andy our driver.

Andy and Mike enjoying an ice cream.

Friday, June 19 – Blenheim Palace Flower Show

48 VPA members set off from Luton on a beautiful sunny day for a trip to the Blenheim Palace Flower Show.

Thursday, July 2 – Queen Elizabeth II: Her Life in Style

30 VPA members set off from Luton on a beautiful sunny day before stopping for a carvery lunch.

They then headed to the Kings Gallery in London; where on show were all of Queen Elizabeth II's outfits worn over the last decade.

Thursday, July 16 – Portsmouth

A strong Armada of 27 VPA members set off from Luton heading for Portsmouth, home of the Royal Naval Docks and Gunwharf Quays with its famous Spinnaker viewing Tower.

There was plenty opportunity for shopping, taking a leisurely lunch or just enjoying the view. The weather was great and a good time was had by all.

Thank you, Dave and Jane, for all your hard work in organising the trips.

August Quiz

Pot luck again!

1. Which sport did Eric Bristow achieve fame in?
2. Who cut off 3 mice tales in a nursery rhyme?
3. Which is the largest musical instrument which has a keyboard?
4. What is mined in Kimberley, South Africa?
5. What does a German national indicate with the word "kaput"?
6. Which George Orwell novel has a year in the title?
7. Cider is made from which fruit?
8. Which film contained the song "He's a tramp"?
9. Which fruit can be served Belle Helene?
10. What colours are on the flag of Luxembourg?
11. Which ice skating duo danced to Bolero?
12. How many blue triangles are there on the Union Jack?
13. What does a choreographer plan?
14. What is a yucca?
15. The tv series Crossroads was set near which English city?
16. How many rowers are in a coxed pair rowing boat?
17. What is sometimes called "The old lady of Threadneedle Street"?
18. Which horse race meeting is known as "Glorious"?
19. Is a tulip grown from seed or bulb?
20. Which American city houses the Yankees and Mets baseball teams?

Hope you enjoy the challenge.

June Quiz answers

1. India
2. Apple
3. Bolognese
4. Sausage
5. Cheese
6. Rice
7. Salad
8. Italy
9. Eggs
10. Coffee
11. Bread
12. Rectangular
13. Chicken
14. Crisps
15. Orange
16. 18
17. Gin
18. Lancashire
19. Black and white
20. Pear

Upcoming Events in the South

The VPA Golf events for 2026

Tuesday, September 15 – Pairs Championship at Aylesbury Vale Golf Club

Please forward the names and respective email addresses of any additional players.

All registered players will be sent entry forms by email, and should any other VPA Club golfer wish to join in these events the contact is Mike Roberts – mikerobertsverulam@msn.com

Trips

Confirmed bookings must be made in writing to Dave Linney, 78 Kingsway, Dunstable, Beds. LU5 4HE, or by email to d.linney@btinternet.com, contact Dave on 01582 665061 if you have any queries. Deposits will not be required for day trips. Payment is required one calendar month before the event date. When a meal is included in the trip price, any special dietary requirements must be declared at the time of booking. In the event of a late cancellation of a booking you will be required to pay for the coach fare and any event ticket that we are unable to resell.

Our trip prices do not include insurance. For your own peace of mind please make your own arrangements. Parking for ALL trips is now at the Co-op Sports and Social Club, Stockingstone Road, Luton, LU2 7NF.

VPA Trips 2026

Thursday, August 6 – Buckingham Palace tour, preceded by carvery lunch.
£50.00 members/£53.00 non-members
Wednesday, September 9 – Chiltern Valley Wine & Brewery tour with tasting, including leisure time in the morning.

£33.00 members/£36.00 non-members
Tuesday, September 22 – Afternoon of Greyhound Racing at Romford, includes three course lunch.
£31.00 members/£34.00 non-members
Friday, October 9 – Brick Lane Music Hall, variety show including afternoon tea.
£50.00 members/£53.00 non-members
Monday to Friday, November 16-20 – 4-night stay at Studley Castle (Warner Hotel). £50 pp deposit when booking.
£360.00 members/£370.00 non-members
Thursday, December 3 – Tour of the Lights and Sights of London, including Fish and Chip lunch.
£30.00 members/£33.00 non-members
Friday, December 11 – Christmas Party.
£35.00 members/£35.00 non-members

Upcoming Events in the North

Monday, November 16 – Eastbourne

In Memoriam

Allison, David John, Vauxhall
Died 11.5.26, Aged 78, Retired 2002
Barnes, Richard, Vauxhall
Died 10.6.25, Aged 83, Retired 2000
Chapman, Peter S, Vauxhall
Died 5.5.26, Aged 88, Retired 1993
Clitheroe, Derek Peter Neil, Vauxhall
Died 4.7.26, Aged 90, Retired 1989
Cooper, J D, Millbrook
Died 15.5.26, Aged 85, Retired 1999
Davies, George Frederick, Vauxhall
Died 31.5.26, Aged 90, Retired 2000
Davies, Stuart James, Vauxhall
Died 3.5.26, Aged 83, Retired 1996
Dobinson, Stanley Kirtley, Vauxhall
Died 1.6.26, Aged 94, Retired 1988
Dubisette, Anastasia, Vauxhall
Died 31.5.26, Aged 84, Retired 2002
Eastman, Frederick, IBC
Died 12.5.26, Aged 91, Retired 1994
Farrall, John, Vauxhall
Died 31.5.26, Aged 82, Retired 2009
Finlay, James Peter, Vauxhall
Died 5.7.26, Aged 79, Retired 2002
Francis, Alan, Vauxhall
Died 20.6.26, Aged 80, Retired 2002
Grady, Martin, Vauxhall
Died 2.7.26, Aged 79, Retired 2012
Grzeszczuk, Christopher, Vauxhall
Died 1.6.26, Aged 79, Retired 2002
Hall, Nora Mary, Vauxhall
Died 10.4.26, Aged 92, Retired 1993
Hancock, Alec Graeff, IBC
Died 22.4.26, Aged 94, Retired 1997
Heley, Lawrence Albert, Vauxhall
Died 3.6.26, Aged 95, Retired 1989
Hoggarth, Ronald James, Vauxhall
Died 14.6.26, Aged 83, Retired 2000
Hollingsworth, Roderick Van, Vauxhall
Died 28.5.26, Aged 89, Retired 1990
Hughes, Frederick Samuel, Vauxhall
Died 13.5.26, Aged 93, Retired 1996
Hughes, Robert, Vauxhall
Died 25.5.26, Aged 80, Retired 2006
Hutson, Paul, Vauxhall
Died 30.4.26, Aged 67, Retired 2018
Indge, Terrance Aurther, Vauxhall
Died 1.5.26, Aged 81, Retired 1994
Jones, David Russell, Vauxhall
Died 30.5.26, Aged 90, Retired 1989
Kilsby, Donald, Vauxhall
Died 8.6.26, Aged 84, Retired 2000
Lines, J, IBC
Died 17.5.26, Aged 85, Retired 1997
Lloyd, Pauline Joy, Vauxhall
Died 15.5.26, Aged 86, Retired 2002
McCormac, Edward Bruce, Vauxhall
Died 4.7.26, Aged 81, Retired 1999
McFallon, Walter, Vauxhall
Died 16.6.26, Aged 85, Retired 2001
Modi, Natwarlal, Vauxhall
Died 23.5.26, Aged 68, Retired 2018
Moore, Nevil William, Vauxhall
Died 5.6.26, Aged 88, Retired 1999
Nicholls, Anthony George, Vauxhall
Died 17.6.26, Aged 89, Retired 1998
Phelan, John, Vauxhall
Died 26.3.26, Aged 74, Retired 2006
Popham, John Edward, Vauxhall
Died 13.6.26, Aged 91, Retired 1990
Scarisbrick, Ian, Vauxhall
Died 18.6.26, Aged 79, Retired 2012
Shaikh, Zulfiqar Haider, Vauxhall
Died 27.6.26, Aged 93, Retired 1993
Thompson, Michael Rayburn, Vauxhall
Died 26.5.26, Aged 86, Retired 2004
Thompson, Sheila Adelaide Victoria, Vauxhall
Died 9.5.26, Aged 79, Retired 2006
Watson, R L, Vauxhall
Died 17.5.26, Aged 71, Retired 2010
White, William John, Vauxhall
Died 10.6.26, Aged 92, Retired 1991
Williams, David, Vauxhall
Died 31.5.26, Aged 83, Retired 1999
Williams, Keith A, Vauxhall
Died 21.5.26, Aged 83, Retired 2001

Contact Information

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Instagram
www.instagram.com/vauxhall_pensioners_assoc

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If you have a story you would like to tell, then please get in touch with Norman McGregor
Email: normanmcgregor3@gmail.com

The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Company.