Pensioners' Newsletter – October 2026

News from the South

At last the grass is recovering, which is good, but as we are now in Autumn the less pleasant tasks such as digging up the plants and preparing for winter need to be addressed.

On a sombre note I have to inform you that Dave Williams, who wrote the News from the North article for this newsletter since April 2012, passed away in May. However, his widow, Jenny, has written the article in this issue and hopefully will continue to do so. Our condolences go to Jenny and all who knew Dave, and a cheque on behalf of the VPA has been sent to the selected charity.

While on the subject of Ellesmere Port I am often asked why we do not feature them more frequently in this newsletter. The answer is fairly simple - only Dave contributed. I would have no issue with encompassing items relating to the northern plant.

In an attempt to start this off when I worked on Vauxhall and Bedford European Marketing Units budgets in the late 1970's each budget submission time we had a group join us in Luton to assist in the process. I remember Pete Townsend, John Spillets and Dave Dryer but sad to say the others who came down have slipped my memory, for which please accept my apologies. If anyone can update me on the statue of, or memories they have, I would be grateful.

One last thing, the December newsletter will contain details of the trips for 2027. Make sure you read and book!

Norman McGregor

News from the North

The T&T is now well on the horizon and the spring break is booked for Torquay on April 28, staying at the Metropole Hotel, there are still a few rooms available so see me at the October social. I have also booked for December 27 to Weymouth. I realise this is a long way off but as I have said before that's how things are now. These coach holidays are so sought after (especially group bookings) we need to book well in advance. In fact when I booked in July for Christmas 2027 I had a list of hotels which wound down to one, such is the demand, especially for single rooms of which the hotels have few.

To bring you back to the present, once again, we were treated to lovely weather for our August trip was to Skipton, enabling us to make the most of the day and the town, with the castle walk, the canal, shopping and plenty of places to choose for lunch.

Our September social saw a lot of empty seats, but we were well entertained by our singer. The September outing to the lakes was, I am sure, enjoyed by those who attended.

Jenny Williams

One ring scam

A one ring scam is an attempt to trick you into calling a fraudsters number. Your phone rings once and then stops, with the fraudster relying on your curiosity to prompt you to call the number back to see who was calling.

The actual process is simplicity itself, the cybercriminal uses an auto dialler to systematically work through a long list of phone numbers. For each number it hangs up after a single ring tone and if the receiver calls the number back they will be connected to an expensive phone service which will trigger an immediate charge for that connection as well as a far from cheap rate for every minute they stay on the line. This scam is worldwide having originated in Japan where it is known as wangiri, which means "one and cut". It is also known as the one ring robocall scam, due to the use of the auto diallers that make the calls and the recorded voice services that the call returners often end up connecting to.

The sure-fire way to avoid this scam is not to call back any number that calls you and after one dialling tone cuts off. Overcoming the temptation to trace the caller is key, as it is this curiosity that the scammers rely on to make their money.

If you are subject to this scam then call your phone company as soon as possible, they may be able to help you avoid the charges associated with the scam.

It might help to remind yourselves that if the call is genuine they most likely will call you back. In this instance curiosity did not kill the cat but merely made the scammers rich!

Norman McGregor

Consumer Rights Legislation versus Product Warranty

A warranty (or guarantee) and your statutory rights under the Consumer Rights Act 2015 are entirely different things, though they do work alongside each other.

Statutory Rights (Consumer Rights Act) is the law. Your contract is with the retailer, **not** the manufacturer. If you go to a shop to claim that something is faulty often the shopkeeper will tell you to contact the manufacturer. Tell the shopkeeper that under this act the liability is with the retailer as your contract is with the retailer and not the manufacturer. Goods must be of satisfactory quality, fit for purpose and as

described. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland you have up to 6 years to bring a claim. In Scotland this is 5 years.

Warranty/Guarantee is a voluntary extra promise usually given free by the manufacturer and typically lasts up to 2 years and sets out specific terms for free replacement or repair.

Under the Act you have a short term right to reject a faulty item and get a full refund within 30 days of delivery.

If a fault appears within the first 6 months, the law assumes the fault was there when you purchased it, unless the retailer can prove otherwise. After 6 months the onus is on the purchaser to prove the fault was present at purchase'

Your legal rights under the Consumer Rights Act often last longer than a manufacturer's warranty has expired. If an expensive item such as a washing machine breaks down before a reasonable length of time has passed the retailer may still be responsible for a repair or replacement. Of course, what is a reasonable length of time etc. come into play here.

It is usually best to go directly to the retailer rather than the manufacturer as this route preserves your statutory rights under the law whereas a warranty is just an alternative.

- You can read a breakdown of your statutory rights versus guarantees from The Complaining Cow
- General guidelines on money recovery can be found on Money Saving Expert
- You can get full return and refund advice at Which?Consumer Rights

The purpose of this article is not to make you an expert in the entitled subject matter it is simply that you do not take the retail fobbing you off to the manufacturer as the only way.

Know your rights and act accordingly.

Norman McGregor

An Autumnal experience for the VPA Golfers

Autumn can be the season of reflection of missed fairways and countless putts failing to fall – but not for all the perennial Vauxhall Pensioners.

For the final VPA golf event of the 2026 season there were just sixteen vintage VPA golfers competing for the Peter Johnson Cup at the Aylesbury Vale Golf Club. The format was a Pairs better--ball Stableford and the standard of play seem to be getting better every year.

The weather conditions were not ideal, but the winners were Peter Johnson and Chris Cleary with a record equalling score of an excellent 47 points. This Trophy was donated by Peter Johnson back in 2007 and since this time Peter has won his own trophy (with different partners) for an amazing fifth time.

In second place was Bill Baldry and the 2026 VPA singles champion Jim Heaney who had a very good score of 44 points In third place were short handicapper Bill Goodyear and Paul Mint with 42 points, whilst in fourth place, with 40 points were Phil Watson and Vince Weatherhead.

The prizes for the nearest the pin competitions on two difficult par three holes were won respectively by Committee member Chris Cleary and Bill Baldry.

After the gruelling character building 5 mile "walk" the seasoned players took shelter at the nineteenth- hole partaking in a couple of well earned "sherberts" before tucking into some healthy portions of diet busting stodge. During this period the opportunity was taken to exchange some well-rehearsed banter, to mock the afflicted and to retell many of the Vauxhall legends which seem to get bigger and better as the years pass by.

Prior to the Prize giving there a few moments of reflection to remember the recent loss of Jim Gleasure. Jim will be greatly missed by his wife, family and his many friends from Vauxhall Motors. Despite this sad news the event was enjoyed by all players and after the Prize presentation and usual raffle all participants went home with a prize or a bottle of fortified grape juice. Even the pair of golfers who had the worst score were awarded a prize, and this was a pen so they could write out 100 lines - I must try to do better!

Jim Heaney (Organizer) Pairs Cup Winners Chris Cleary and Peter Johnson and Mike Roberts

The VPA Golf organisers Mike Roberts and Jim Heaney are already making arrangements for the 2027 events. The programme will include the following:

May 20 - Abbey Hill G.C. - Team Texas Scramble
July 15 - Harpenden Common G.C. Singles Championship
September 14 -Aylesbury Vale G.C. - Pairs Championship

All golf-playing VPA members with a club handicap are most welcome and can register for the events by sending a brief email to Mike Roberts at mikerobertsverulam@msn.com

Remembrance Service

The Remembrance Day service this year will take Kimpton Road War Memorial. There will be a short service conducted by Reverend David Alexander, the Vauxhall Chaplain, and a wreath will be laid to honour the Vauxhall employees who lost their lives in the two World Wars.

All employees, pensioners and members of the public are welcome. Parking will be available in the front of the Calibra Court car park, with guests registering at the concierge office. Warm refreshments will be provided courtesy of Strawberry Star.

Thursday, August 6 – Buckingham Palace

A full coach of VPA members set off from Luton stopping for an early carvery lunch at the Myllet Arms in Greenford.

The group then attended a tour around Buckingham Palace, visiting the magnificent rooms including the drawing rooms, the throne room and picture gallery. There was also the opportunity to visit the outdoor café overlooking the palace garden. Everybody had a fantastic day

George, Carole, Lynda and Judy overlooking the Buckingham Palace gardens

Wednesday, September 9 – Chiltern Valley Wine & Brewery

45 VPA members set off to the lovely town of Henley-on-Thames where there was plenty of time to window shop, stroll next to the river, or visit a local hostelry for an enjoyable lunch.

The highlight of the tour was the visit to the Chiltern Valley Wine and Brewery where we were given a very interesting tour of the vineyard and winery before being invited for wine and beer tasting. There was plenty of clinking to be heard on the coach journey home. A good time had by all.

Jeanne and Dave in the vineyard

Tuesday, September 22 – Greyhound Racing at Romford

41 VPA members left Luton heading for Romford Greyhound Stadium, enjoying a three-course meal was served in the restaurant.

There were winners and losers, but it was a great day out.

Elaine and Ben enjoying a bet

Thank you, Dave and Jane, for all your hard work in organising the trips, and not forgetting the driver, Andy.

October Quiz

In order to ring the changes, the subject this month is TV sitcoms. Unlike real life this quiz contains no repeats!

1. In Dad's Army who called Sgt Wilson Uncle Arthur?
2. Which family lived in Nelson Mandela House, Peckham?
3. Which space age sitcom starred Craig Charles and Chris Barrie?
4. Who played Adrian Mole's mother?
5. Which Felicity starred in Solo?

6. Who wore a knitted tank top, long mac and beret?
7. Which sitcom featured Mimi La Bonc and a painting by Van Clomp?
8. What was the profession of Gladys Emmanuel in Open all Hours?
9. In which show did Tracey have a husband Darrel and a son Garth?
10. Where did Miss Tibbs, Miss Gatsby and Major Gowen reside?
11. Who dreamt his mother-in-law as a hippopotamus?
12. Which sitcom featured Wendy Richard as Miss Brahms?
13. Which Birmingham comic starred as Bob Louis in The Detectives?
14. How were Dorothy, Blanche, Rose and Sophia known?
15. How was Bombardier Beaumont known in It Ain't Half Hot Mum?
16. Which sitcom was set in HMP Slade?
17. Which show is written by and stars Brendon O'Carroll?
18. In which show did Baldrick first appear?
19. In which show did Paul Nicholas play Vince Pinner?
20. Which show's theme song was Holiday Rock?

If you do well perhaps you should get out more, listen to the radio or like me like a sedate life.

August Quiz answers

1. Darts
2. Farmer's wife
3. Organ
4. Diamonds
5. Broken
6. 1984
7. Apples
8. The Lady and the Tramp
9. Pears
10. Red, white and blue
11. Torvill & Dean
12. 8
13. Dance steps
14. A plant
15. Birmingham
16. 3
17. The Bank of England
18. Goodwood
19. A bulb
20. New York

Upcoming Events in the South

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

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

Don't forget October sees us return to afternoon socials for the winter.

VPA Trips 2026

October 6 - social afternoon
November 3 - social afternoon
November 27 - Bury market
December 11 - Christmas dinner at the East Ham Golf Club 5.00pm for 5.30pm.

VPA Trips 2027

April 28 – Torquay staying at the Metropole Hotel
December - Weymouth

In Memoriam

Ashbrook, Michael Thomas, Vauxhall
Died 14.7.26, Aged 76, Retired 2006
Blackwell, John William, IBC
Died 18.9.26, Aged 95, Retired 1994
Bland, Ronald Richard, Vauxhall
Died 24.8.26, Aged 91, Retired 1997
Bohme, Jurgen Hellmut, Vauxhall
Died 13.8.26, Aged 71, Retired 2010
Braithwaite, Stephen Strafford, Vauxhall
Died 14.8.26, Aged 86, Retired 2002
Butler, David, Vauxhall
Died 24.7.26, Aged 74, Retired 2002
Callaghan, Walter Edward, Vauxhall
Died 20.8.26, Aged 91, Retired 1995
Campbell, Eric, Vauxhall
Died 17.8.26, Aged 68, Retired 2013
Davies, Veronica L, IBC
Died 17.8.26, Aged 80, Retired 2002
Delaney Jones, Donald, Vauxhall
Died 1.8.26, Aged 89, Retired 2001
Edwards, Ronald Leighton, Vauxhall
Died 23.8.26, Aged 88, Retired 2000
Evans, T H, Vauxhall
Died 26.8.26, Aged 83, Retired 2000

Farrow, Ruth, Vauxhall
Died 18.8.26, Aged 76, Retired 2009
Fay, Beryl Ann, Vauxhall
Died 12.6.26, Aged 87, Retired 1988
Fullerton, David, Vauxhall
Died 27.7.26, Aged 78, Retired 2002
Garlick, Terence, IBC
Died 29.7.26, Aged 78, Retired 2003
Giles, H M, Vauxhall
Died 22.7.26, Aged 84, Retired 1993
Gleasure, James A, IBC
Died 1.8.26, Aged 72, Retired 2008
Gomm, Norman Henry Horace, Vauxhall
Died 16.4.26, Aged 93, Retired 1998
Grant, Samuel, Vauxhall
Died 10.8.26, Aged 95, Retired 1988
Hewitt, Clifford, Vauxhall
Died 7.8.26, Aged 79, Retired 2004
Hulse, Eric, Vauxhall
Died 11.9.26, Aged 88, Retired 2001
Jones, Geoffrey Allan, Vauxhall
Died 2.7.26, Aged 88, Retired 2001
Joseph, James, Vauxhall
Died 22.8.26, Aged 87, Retired 2001
Joseph, Lucien, IBC
Died 15.8.26, Aged 88, Retired 2003
Kelly, Elizabeth, Vauxhall
Died 7.6.26, Aged 90, Retired 1988
Larkin, Lydia Mae, Vauxhall
Died 23.8.26, Aged 82, Retired 2002
Ludgate, Michael James, Vauxhall
Died 22.8.26, Aged 74, Retired 2014
Monk, Keith Arthur, Vauxhall
Died 4.7.26, Aged 85, Retired 1996
Neil, Thomas Harold, Vauxhall
Died 12.7.26, Aged 85, Retired 2003
Pearce, Edward Albert John, Vauxhall
Died 25.8.26, Aged 91, Retired 1998
Phillips, Lester, IBC
Died 21.7.26, Aged 70, Retired 2014
Price, Peter, Vauxhall
Died 14.9.26, Aged 72, Retired 2006
Prosper, John, IBC
Died 21.6.26, Aged 86, Retired 1998
Thompson, David, Vauxhall
Died 21.8.26, Aged 85, Retired 1999
Valentine, Roy, IBC
Died 10.8.26, Aged 84, Retired 2003
Venable, Dennis Robert, Vauxhall
Died 8.8.26, Aged 86, Retired 1998
White, Peter, Vauxhall
Died 28.7.26, Aged 80, Retired 2000

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If you have a story you would like to tell, then please get in touch with Norman McGregor
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The views expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Company.