



# Pensioners' Newsletter - April 2024

## News from the South

How pleasing it is that the nights are getting lighter and temperatures are rising through the day. Buds are appearing on bushes and trees and already the daffodils are blooming, with tulips hopefully not far behind. The only downside is that the grass needs cutting - sometimes paved patios seem to be a good option!

What with the triple lock state pension increase and a rise in our Vauxhall pension, along with the recent drop in inflation we've never had it so good!

Elsewhere in this Newsletter, as is usual, we list the trips for 2024. Many are already booked to near capacity, if not sold out. I urge you not to be disheartened as if you want to go on a particular trip you can ring Sylvia (telephone number at end of Newsletter) and put your name on the reserve list. If the reserve list is of a sufficient size, and depending on the trip, it may be possible to put on a second coach.

The 2024 AGM went very well and is covered elsewhere in this issue, so all that remains is to wish you the best of times until our next Newsletter in June.

*Norman McGregor*

## News from the North

Hi Everyone:

Well I think spring is in the air by the way the garden has sprung into life, even if it is still cold and somewhat wet. At least we have some colour to look at and the birds seem very busy preparing for their families.

Our February social was entertained by a very pleasant singer. Unfortunately we got off to a bad start with the poor man being stuck in the lift, but he took it all in good spirits fortunately and joked about it.

March saw us having our AGM with all the Committee and officers returned. Two new members joined - Alan Seymour took over from Dave as Vice Chairman and John Morton.

After the business was completed we had a hot pot and apple pie lunch and were entertained by a Gary Barlow tribute.

As you will know everybody is being issued with an ID card with colours referencing their membership status.

This month we revert back to evening socials, but the date has been moved to April 9. This unfortunately falls the evening before we go to Bournemouth, so please try and come to collect your itinerary and luggage labels otherwise I will

give them to you on the morning. I think and hope we are all looking forward to a good holiday and don't forget if you wish to swim there is an indoor pool.

Since the programme was printed there have been several alterations so please take note.

The April day trip has now been cancelled, so as the May one will be the first one since the pantomime I hope we are all looking forward to it. This date has also been changed from May 23 to May 30 and now costs £20 pp.

Please refer to your programme as all trips have gone up by £5 due to rising costs and the August trip has also been changed to Bridgnorth and the Down Inn.

There are still a few rooms left for the December Turkey & Tinsel leaving December 2 and staying at the Cliffe Norton Hotel in Tenby.

I hope all this information/alterations makes sense. If not ask at the Social on April 9. If you can't make the Club on April 9 and are going on holiday please remember we leave the Club on Wednesday, 10 at 9:00 am and cars can be parked at the Club. Till next time Cheerio.

*Dave Williams*

## EMPOLO Registration Now Extended

It has recently become obvious that some pensioners have not received the August 2023 communication regarding the changes to the Retirees Car Plan which gave a deadline of the end of December 2023 to register on the new EMPOLO plan.

It was announced at the AGM held on Tuesday, March 19 that this date has now been extended until June 30, 2024, so if you, or if you are aware of anyone who has unfortunately been overlooked and wishes to re-join and, therefore, needs to register, please telephone Employee Fleet on 0151 350 3250 or email on [employeefleet@stellantis.com](mailto:employeefleet@stellantis.com)

## Southern Plants AGM 2024

The 75<sup>th</sup> VPA Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday, March 19 in the Juniper Suite at Venue 360 commencing at 2:15 pm with 62 people in attendance. This was a significant increase on recent years.

After the Chairman's welcome Rob Assinder, Pensions Director, GME, gave an update presentation on the state of our pension plans. It was encouraging to be told that the shortfall was very much improved from recent years and at the latest evaluation was close to parity.

This was followed by a presentation from Lindsey Thompson, UK HR Director for Stellantis, which covered Stellantis and Vauxhall performance and the Vauxhall pensioners car lease scheme. More on this item is reported above in this Newsletter. After a short break addresses were given by the President, Chairman and Treasurer of the VPA and the meeting closed at 16:30 pm. Minutes of the meeting will be published on the VPA website in due course.

### **Volunteering with Beds Fire Service**

If you care about keeping your local community in Bedfordshire safer, Beds Fire Service wants to hear from you. The Service is offering rewarding volunteer roles that enable you to do something really useful and make a difference while being flexible and able to fit in with other commitments you have.

If you possess good interpersonal skills, basic IT knowledge and want to help vulnerable people to stay safe in their own homes, supporting the home visits service could be perfect for you. Home visitors provide information on staying safe at home, additional guidance on health, wellbeing and crime prevention, along with free installation of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to eligible residents.

Or perhaps you are the type of person who is often out and about around the local shops and social groups chatting to people. Then you would be the perfect fit to be a Community Safety Advocate sharing fire safety and similar messages around your area. This could also include assisting staff who are giving talks to local groups, attending events, gathering feedback on visits or even giving pre-prepared talks when confident to do so. The Service is also keen to hear from anyone who could enable people from under-served communities to access its advice and support by volunteering as a Diversity and Inclusion Advocate.

Needless to say all information, training and equipment, along with ongoing comprehensive support will be provided as well as reimbursement of travel expenses and opportunities for your personal development. Plus you get to be a member of the fantastic Beds Fire team.

To find out more contact Volunteer Manager Janet Brennan on 07543 301604 or alternatively email [janet.brennan@bedsfire.gov.uk](mailto:janet.brennan@bedsfire.gov.uk)

If you want to request a home visit for yourself (Bedfordshire residents only) go to [www.bedsfire.gov.uk](http://www.bedsfire.gov.uk) or [homefiresafetyvisit@bedsfire.gov.uk](mailto:homefiresafetyvisit@bedsfire.gov.uk) or telephone 0800 043 5042.

### **Loft Insulation Scam**

Central Bedfordshire Council Trading Standards team are urging residents to act with caution if

they receive an unsolicited call or visit about spray foam loft insulation for their home.

They have been made aware of reports from residents who have received an unsolicited telephone call where the caller claims that the resident's current loft insulation may not be energy efficient or could even cause health-related problems. The caller then offers to arrange for a representative to visit their home to carry out an inspection of the loft.

If you or anyone you know receives this type of telephone call, do not feel pressured into making a quick decision and always taken a moment to consider whether any claims being made are genuine. If you are concerned about what you have been told, always seek expert advice before agreeing to any work taking place.

If you receive a call you suspect maybe a scam, please report it to Trading Standards on 0808 223 1133.

Please help protect others from falling victim to this type of scam by telling your family, friends and neighbours about this alert.

### **Booking your Holidays Safely**

Most of us look forward to an annual holiday or short break which, more often than not, we find and book online.

But fraudsters also love the internet. They use fake websites, listings, emails, advertisements, social media posts and texts and also phone calls to trick you into paying for a holiday or other travel to Never Never Land. In other words it simply does not exist.

To help save you from losing your holiday and your money, there is some expert tips on safely searching and booking holidays and travel with confidence. Take a look at the tips on this advice page:

<https://www.getsafeonline.org/holiday/>

### **New Driving Law Proposals - Vision**

An expert has warned that new driving law proposals may have an adverse effect on elderly drivers and those with vision issues.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) Business Plan 2023-24 outlines how the Agency is considering whether changes should be made when taking a driving test.

Learner drivers are required to read out the letters and numbers from a standard licence plate from 20 metres away before they start the test.

This is done to ensure they have an acceptable standard of vision and are fit to drive on the road by seeing any potential hazards in front of them. The DVSA said it would engage with the DVLA's Medical Panel to ensure that any new procedures meet the current standards.

The Business Plan stated any potential changes were the subject of a public consultation with

most respondents supporting more flexible proposals.

It added: "The aim of the change is to provide more flexibility about when the driving test is conducted and in different levels of light."

Tina Patel, contact lens optician at Feel Good Contacts, commented on the new proposals, saying it would benefit some motorists but hinder others.

She said: "The current eyesight test for driving does not take the driver's night vision into consideration, peripheral vision, depth perception or colour vision. These aspects are considered essential for safe driving."

However, she warned that any new restrictions could have an impact on older drivers and their ability to drive at night, which can sometimes be compromised.

Recent data from the RAC found that around 85 per cent of all drivers said they were affected by headlight glare, with elderly drivers being particularly at risk of being dazzled.

Tina Patel continued, saying: "Ageing can affect night driving in several ways. As we age, our pupils don't dilate as much in the dark and shrink, this reduces the amount of light entering the eye, making it harder to see clearly at night. "The cornea and lens within the eye become less clear as we age, causing light to scatter and increase glare.

"This can also lower contrast sensitivity, which is the ability to see subtle differences in bright light. This can make it difficult to see things on the road at night.

"Testing an elderly person's vision in low light could be more difficult for them compared to a young person with healthy eyes."

Many new cars use LED headlights as they can provide a clearer view of the road in front of them, although they can cause issues for other road users.

According to the RAC, an LED light has a much more 'intense and focused beam' that the human eye reacts differently to, especially when compared to traditional 'yellower' halogen bulbs. Too much bright light can hurt people's eyes by causing glare and eye strain, as well as affecting the quality of sleep someone may receive, potentially making them more dangerous on the road.

### **Thursday, February 8 - The King and I**

On an extremely wet and misty morning a coach load of members left Luton, initially heading for Perrivale and the Myllet Arms where everyone tucked into a most welcome carvery lunch. If ever a meal suited the day!

Leaving this location for the Dominion Theatre for a matinee performance of The King and I we passed the Grenfell Tower which is still heavily protected from the public view. A sombre sight indeed.

We arrived in good time for the 2:30 am start and were splendidly entertained by the cast of the musical. Special praise here to Helen George (of Call the Midwife fame) who sang beautifully. When we left the theatre it was lashing down so special praise to our driver, Andy, who parked right outside the exit. All who witnessed the show were pleased, so special thanks to Sylvia and Dave.

### **Thursday, March 14 - Springfield's Shopping Outlet and Festival Gardens**

45 members left Luton at 9:30 am, arriving at the Springfield Shopping Centre at 11:30 am, where they were met by a Centre representative who gave them a map and a series of discount vouchers. This signalled the commencement of the shopping spree!

The weather was good so a number of the group viewed the flowers and thought them very attractive. The coach left at 4:00 pm and arrived in Luton at 6:15 pm. Thanks to the usual suspects for their organising of the day.

### **April Quiz**

The quiz is a little different this month. See if you can work out the answers from the Sweet Shop:

- 1 Scrooge's favourite perhaps (7)
- 2 They can restrict conversation (11)
- 3 Said to be too good to hurry (6,5)
- 4 Romantic sweets (4,6)
- 5 Wobbly infants (5,6)
- 6 Very clever sweets (8)
- 7 Last trifle is up (5,9)
- 8 The fruit falls (4,5)
- 9 Little Minnies digits (7)
- 10 Both lesser men (7,6)
- 11 Quivering legumes (5,5)
- 12 Pristine spheres (4,5)
- 13 Kojak loved them (9)
- 14 Simple mini rat (4,9)
- 15 Pester and nip the MP (11)
- 16 Eaten at Goodison Park (7,5)
- 17 A miny bit stronger (6,5)
- 18 Bitter globules (4,5)
- 19 Loving insects (8)
- 20 A lot of meal choices (9,5)
- 21 Sounds like a bog plant (11)
- 22 Split moon re-joined (4,5)

### **February Quiz answers**

- |                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Milk             | 2 Frank McClintock     |
| 3 Patricia Hearst  | 4 Fishing              |
| 5 Potter           | 6 Naturalist bathing   |
| 7 New Seekers      | 8 It was bankrupt      |
| 9 Jim Callaghan    | 10 Betty Stove         |
| 11 Alex Haley      | 12 Charlies Angels     |
| 13 Ho Chi Minh     | 14 Invented cat's eyes |
| 15 Lords           | 16 Australia           |
| 17 Morning Cloud   | 18 Londonderry         |
| 19 PC George Dixon | 20 Max Boyce           |

## Upcoming Events in the South

To book trips please telephone Sylvia on (01582) 759851 or write to Mrs S Pemberton, 27 Ryecroft Way, Luton, Beds, LU2 7TU.

A stamped addressed envelope is no longer required. If you use email please provide your email address. Our trip prices do not include insurance. For your own peace of mind please make your own arrangements.

In the event of your late cancellation of a booking you will be required to pay for the coach fare and any event ticket that we are unable to re-sell.

### **Thursday, May 9 - Huntingdon Horse Racing**

Come and have a flutter and enjoy the spectacle of National Hunt racing. No food included  
Members £29.00 pp/Non-members £32.00 pp

### **Thursday, May 16 - Watercress Line Steam Train, Hants**

Enjoy a steam train ride on the Watercress Line through Hampshire countryside. A Ploughman's lunch will be served on board

Members £45.00 pp/Non-members £48.00 pp

### **Thursday, June 6 - Brighton (coach only)**

Day trip to this ever popular seaside resort

Members £16.00 pp/Non-members £19.00 pp

### **Thursday, July 18 - Norfolk Lavender Fields and Villages Tour**

Blue Badge guided tour of Norfolk's lavender fields and pretty villages

Including fish and chips lunch

Members £36.00 pp/Non-members £39.00 pp

### **Thursday, August 15 - Savill Gardens, Windsor Estate, and Thames Cruise**

Visit to these splendid gardens at Windsor where we have lunch before enjoying a 2 hour Thames Cruise with a cream tea

Members £59.00 pp/Non-members £63.00 pp

### **Thursday, September 19 - Suffolk Punch Centre, Woodbridge**

Come and see these magnificent horses in their stables and fields. The trip includes meeting the horses, watching them demonstrate their skill and a horse-drawn hay cart ride. A café is on site selling a variety of food

Members £35.00 pp/Non-members £38.00 pp

### **Thursday, October 17 - Vineyard Visit at Tenterden, Kent**

Sample the fine wines in this renowned winery in Kent and enjoy a tour of the vineyard. We will taste five of their popular wines (soft drink alternatives if preferred). We will stop for lunch en route at a suitable venue where you will be able to buy lunch

Members £36.00 pp/Non-members £39.00 pp

### **Mon-Fri, November 25-29 - Turkey and Tinsel**

A festive 4 night break at the Warners Hotel, Holme Lacey, Herefordshire in the beautiful Wye Valley. The stay will be on half board basis with daily excursions

Members £325.00 pp/Non-members £335.00 pp

### **Thursday, December 5 - Christmas Cockney Show, followed by a tour of the London lights.**

Enjoy the festive fun on board Tereza Joanne at London's Royal Docks.

Includes Christmas turkey dinner with apple pie dessert.

Members £55.00 pp/Non-members £58.00 pp

### **Wednesday, December 11 - Christmas Dinner and Dance**

Come and join us at Venue 360 for this annual festive celebration.

Evening includes a three course festive meal and live music.

Members £35.00 pp/Non-members £38.00 pp

## Upcoming Events in the North

**Tuesday, April 9** – Evening Social at the Club

**Wednesday, April 10** - Bournemouth

**Thursday, May 20** – Stumble Inn

Leave Club 9:00 am. £20 pp

**Thursday, June 20** – Black Country Museum

Leave Club 9:00 am £20 pp

**Thursday, July 25** – Snowdonia Tour

Leave Club 9:00 am £15 pp

**Thursday, August 22** – Bridgnorth and Down Inn for lunch

Leave Club 9:00 am £20 pp

**Friday, September 6** – Nantwich Food Festival and Bridgemere Gardens

Leave Club 9:00 am £15 pp

**Thursday, October 24** – Leeds Trip

Leave Club 9:00 am £15 pp

**Monday, December 2** – Turkey and Tinsel, Cliffe Norton Hotel, Tenby

£50.00 pp deposit required in February

## In Memoriam

**Ali, Zulfiqar, Vauxhall**

Died 5.3.2024, Aged 72, Retired 2002

**Ashworth, Graham, Vauxhall**

Died 21.12.2023, Aged 60, Retired 2018

**Atkinson, John Craig, Vauxhall**

Died 25.2.2024, Aged 73, Retired 2002

**Bannister, Jack Alan, IBC**

Died 11.1.2024, Aged 89, Retired 1994

**Barrett, John Edward, Vauxhall**

Died 8.3.2024, Aged 88, Retired 1997

**Blades, James William Campbell, Vauxhall**

Died 19.1.2024, Aged 85, Retired 1993

**Boon, Joseph, Vauxhall**

Died 27.1.2024, Aged 90, Retired 1995

**Brown, Kenneth George, Vauxhall**

Died 15.1.2024, Aged 74, Retired 2010

**Buras, Zbigniew Jan, Vauxhall**

Died 17.2.2024, Aged 83, Retired 2002

**Cain, Carol, Vauxhall**

Died 16.1.2024, Aged 75, Retired 2011

**Catlin, Michael, IBC**

Died 18.2.2024, Aged 80, Retired 2008

**Cespedes, Edwin, IBC**

Died 29.1.2024, Aged 84, Retired 1998

**Challinor, Janice, Vauxhall**

Died 9.3.2024, Aged 71, Retired 2004

**Charalambos**, Eufrosini, Vauxhall  
Died 20.10.2023, Aged 76, Retired 2012

**Clark**, Robert Joseph, IBC  
Died 20.1.2024, Aged 77, Retired 2009

**Collings**, Glenn Graham, Vauxhall  
Died 29.1.2024, Aged 76, Retired 2002

**Conolly**, Roger Hardy, Vauxhall  
Died 13.2.2024, Aged 78, Retired 2006

**Cordall**, Leonard, Vauxhall  
Died 18.2.2024, Aged 91, Retired 1989

**Coward**, Michael Charles John, Vauxhall  
Died 14.1.2024, Aged 92, Retired 1988

**Cranny**, Brian Michael, Vauxhall  
Died 14.2.2024, Aged 75, Retired 2005

**Daly**, Benjamin James, Vauxhall  
Died 12.1.2024, Aged 86, Retired 1999

**Eastland**, David Edward, Vauxhall  
Died 25.1.2024, Aged 81, Retired 2005

**Emery**, Brian John, Vauxhall  
Died 16.2.2024, Aged 87, Retired 2001

**Gorton**, Cyril Edward, Vauxhall  
Died 19.1.2024, Aged 93, Retired 1995

**Grace**, David John, Vauxhall  
Died 20.12.2023, Aged 79, Retired 2002

**Harrison**, Raymond, IBC  
Died 6.2.2024, Aged 88, Retired 2000

**Harrison**, Geoffrey, Vauxhall  
Died 4.3.2024, Aged 83, Retired 2002

**Harvey**, Iris Anne, Vauxhall  
Died 14.2.2024, Aged 73, Retired 2013

**Heard**, Graham Bailey, Vauxhall  
Died 24.2.2024, Aged 84, Retired 2002

**Hooper**, David, Vauxhall  
Died 20.2.2024, Aged 74 Retired 2015

**Ithell**, John, Vauxhall  
Died 30.1.2024, Aged 85, Retired 2002

**Jeffries**, Vincent, Vauxhall  
Died 24.2.2024, Aged 86, Retired 1991

**Johnson**, Peter Montague, Vauxhall  
Died 28.2.2024, Aged 94, Retired 1990

**Large**, Malcolm Bruce, Vauxhall  
Died 17.1.2024, Aged 74, Retired 2005

**Laws**, Colin Wilfred, Vauxhall  
Died 5.3.2024, Aged 85, Retired 1993

**Leyland**, Charles Graham, Vauxhall  
Died 25.1.2024, Aged 81, Retired 2002

**McWhinnie**, John, Vauxhall  
Died 5.2.2024, Aged 65, Retired 2018

**Morris**, Harry Reginald, Vauxhall  
Died 3.2.2024, Aged 85, Retired 1996

**Murray**, Bruce, Millbrook  
Died 15.1.2024, Aged 85, Retired 1999

**Neville**, Edward Geoffrey, Vauxhall  
Died 5.1.2024, Aged 93, Retired 1988

**O'Meara**, Michael John, Vauxhall  
Died 26.2.2024, Aged 82, Retired 2004

**O'Sullivan**, Carmel Attracta, Vauxhall  
Died 31.1.2024, Aged 87, Retired 1993

**Philip**, Ivan, Vauxhall  
Died 9.2.2024, Aged 84, Retired 2002

**Rees**, David Brian, Vauxhall  
Died 22.1.2024, Aged 87, Retired 1999

**Robinson**, John Ernest, Vauxhall  
Died 27.2.2024, Aged 89, Retired 1999

**Sadler**, Martin, Vauxhall  
Died 31.1.2024, Aged 79, Retired 2002

**Singh**, Hardial, Vauxhall  
Died 12.1.2024, Aged 69, Retired 2010

**Szabo**, Attila, IBC  
Died 3.1.2024, Aged 61, Retired 2017

**Wakefield**, Nigel John, Vauxhall  
Died 19.12.2023, Aged 62, Retired 2018

**Watson**, John Henry, Vauxhall  
Died 3.2.2024, Aged 80, Retired 2002

**West**, John Bernard, Vauxhall  
Died 30.1.2024, Aged 86, Retired 2002

**Whelan**, Michael Anthony, Vauxhall  
Died 8.3.2024, Aged 75, Retired 2006

**Whitehouse**, Terence Arthur, Vauxhall  
Died 8.3.2024, Aged 94, Retired 1993

**Whittington**, Leslie, Vauxhall  
Died 23.1.2024, Aged 78, Retired 2002

**Winter**, Eric Gerald, Vauxhall  
Died 12.3.2024, Aged 91, Retired 1997

## Contact Information

### VPA South

All contact details for the new VPA office will be announced when these are known.

In the meantime please phone 01582 759851.

### VPA North

Dave Williams

0151 608 8701

### VPA Website – Southern/Northern Plants

<https://www.vauxhallpensioners.org>

### Facebook

[www.facebook.com/groups/VauxhallPensionersAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/groups/VauxhallPensionersAssociation)

### Pensions Enquiries

#### Aviva:

Defined Benefit Solutions

PO Box 3331

Norwich NR1 3WH

Telephone: 0800 1584 194

Email: [bpainc@aviva.com](mailto:bpainc@aviva.com)

#### Rothesay Life:

Rothesay Life

PO Box 545

Redhill

Surrey

RH1 1YX

Telephone: 0800 916 8090

Email: [pensions.helpline@rothesaypolicy.com](mailto:pensions.helpline@rothesaypolicy.com)

#### Aon:

General Motors (VML) Pension Plan

Aon, PO Box 196, Huddersfield, HD8 1EG

Tele: 0330 808 5226

Email: [GMPensions@aon.com](mailto:GMPensions@aon.com)

#### Employee Fleet

0151 350 3250

Email: [employeefleet@stellantis.com](mailto:employeefleet@stellantis.com)

#### Welfare Fund

07460 171565

Email: [vauxhallwelfare@vwcharity.com](mailto:vauxhallwelfare@vwcharity.com)

Website: [www.vauxhallwelfarefund.org](http://www.vauxhallwelfarefund.org)

If you have a story you would like to tell, then please

get in touch with Norman McGregor

Email: [normanmcgregor3@gmail.com](mailto:normanmcgregor3@gmail.com)

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