



Pensioners' Newsletter – December 2023

News from the South

Looking back over 2023 it is in many ways a difficult one to sum up. We had periods of extremely hot weather, but then again they were counterbalanced by times of very wet conditions. It sure made gardening interesting! This time last year I wrote that 2023 was likely to be a year of recession. Well, for lots of us that did not quite happen. I only worked in Finance for forty years so what do I know!

At the VPA level it has been a year to be pleased with. Our trips were varied and well supported, and importantly they were enjoyed by those who went on them. A huge thanks to Sylvia and David for their efforts.

The VPA Golf Society had a number of successful tournaments which were enjoyed by all who participated and as an added bonus helped raise money for a local hospice. Thanks here to Mike and Jim for their efforts in arranging said activities.

The VPA Facebook page goes from strength to strength, totally due to the efforts of Bill Saul who we give our thanks to.

Also in 2023 the VPA website was introduced and pleasingly this is gaining in popularity as each month passes. For his efforts in establishing this website and in maintaining it we salute David Kirke.

We liaise with the Welfare Group and fund hampers at Christmas for some of our members. Richard and Linda Mumford organise them and Committee members Jean, Marion, Nigel, Gordon and Chris help distribute around the recipients. Grateful thanks to all of them.

Finally my personal thanks to Jean for her help in producing this Newsletter.

You might recall that I asked for volunteers to join the Committee in the October issue. Success!

Tony Hunt has come on board and you can read about him elsewhere in this issue.

2023 was a year when the Parts Warehouse was totally flattened and work is rumoured to be on the cusp of commencement on what was the HQ site in Osborne Road. To many of us it is somewhat strange to see these changes. Some call it progress, but who knows?

However, we must look to the future. Next year will provide a variety of trips to whet your appetite and they are listed later in this Newsletter. At the time of writing all we can show are the bare facts, except for the February 8 trip to the Dominion Theatre to see the matinee performance of the King and I, including a carvery lunch.

Prices are £65.00 for members and £70.00 for non-members. These shows are usually very popular so my advice is to book early.

All that remains is to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year on behalf of the VPA Committee.

Norman McGregor

News from the North

Hi Folks:

Can it be that time of year again already? Surely I have just put decs away, but no the Christmas season seems to be in full swing, so time to look for a Christmas tree. The wife will be pleased, but I will have my usual reluctance (Jen calls it Paddy) getting it in the stand.

We had a lovely day out on October 26 and although it was called Autumn Tints there was precious little autumn tints in evidence as most trees were still green. We stopped at a garden centre for a mooch, coffee and chat, then on to the Stumble Inn where we were treated to a lovely lunch. After lunch we meandered to Llangollen where the sun shone and it was a lovely warm autumn afternoon. The town was busy as it was school half term and people were on holiday. We were fascinated standing on the bridge watching parties of white water rafters coming down the river.

I believe the visit to the Halifax Peace Palace went well. I was told it was a very interesting day. Sorry we missed it, but we were on a long overdue visit to our family in Canada - a very long journey to Vancouver Island - but well worth the effort. The sun shone for three weeks and it was lovely to see our youngest grandchild.

Our first afternoon social went well, if not too well, and was attended with a Cilla Black tribute. Don't forget we will be having one on December 5 which is not on the programme.

There was no day trip in November as 44 of us were away enjoying our Turkey and Tinsel holiday. I think I can speak for us all when I say we really did have a good time. We had a very entertaining driver who looked after us very well. The hotel was warm and welcoming with lovely staff and good food. Although I wore my prayer mat out it worked as the weather was mostly good - sunny with blue skies. We had a shopping day in Norwich, a relaxing 'Christmas Day' in the hotel when our quiz teams swept the board coming first and second. We also did very well on the bingo. Not sure how popular we were with the other

coach parties! On our last day we travelled to the Thursford Christmas Spectacular and it was just that spectacular! For anybody who likes music, singing, variety and Christmas trees and lights it is a must.

Our Christmas lunch is at the Queens Hotel in Chester as I am sure you all know on December 15. Please arrive for 10:30 am for what I hope promises to be a good day.

There will be no social in January, so the next one will be on February 6. If you have not paid the balance of your April holiday it must be paid on that day. The holiday is fast approaching so if you still want to come let us know as soon as possible. We are going to the Norfolk Royals Hotel in Bournemouth and the cost is £326.00 pp unless we get over forty then it will be £299.00 pp. Well folks that's all the news for now so I will see you on the 5th at the Club or the 15th at the Queens Hotel. Till then cheerio

Dave Williams

Remembrance Service - November 12

25 people attended the service held at the Vauxhall War Memorial in Kimpton Road which was conducted by the Vauxhall Chaplain, Reverend David Alexander.



Ron Burnham and Alan Oliver

Wreaths from IBC, Vauxhall and the VPA were laid and Alan Oliver and Bill Saul read out the names of a selection of those on the inscription.

EMPOLO for the Retiree Car Scheme

Don't forget those who have retired, and not currently in possession of a Retiree Car Scheme car, need to register and order a vehicle before the end of December 2023.

If you do not register by the end of December 2023 you will not be considered eligible to join the Vauxhall Retiree Car Scheme at any time in the future.

If you have any queries please contact employeefleet@stellantis.com or telephone 0151 350 3250.

Telephone Scams

We covered this item not so long ago, but as Christmas is fast approaching and scams are likely to increase, it is worth reminding our readers of the latest technology to try and beat the scammers.

If you think someone is trying to trick you into handing over money or personal details - stop, hang up and call 159 to speak directly to your bank.

159 works in the same way as 101 for the police or 111 for the NHS. It is the number you can trust to get you through to your bank safely and securely every time. So if you think someone is trying to trick you into handing over money or personal details - stop, hang up and call 159 to speak directly to your bank.

159 was launched in 2021 to provide a memorable, simple way to connect UK banking customers safely and securely with their bank if they receive an unexpected or suspicious call about a financial matter.

This breaks the scam 'journey' when you are at the most critical moment, when you are most at risk of being manipulated into making a payment. So, even if scammers can make contact with you that link will be broken by your call to 159, before any information is shared, any payment is made, and any harm done.

Over 400,000 calls have been made to 159 and there are ambitious plans for its future. While it is available to almost everyone already, plans are being made to make 159 a universal number offered by all telephone providers similar to 101, 111 and 999.

The cost of calling 159 will vary according to your provider. In many cases this will be the same as a national rate call. Please ask your provider for details.

DVLA Warning for the Elderly

Elderly drivers may be caught out and "charged a premium" when trying to renew their driving licence online, according to the DVLA. The motoring organisation has urged older road users to only use their official GOV.UK site when updating their driving licence. Through the Government website, online renewals are completely free for those over 70.

It comes as a range of third-party websites not affiliated with the DVLA charge drivers for free services. Previous data has shown hundreds of older motorists are caught out every year which could be a major blow during the cost-of-living crisis.

The DVLA issued their latest warning on social media, reminding road users to always use official channels. They posted: "Due to renew your driving licence? Only use GOV.UK and avoid third-party websites which charge a premium."

Back in 2021, the DVLA reported that a whopping 803 drivers over the age of 70 had parted with money to renew their licence. Some drivers had paid a staggering £81 handling fee when they could have received the same service for no charge. Third-party sites often charge to simply pass an application over to the DVLA.

Tony Hunt

As mentioned in our News from the South, we have a new Committee member, Tony Hunt, and the following is a little history of Tony's life in his own words:

"Sitting on a coach on one of the Pensioners' outings, talking to Norman, he asked me if I would like to be co-opted on to the Committee, so after some thought here I am looking for a new challenge.

Let me introduce myself to you all - my name is Anthony (Tony) Hunt. I was born in Whitechapel in the East End of London (yes I am proud to be a real cockney), and I very much still love those cockney delights of pie and mash, jellied eels and all forms of shell fish.

My proudest moment at school was being in the production team in the making of a film called Paper Chase which won film awards and we ended up being on the BBC children's schools programme one Thursday afternoon.

I left school at 15 and went to work in the City of London at the rate of £32.00 per month as a shipping clerk. When this firm closed I worked on the London Underground before deciding with my first wife and two children to take up an offer through the Greater London Council to move to Luton and work at Vauxhall. This was in 1972.

When I came for the interview I met with John Ladyman who told me there was only one job left he could offer me which was as operator in the Heat Treatment Department in AA Block. The pay was £32.00 per week which I was so glad I took. I worked there for 2 years before having a heart attack and I was medically advised that I would have to take a lighter job, so over the years I worked in AJ Block, Production Control in V Block, scheduling in P Block.

During this time I had the pleasure to work on the Joint Office Committee of the Trade Union, TASS, and will always remember the times spent at Rugeley on the wage negotiations.

I finally ended up working as production planner for the Press Shop until I took early retirement in 2002.

After leaving Vauxhall I worked at Luton and Dunstable Hospital as a Ward Stock Controller. Outside of Vauxhall I was the secretary for the Luton and District Skittles League for over 20 years until it ceased.

I still support my beloved West Ham United as I have done since I was a small lad.

I am now with my second wife, Chris, and after many years of living in Luton we moved to Ampthill 5 years ago to help out with some of our grandchildren, before and after school.

I am looking forward to working on the Committee in the coming years."

Thursday, October 5 – Brick Lane Music Hall
45 members left Luton at 10:00 am, arriving in London at 11:15 am. As entry to the music hall

was not until 12:15 pm, coffee and a gossip was the order of the day.

Entering on time the group were shown to their tables which were located in a prime position just in front of the stage.

A very tasty 3 course meal was partaken before the show commenced. The Divas show was really good and the MC knew our group was from Luton and much mickey taking ensued. However, it was all good friendly banter and in good taste.

At the interval there was a raffle with 2 VPA'ites gaining a prize. The show then continued with the general thought that it got better as it went on. Thanks to Sylvia and David for organising and to driver Andy.

Turkey and Tinsel – Nov 27-Dec 1, Hayling Island

This year's Turkey and Tinsel was held at the Sinah Warren Hotel, Hayling Island, which is set in very impressive gardens and grounds bordering on the sea shore. 52 members left Luton on the Monday at 10:00 am, arriving at the hotel at 2:15 pm.

The hotel looked very festive with the Christmas decorations. There was entertainment every night and the hotel was equipped with a gym, sauna, jacuzzi, steam room and table tennis and plenty of daily activities such as pilates, aqua aerobics, movies and a pantomime.

Trips to Portsmouth, Winchester and to Bambridge Garden Centre were also arranged. Many thanks to Sylvia and Dave for arranging this trip and also to Andy, our driver, who looked after everyone.

December Quiz

There are only so many questions that can be asked on the subject of Christmas so we are breaking with tradition and testing you on Hobbies and Leisure this issue:

- 1 Fountains Abbey is in which county of England?
- 2 Which museum displays Constable's Haywain?
- 3 Where is the Battle of Flowers held?
- 4 What would you have if you collected Coalport?
- 5 Where is the Jorvik Centre located?
- 6 In which seaside resort is Frontierland to be found?
- 7 What is the practice of stuffing dead animals known as?
- 8 How many pins are to be knocked down in a game of skittles?
- 9 What was the name of the first Rolls Royce?
- 10 What is Brighton Pier called?
- 11 Which Essex town is famed for its Oyster festival?
- 12 In pottery what is slip?
- 13 What is Numismatics?
- 14 Alfred Wainwright wrote about what?
- 15 How many wheels on a skateboard?
- 16 In what month is the London to Brighton Veteran Car rally held?
- 17 Where did bonsai gardens originate?

18 What is the practice of formal handwriting better known as?
19 In which city is the Fitzwilliam Museum?
20 What do British postage stamps not have on them which most other stamps do?

October Quiz answers

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Harold MacMillan | 2 Christine Keeler |
| 3 Diana Spencer | 4 The moon |
| 5 Dudley Moore | 6 Princess Margaret |
| 7 Suicide | 8 Elizabeth Taylor |
| 9 Libya | 10 The Isle of Wight |
| 11 Doctor Beeching | 12 A spy |
| 13 Chichester | 14 John F Kennedy |
| 15 Yoko Ono | 16 De Gaulle |
| 17 South Africa | 18 An oil tanker |
| 19 The Windmill | 20 Private Eye |

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.

Wednesday, December 6 – Christmas Carol Concert at Royal Albert Hall. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra presenting a selection of festive classics and sing-along carols. Trip includes a carvery lunch and tour of the London Christmas lights.
£61.00 members/£66.00 non-members

Wednesday, December 13 – Christmas Dinner and Dance with 3-course meal and cabaret. Enjoy a festive 3-course meal and then dance the night away.
£30.00 members/£33.00 non-members

VPA Trips 2024

Below are our planned 2024 trips. At this point we have only the details shown. The missing information such as prices, applicable dates and where necessary more information on the trips will be in our February Newsletter.

However, the February trip to the theatre is covered in better detail so you can book with Sylvia if you are interested. The purpose of the remainder of the list is to give you time to make your choices and register them with Sylvia. Once you see the February Newsletter you can confirm with Sylvia how you wish to proceed.

Thursday, February 8 - Matinee Performance of The King and I at the Dominion Theatre. Starring Helen George of Call the Midwife Including carvery lunch
£65.00 members/£70.00 non-members

Thursday, March 14 - Springfields Shopping Outlet and Festival Gardens

Wed-Fri, April 17-19 - Welsh Break
Visiting three attractions - Royal Mint, Coal Mine, and Gin Distillery.
2 nights accommodation

Thursday, May 9 - Huntingdon Horse Racing
Including meal

May (tba) - Watercress Line Steam Train, Hants
Meal on board

Thursday, June 6 - Brighton (coach only)

Thursday, July 18 - Norfolk Lavender Fields and Villages tour with Blue badge guide
Including fish and chips lunch

Thursday, August 22 - Savill Gardens (Windsor Estate) with 2 hour river cruise from Runnymede with cream tea on board
Including lunch

Thursday, September 19 - Suffolk Punch Centre, Woodbridge.

See the magnificent shire horses

Thursday, October 17 - Vineyard visit

Mon-Fri, November 25-29 - Turkey and Tinsel
4 night break at Warner Hotel, Home Lacey, Herefordshire

Thursday, December 5 - Christmas Cockney Show at Royal London Docks followed by the always popular tour of the London lights
Including 2 course lunch.

Wednesday, December 11 - Christmas Dinner and Party

Upcoming Events in the North

Tuesday, December 5 - Social at the Club

Friday, December 15 – Queens Hotel, Chester
Welcome coffee and mince pies, sing-along, quiz, 3-course meal, entertainment, dancing and raffle.
Contribution of £20.00 towards cost.

In Memoriam

Birtall, Frederick, Vauxhall
Died 28.10.2023, Aged 92, Retired 1993

Blackburne, Anthony Joseph, Vauxhall
Died 26.10.2023, Aged 80, Retired 2005

Carr, Robert, Vauxhall
Died 28.9.2023, Aged 75, Retired 2002

Cass, Ronald Albert, Vauxhall
Died 10.11.2023, Aged 91, Retired 1993

Chaloner, Victor, Vauxhall
Died 11.10.2023, Aged 80, Retired 2002

Christophi, Andrew, IBC
Died 22.9.2023, Aged 67, Retired 2011

Davies, Eddie, Vauxhall
Died 28.9.2023, Aged 80, Retired 2003

Deponeo, Peter Anthony, Vauxhall
Died 7.11.2023, Aged 82, Retired 2004

Dutton, Peter, Vauxhall
Died 16.11.2023, Aged 63, Retired 2017

Elliott, James Edward, Vauxhall
Died 1.10.2023, Aged 88, Retired 1993

Elliott, Anthony, Vauxhall
Died 10.10.2023, Aged 82, Retired 1996

Fletcher, John, Vauxhall
Died 22.10.2023, Aged 83, Retired 2001

Fox, Eric James, Vauxhall
Died 14.10.2023, Aged 88, Retired 1999

Gooch, Brian Richmond, Vauxhall
Died 6.9.2023, Aged 85, Retired 2000

Grant, Ethelyn Veronica, Vauxhall
Died 22.9.2023, Aged 91, Retired 1990

Greenstreet, Roger James, Vauxhall
Died 19.9.2023, Aged 74, Retired 2009

Hannon, Mary, Vauxhall
Died 21.9.2023, Aged 85, Retired 1989

Jenart, Arthur, Vauxhall
Died 9.7.2023, Aged 89, Retired 1999

Jones, William Richard, Vauxhall
Died 13.10.2023, Aged 82, Retired 1999

Keane, Anthony J., Vauxhall
Died 17.9.2023, Aged 76, Retired 2009

Lewis, Thomas, Vauxhall
Died 9.8.2023, Aged 90, Retired 1993

Line, John Wilfred, Vauxhall
Died 30.9.2023, Aged 82, Retired 1995

Manning, Winston, Vauxhall
Died 3.11.2023, Aged 79, Retired 2002

Mattisson, Paul, Vauxhall
Died 24.9.2023, Aged 70, Retired 2018

McGowan, John, Vauxhall
Died 27.10.2023, Aged 80, Retired 2001

McGrory, Campbell, Vauxhall
Died 9.11.2023, Aged 78, Retired 1999

Morris, Jack, Vauxhall
Died 28.9.2023, Aged 91, Retired 1988

Norman, Eric, Vauxhall
Died 20.10.2023, Aged 77, Retired 2002

Over, Gilbert John, Vauxhall
Died 22.10.2023, Aged 89, Retired 1993

Price, Frederick William, Vauxhall
Died 12.10.2023, Aged 89, Retired 1993

Rock, Bruce Lawson, Vauxhall
Died 24.10.2023, Aged 87, Retired 1995

Rosemorgan, George William, Vauxhall
Died 25.9.2023, Aged 78, Retired 2006

Scott, Terence Roy Frank, Vauxhall
Died 10.8.2023, Aged 85, Retired 1992

Sibley, Gordon, Vauxhall
Died 15.6.2023, Aged 89, Retired 1996

Silsby, Harry Charles, Vauxhall
Died 20.10.2023, Aged 88, Retired 1988

Smith, Albert David, Vauxhall
Died 28.9.2023, Aged 91, Retired 1989

Threadgold, Robert, Vauxhall
Died 11.10.2023, Aged 90, Retired 1992

Turner, Peter, Vauxhall
Died 21.10.2023, Aged 86, Retired 1999

Vincent, Grenville Bernard, Vauxhall
Died 24.10.2023, Aged 79, Retired 2001

Ward, Robin Alan, IBC
Died 1.10.2023, Aged 86, Retired 1999

Williams, John, Vauxhall
Died 26.9.2023, Aged 86, Retired 1993

Williams, Graham Evan, Vauxhall
Died 20.10.2023, Aged 76, Retired 2005

Wood, David J., IBC
Died 17.9.2023, Aged 77, Retired 2006

Wray, Thomas, Vauxhall
Died 10.10.2023, Aged 65, Retired 2019

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

Pensions Enquiries

Aviva:

Defined Benefit Solutions

PO Box 3331

Norwich NR1 3WH

Telephone: 0800 1584 194

Email: bpainc@aviva.com

Rothsay Life:

Rothsay Life

PO Box 545

Redhill

Surrey

RH1 1YX

Telephone: 0800 916 8090

Email: 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

Employee Fleet

0151 350 3250

Email: employeefleet@stellantis.com

Welfare Fund

07460 171565

Email: vauxhallwelfare@vwcharity.com

Website: 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

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

