



Pensioners' Newsletter – December 2024

News from the South

In the almost fifteen years I have been editing the VPA newsletter there have been many changes in the world around us. One thing that has remained constant however is the support and assistance I have received from Jean Skipp, my very able deputy.

Jean has decided to step down from the Committee as of now. I wish to place on record my thanks to Jean for her help and encouragement over the years and on behalf of all of us on the Committee wish her well in the future.

Jean will be replaced by Sylvia Gray, a new Committee member, of which there is more information later in this newsletter. I am sure she will be a capable addition to the Newsletter team.

Also in this issue is an article concerning the cancellation of the December dinner and dance.

As we pass through Autumn have you noticed the splendid colours that are coming from the trees all around us. What causes this I do not know although I guess the phrases global warming and climate change will be bandied about. Anyway best to enjoy the situation and think of the money saved by not travelling to New England to see their trees in the fall!

For those of us that worked in AJ block it is sad to witness what is happening now they are in the process of demolition. More on this later.

Finally on behalf of the VPA Committee, Sylvia and myself have a very Merry Christmas and the happiest of 2025.

Norman McGregor

News from the North

Hi Folks:

Another year nearly over, where do they go?

Not a lot has happened over the last two months. Our day trip to Leeds was a good one. The weather was very kind, warm and sunny. We went straight to Leeds, dropped some people off in the city and the rest of us went on to the Royal Armouries. First important stop, the cafe for coffee and for some a late breakfast. The displays were well set out and interesting, the only glitch being the design of the building which entailed walking down endless corridors, some leading nowhere, which all looked

alike and somewhat confusing. We, along with a party of schoolchildren, watched an interesting display of a fight between a Roman soldier and a Celt so not only did the children learn something but so did we!!!. After this some of us walked back into town to the shops. The famous Victorian arcades were amazing and well worth seeing, altogether a good day out.

Unfortunately, the November social was quite poorly attended, whether because it was daytime and people have other commitments, I don't know. We had a very entertaining singer, and also a snack of sausage rolls, mince pies and coffee.

O.k. I think that brings the news up to date so if I don't see you, I hope you have an enjoyable Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Till next time, Cheerio.

Dave Williams

The future of AJ Block

Although there have been plenty of rumours concerning what will be happening to the Engineering AJ Block, including retail outlets, houses, flats, a cinema, and even a casino, however, it appears that the reality will be much less exotic.

Luton Borough Council recently approved plans for the development of a business park, which is forecast to create 600 jobs. Initially plans have been approved for a 165,000 sq. ft. building on land next to the building.

The development will be carried out in stages, with the first stage concentrating on demolishing the building itself and "rejuvenating the River Lea". It is expected that this phase will be completed by May 2025. New cycle and pedestrian paths will be added to run alongside the river, allowing access to the site from Osborne Road to Manor Road.

The 165,000 sq. ft. facility would be built on a "build to suit basis" according to PrologisUK, the site developers. It is planned that there will be a further number of logistic units, commonly known as warehouses/depots. As good as this seems, and recognising that things must change, etc. I cannot help but feel that the company many of us gave our working life to is finally gone.

Norman McGregor

Remembrance Service - November 10

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



Wreaths from IBC, Vauxhall and the VPA were laid and Nigel Smith and Paul Geary read out the names of a selection of those on the inscription.

Sylvia Gray

The latest addition to the committee is Sylvia Gray. Sylvia was born and brought up in Luton and followed her father and sister in joining Vauxhall. Sylvia started in September 1970 beginning her working life in the Service Department (Z Block) as a filing clerk. She progressed to a position in the typing bureau, responding to customer correspondence. Her next role was to be appointed Secretary/PA to the Customer Relations Manager covering the United Kingdom before the responsibilities encompassed the European Service Centre which covered most of mainland Europe.

Following this assignment Sylvia moved to the Warranty Department as a Warranty Co-ordinator before progressing to the role of a Warranty Analyst/Vehicle Exchange Co-ordinator, before taking early retirement in January 2018.

As you will have noticed a great deal of her working life centred around dealing with people which makes Sylvia an admirable addition to the Committee, and we wish her well in her new role.

Christmas Dinner and Party

It's with much sadness that after celebrating our 75th Anniversary this year that we've had to make the decision to cancel this year's Christmas Dinner and Party.

I must apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused with the disruption to your celebrations this year but unfortunately due to the low number of attendees booked to join the event we would have had significant overheads to absorb which therefore did not make it a viable event to run.

The Executive Committee will be looking to hold an event next Christmas and would welcome any suggestions you may have whether it takes place at lunchtime or afternoon and a smaller location?

Your thoughts on how we can continue to support you would be much appreciated. Please contact us at vauxhallpensioners@gmail.com or nigelpsmith@outlook.com

May I wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Have a wonderful time celebrating and I hope to see you at our Dinner and Party next year.

Nigel Smith

December Quiz

For the past few years the December Quiz has been Christmas themed. This time we are breaking with tradition in focussing on Pot Luck. You don't have to be young and trendy to change the world.

1. How many dancers perform a ballet pas de deux?
2. If T is Time what does the M represent in GMT?
3. Cos and Iceberg are varieties of which salad plant?
4. As well as being a TV programme what is a Blue Peter?
5. What type of number do you get if you add two odd numbers?
6. What phrase do you associate with The Krankies?
7. Which pear is served as a starter and is not sweet?
8. How many furlongs comprise a mile?
9. Which melon has black pips and red juicy flesh?
10. What is the first postage stamp commonly known as?
11. Which biblical character had the surname Iscariot?
12. What was the usual name for two shillings and sixpence?
13. What is the letter Z if A is Alpha and B is Bravo?
14. How many hooks do you use in crochet?
15. The Matterhorn is in which mountain range?
16. What was originally stored in Fort Knox?
17. Steak au poivre is a steak covered in what?
18. What is a sheepshank a type of?
19. What is the main drink export of Brazil?
20. What was the name of Admiral Nelson's ship?

Nothing too taxing as it is our Christmas issue. Nevertheless, enjoy!

October Quiz answers

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Dixon of Dock Green | 2. Percy Thrower |
| 3. The Lone Ranger | 4. The clergy |
| 5. Joanna Lumley | 6. Stephenson |
| 7. Please Sir | 8. Starsky |
| 9. Bonanza | 10. Liverpool |
| 11. The Good Old Days | 12. Alsatian |
| 13. Cookery | 14. Hancocks |
| 15. Roger Moore | 16. Eamonn Andrews |
| 17. Jacques | 18. Three |
| 19. Dave Allen | 20. Beverley Hillbillies |

Upcoming Events in the South

The VPA Golf events for 2025

For your delight and delectation, please note the following dates for VPA 2025 Golf events:

Thursday, 15 May - Texas Scramble at Abbey Hill Golf Centre

Tuesday, 1 July - Team Event at Stockwood Park Golf Club

Thursday, 21 August - Singles Championship at Harpenden Common Golf Club

Tuesday, 16 September - Pairs Championship at Aylesbury Vale Golf Club

I trust you will "winter well" and not suffer too much with IMS (Irritable Male Syndrome)

Revised rules for Booking Trips in 2025

It has been decided that procedures for booking trips in 2025 need to be amended to strengthen the process.

All day trips will require a non-refundable deposit of £15 per person per trip to confirm the booking. Trips of two days or longer will require a non-refundable deposit of £50 per person.

Confirmed bookings must be made in writing to the quoted VPA address, together with the necessary deposit(s). When a meal is included in the trip price, any special dietary requirements must be declared at the time of booking.

Enquiries made by telephone can be used to register your interest in a trip, but the booking will only be confirmed on receipt of your letter and deposit(s). The VPA will write to you approximately four weeks before the event to request payment of any outstanding balance for the trip.

Insurance is NOT included on any of our trips so we advise you to obtain your own cover.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused to you but the Vauxhall Pensioners Association Committee consider the changes necessary.

Bank Charges

At the most recent Committee meeting it was announced that from January 2025 our bank will charge us 50p for every cheque we deposit. For some time all banks have been keen to discontinue the use of cheques, and it is reasonable to expect other banks will follow suit. This effectively means that each trip will have an on cost of £1 (cheque for deposit and cheque for payment of balance). The Committee voted unanimously to absorb this cost out of the VPA funds.

At the same time you will be aware of the rising cost of postage stamps. Therefore, it was decided that wherever possible we would communicate by

e-mail. It was recognised that not everyone has access to e-mailing and these people can continue with the current procedure.

Nevertheless in order to minimise our postage costs it is requested that where possible would you please forward your e-mail address to the VPA at vauxhallpensioners@gmail.com.

We will never divulge this information to anyone else or any other organisation and the file that we create will only be accessible to those on the Committee who need to know.

Thanking you in advance for your support

Thursday October 17 - Vineyard visit

The group left Luton at 09.05 for the journey to Tenderden in the heart of Kent, arriving at 11.30, after suffering a few diversions. Some of the entourage went for lunch at the Lemon Tree restaurant where the liver and bacon was most enjoyable. Perhaps evoking memories of the old staff canteen on a Tuesday?

After eating there was a short coach ride to the Chapeldown Winery, the arrival coincided with the sun making a presence. The group was split into 2, one group to focus on red and white wines and the other on sparkling wines. Perhaps focus is less appropriate as the afternoon passed. The final act was a wine tasting with 5 different wines. Needless to say they got better as the tasting ensued. Everyone sympathised with coach driver Andy who could only watch the group get their fill!

All in all another successful trip.

VPA Trips 2025

Below are our planned 2025 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 Rushton Lakes Shopping Outlet 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 how you wish to proceed.

Thursday, February 13 – Visit large shopping centre Rushden Lakes, where you can purchase New Year bargains.

£15.00 members/£17.00 non-members.

Wednesday, March 12 – Matinee Performance of The Lion King.

April (tba) – Tulley Tulip Fields.

Thursday, May 15 – Black Country Living Museum.

Thursday, June 5 - Brighton (coach only)

Friday, June 27 – Visit to Mid-Norfolk Railway in Dereham.

Wednesday, July 16 – William Morris Gallery and Cruise.

Thursday, August 14 – Visit to Chartwell House.

Thursday, September 11 – Poppy Factory visit.

Thursday October 16 – Visit to Millbrook Garden Centre in Gravesend.

Monday-Friday, November 3-7 - Turkey and Tinsel. 4 night break at Warner Hotel, Studley Castle.

Thursday, November 27 – Brick Lane Christmas Show.

Wednesday, December 10 – Christmas Celebration Event

Upcoming Events in the North

As you read this 44 of us will be sallying forth to Tenby for our T & T break. The prayer mat is once again out for us to have good weather so let's hope it works.

As so many of us are away there will be no December social so the next time we all meet will be Christmas lunch at the Cheshire View. Timing is 12 noon for 1pm. We are being entertained by the same couple we have had at the club on several occasions, so dress up and enjoy.

We are, however, having a club social in the daytime on the 7th of January, followed by the panto at the Everyman on the 9th. Those going by coach will leave the club at 12 noon.

If you are going on the Melrose holiday in April please pay your balance on or before the March social. I am relying on somebody else collecting money for me in February as I shall be away taking the sun. If anybody else is still interested but not yet booked there are still a few double rooms left.

Dave Williams

In Memoriam

Bater, Denzil, Vauxhall

Died 26.10.24, Aged 70, Retired 2002

Biggart, Farquhar, Vauxhall

Died 8.7.2024, Aged 82, Retired 1995

Brie, Kenneth, Vauxhall

Died 29.9.2024, Aged 86, Retired 1995

Collins, Dennis Stanton, Vauxhall

Died 19.11.2024, Aged 90, Retired 1992

Currin, Edward, Vauxhall

Died 5.10.2024, Aged 77, Retired 2003

Dad, Ajab, Vauxhall

Died 1.10.2024, Aged 101, Retired 1988

Dennis, John Raymond, IBC

Died 2.7.2024, Aged 86, Retired 1994

Duller, Jeremy George, Vauxhall

Died 28.10.2024, Aged 84, Retired 1995

Evans, Raymond, Vauxhall

Died 17.11.2024, Aged 92, Retired 1992

Flanagan, William, Vauxhall

Died 21.10.2024, Aged 73, Retired 1991

Fuge, David, Vauxhall

Died 13.9.2024, Aged 76, Retired 2003

Gagan, Ian George, Vauxhall

Died 20.9.2024, Aged 90, Retired 1998

Hardman, Pamela May, Vauxhall

Died 14.11.2024, Aged 92, Retired 1989

Jones, Allan, Vauxhall

Died 28.10.2024, Aged 68, Retired 2018

Jones, Geoffrey, Vauxhall

Died 13.11.2024, Aged 62, Retired 2017

Kelly, Geoffrey, Vauxhall

Died 8.10.2024, Aged 65, Retired 2019

Kempson, Douglas, Vauxhall

Died 16.10.2024, Aged 81, Retired 2003

Larkin, Michael Thomas, Vauxhall

Died 13.9.2014, Aged 95, Retired 1994

Lindop, Richard Brian, Vauxhall

Died 31.10.2024, Aged 87, Retired 1998

Macleod, Lionel Roy Edward, Vauxhall

Died 9.10.2024, Aged 90, Retired 1988

Malone, Edward, Vauxhall

Died 17.10.2024, Aged 74, Retired 2005

Manship, Robin Philip, Vauxhall

Died 30.10.2024, Aged 80, Retired 2002

McAndrew, Gordon Flanagan, Vauxhall

Died 27.9.2024, Aged 95, Retired 1989

McMahon, David, Vauxhall

Died 20.10.2024, Aged 80, Retired 2002

McNiffe, Patrick, Vauxhall

Died 15.11.2024, Aged 90, Retired 1993

Mycroft, John Anthony, Vauxhall

Died 20.10.2024, Aged 84, Retired 2005

Nye, John, Vauxhall

Died 20.9.2024, Aged 87, Retired 1997

Powell, Peter Bernard, Vauxhall

Died 7.10.2024, Aged 94, Retired 1990

Quigley, James Vincent, Vauxhall

Died 10.10.2024, Aged 86, Retired 1994

Roberts, David, Vauxhall

Died 22.9.2024, Aged 79, Retired 2000

Rycroft, Alan, Vauxhall

Died 28.5.2024, Aged 84, Retired 2002

Scholes, Kenneth, Vauxhall

Died 10.11.2024, Aged 85, Retired 2002

Sharman, Alan, Vauxhall

Died 2.10.2024, Aged 83, Retired 2002

Todd, Alan George, Vauxhall

Died 6.11.2024, Aged 89, Retired 1991

Ward, Ronald Frederick, Vauxhall

Died 22.10.2024, Aged 96, Retired 1990

Williams, Paul, Vauxhall

Died 18.10.2024, Aged 68, Retired 2006

Wilson, Thomas Moore, Vauxhall

Died 15.7.2024, Aged 89, Retired 1992

Contact Information

VPA South

Dave Linney Email: d.linney@btinternet.com
Sylvia Pemberton (for trips only) 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

Rothesay Life:

Rothesay Life
PO Box 545
Redhill
Surrey
RH1 1YX
Telephone: 0800 916 8090
Email: pensions.help@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.

