

Pensioners' Newsletter – April 2019

News from the South

Hi Everyone

I hope you are all well and looking forward to the spring and summer to come.

My news this time is focused on the VPA (Southern Plants) Annual General Meeting which took place on March 12 in the Juniper Suite, Venue 360. The audience of around 70 retirees heard a comprehensive update from James Highnam, Finance Director, about the performance of PSA and Vauxhall with some positive news about the future of the Luton Van Plant and the Parts operation at Toddington Road. He covered the challenges facing Vauxhall with the introduction of stricter emission regulations meaning a shift towards hybrid and fully electric vehicle options and explained the reasons for the recent changes to the Car Plan. Rob Assinder, GM Pensions Director, then presented the latest situation regarding the pension funds and reported that GM remains fully committed to supporting the fund. Following each presentation the audience had the chance to ask questions. VPA President, David Kirke, then gave an overview of the VPA activities during the past year and thanked the members of the Executive Committee for their hard work. He also covered the challenges for the future, i.e. the recent introduction of the General Data Protection Rules, the closure of Griffin House and the transfer of the Retirees Pension Fund to Rothesay Life. If you would like more information about this meeting the questions and answers are contained in the minutes which will be posted on the Pensioners website.

John Boast

News from the North

Hi there folks

Well the flowers are out so it must be spring, but the weather is saying something else. After a beautiful warm couple of weeks in February which lulled us into a false sense of security it returned to winter. I hope all you gardeners out there did not get caught out with your planting.

In February we once again returned to the Mill Hotel in Chester for a superb lunch. Many thanks to the Committee for providing it.

We held our AGM at the March social evening and the Committee were all returned to office.

However, the Treasurer announced that she would serve for another year before handing over the reins to somebody else.

We recently held a bingo afternoon as the Committee thought it would make a change as the weather at this time of year can be so unpredictable. Unfortunately it was very poorly attended which was a shame as people had gone to a great deal of trouble to organise it and shop for the prizes. The few that went had a good sociable afternoon, so I hope it will be repeated in the future and the Committee are not put off organising it. I think there are still a couple of tickets left for Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat

at the Story House in Chester on April 19 at a cost of £30 per ticket.

The May trip has been changed as we could not make contact with the golf club. Instead it will be a trip around North Wales taking in Barmouth. The cost will be £10 pp and will leave the Club at 9 am. The Turkey and Tinsel holiday to Bognor Regis commencing November 25 is now fully booked, but we will take a reserve list in case more rooms become available nearer the date.

So until next time I will sign off. Cheers

Dave Williams

Relocation of VPA Office

The move of office to the Vauxhall Security Building, Gate Number 1 is still on schedule for later this month. Importantly the office telephone number stays the same. More details when we have them, such as internal mail address and where to park if visiting the office for example, will be included in the next Newsletter. So please watch this space or keep looking at our page on Facebook.

Vauxhall IT Welcomes You!

As promised we have now received information on the IT sessions as follows:

- Need some help with your laptop, mobile phone or tablet?
- Want to be able to make video calls or send emails?
- Would you like to use Facebook?

Come and join the Vauxhall IT Team for a cuppa and we will help you with your IT questions. We will also share with you some of the exciting IT projects we have underway, and possibly the chance of a Vivaro plant tour.

WHEN: Wednesday 24th April 14:00 – 16:00

WHERE: Comms Suite, Vauxhall Luton Plant

Spaces are limited so if you would like to join us please email laura.gac@opel-vauxhall.com

or contact the VPA Office on 01582 427921.

Where possible we will help with transport to and from the Plant.

Vauxhall War Memorial, Kimpton Road

A meeting was held with Strawberry Star (the owners of the site) in February at which John Boast and Jean Skipp attended on behalf of the VPA. The side walls will be removed, the perimeter will be landscaped and the area in front of the memorial along Kimpton Road will repaved with a ramp built to aid access. A proposal for adding lighting and seating to the area was not considered appropriate. In response to VPA concerns regarding the current condition of the plaques and the long term condition of the memorial Strawberry Star agreed to review the refurbishment of the plaques and confirmed that following completion of the site development they would be responsible for maintaining the area. This would be in

approximately two years' time. As of early March site development work has started so things seem to be going to plan. Thanks to Jean and John for their efforts on this item.

Bad News/Good News

Due to a pretty low number of bookings for the Llandudno break in May it has been decided to cancel the trip. The good news is that all those who booked and have paid monies have been reimbursed.

Although your Committee recognises that not all trips appeal to all members it remains very disheartening when they have to take this course of action. Given that there is no way of reporting on members who have passed since being transferred to the Rothesay Life Plan and following the cessation of the dancing sessions, the trips are probably the most important activity the VPA is involved in doing for the membership.

Can we request please that you let us know what we do right, what we do wrong and most importantly what we can introduce? You, the members, are our lifeblood, and we really do need your input. Please contact us with any thoughts through the methods shown at the end of this Newsletter.

Car Parking for Trips

We have always enjoyed the ability to park vehicles at the Venue 360 parking area when going on VPA trips. For day trips this will be unchanged. However, for trips of a longer duration this is changing. As Venue 360 can no longer provide secure overnight parking the Committee has decided that VPA members will be required to make their own arrangements in future. They have stated that it will be possible to use the Venue 360 site to board the coach in the morning and get off at the end of the trip. As the Llandudno trip has been cancelled the only trip this concerns this year is the Turkey and Tinsel 4 nighter in December.

Executive Committee Members

Through various members leaving the Committee, mainly through ill-health, we ARE IN URGENT NEED of new Committee members. All you need to do is attend a monthly meeting which lasts for 2-3 hours. Refreshments are provided, good company is guaranteed and you will be involved in the VPA decision making process. How exciting is that? If you are tempted please give your details to the office.

Vauxhall 25 Year Club Annual Dinner 2019

The 2019 event is planned to take place on Friday October 18 and will be held in the Riverside Suite at Venue 360. Doors open at 6 pm for a 7 pm dinner, which will be followed by entertainment. More information relating to ticket purchase and the evening entertainment will follow in due course when known. The purpose of this article is to give you the chance to put the date in your diary.

Factory Tours

We have been informed of the following Factory Tour dates by Vauxhall.

Tuesday, September 10 2019 and Monday, January 14 2020. Tours will start at 11am and finish at 1pm. Please be aware that there is a good deal of walking involved and also that people fitted with a pacemaker are not permitted to take part because of body shop restraints.

If you wish to go along please ring the VPA office on 01582 427921.

Shed and Garden "Security Health Check"

A few pointers to help you through summer and autumn.

Check all locks and bolts - ideally padlocks should bear the British Standards kite mark.

Check all door hinges - if a lock cannot be breached an intruder may well attempt to unscrew hinges. If possible use coach bolts, non-return screws or simply damage the screw head to stop unscrewing taking place.

Secure outbuilding windows with locks. Also consider applying an opaque window sheeting (available at all DIY shops) to reduce visibility. It might be worth considering fitting a grille or bars across the window.

You can buy battery operated alarms for about £20 which are easy to install and use.

Get into the habit of putting everything away when you have finished with it. Someone using your own tools to illegally enter your property just adds insult to injury.

For items such as garden furniture, power tools or outdoor heaters you can mark with a security pen or score or etch in details such as name, address and postcode. However, as per Beds Police **all** Bedfordshire residents can enjoy a discount on a chemical DNA based marking product. To purchase simply visit www.selectsdna.co.uk/nhw and quote NHCENTRALBEDS. You can purchase kits for £20 that normally retail at £67.84. Delivery is included. I should stress that the VPA have no interest in or reason to recommend this product, but have included it on the basis that Beds Police advise of its availability.

February 14 – Mickies Palace

A group of twenty left Luton at 10.30 am heading for the Mickies Palace Valentine's Day Show. Lunch consisted of roast beef with all the trimmings and was enjoyed by all. The raffle was then drawn with one lucky VPA member winning a prize. The show then commenced and comprised of various singers and a magician. Everyone joined in singing and dancing to the old music hall favourites right up till the hits of the sixties. All who went agreed that they had a great afternoon. Thanks to Sylvia for organising.

March 20 - Mystery Trip

Around 30 travellers were first bussed to Malden in Essex which is a very olde worlde town with plenty

of churches, shops and cafe restaurants which allowed people to worship, waste money or woof food down. It was then on to Saffron Walden, a picturesque village with a duck pond and the inevitable tea shops. After stocking up on refreshments the group returned to Luton having had a thoroughly enjoyable day. Well done Sylvia and Dave for your efforts.

April Quiz

Continuing with the theme of Pot Luck here are the questions for April.

- 1 What product was originally marketed as 'liquid beef'?
 - 2 Who or what is the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street?
 - 3 What do the initials KFC stand for?
 - 4 Who was known as The Lady of the Lamp?
 - 5 Who did God give the Ten Commandments to?
 - 6 What do the initials FBI stand for?
 - 7 What does the Queen hand out on the Thursday before Easter?
 - 8 What colour is a Spanish post box?
 - 9 According to the proverb what should you not wash in public?
 - 10 What type of spoon featured in The Owl and the Pussycat?
 - 11 How many pounds (in money) is a monkey?
 - 12 How are you travelling if you travel "as the crow flies"?
 - 13 In which English county is the River Medway?
 - 14 What is blended with sugar to make meringue?
 - 15 In which year was Hong Kong returned to China?
 - 16 How many legs has a Bombay duck got?
 - 17 In what year did the pound note cease to be legal tender in England?
 - 18 What did Peter Piper pick?
 - 19 What fish is an ingredient of Worcester sauce?
 - 20 What type of creature is a Hammerhead?
- As usual the winner will receive a £10 One4all shopping voucher. Entries close on Friday May 17. Now we are owned by PSA I had better write bonne chance instead of good luck!

February Quiz Answers

- 1 9
- 2 240
- 3 Loch Ness
- 4 12
- 5 Polish
- 6 An egg
- 7 The Red Arrows
- 8 Birmingham
- 9 Dwarfs
- 10 Ringing in the ears
- 11 Norwich
- 12 False
- 13 The Siegfried Line
- 14 Green
- 15 Anne Boleyn
- 16 Wimbledon Common
- 17 Gymnastics

- 18 Scurvy
- 19 The War Cry
- 20 Kermit

The winner this time is Jim Penfold and a voucher will be with him shortly along with our congratulations.

Upcoming Events in the South

Apr 17 – The People Post (city and village trip) British story sending a letter from Roman times to current GPO (including visit to Postal Museum and ride on mail rail train)

£37.00 pp members/£40.00 pp non-members

May 2 – Lincoln

(plus river trip – coach only)

£17.00 pp members/£20.00 pp non-members

May 29 – Steam Train Ride with Meal

Loughborough to Leicester. Train pulled by main line express locomotive and meal in Griddle Car

£30.00 pp members/£34.00 pp non-members

June 1 – Brighton (coach only)

£13.00 pp members/£15.00 pp non-members

June 19 – River Medway Cruise

Meal included

£31.00 pp members/£35.00 pp non-members

July 18 – Matinee Performance of Mamma Mia

Novello Theatre, with fish and chips.

£55.00 pp members/£60 pp non-members

Aug 22 - Sussex Prairie Gardens/Carvery Lunch

City and village trip. Scenic tour of pretty West Sussex villages before stopping for a carvery lunch. Afternoon is spent at the Prairie Gardens (new landscaped attraction). Tea and cake.

£42.00 pp members/£45.00 pp non-members

Sept 4 – RHS Wisley Flower Show

Visit the RHS immaculate gardens, plus browse the many stands selling plants/gardening accessories.

£20.00 pp members/£22.00 pp non-members

Sept 18 – Oxford – (coach only)

£12.00 pp members/£14.00 pp non-members

Oct 16 – Mystery Tour

£12.00 pp members/£15 pp non-members

Nov 20 – Thursford Christmas Show (Matinee)

Top Class festive musical extravaganza

£50.00 pp members/£55.00 pp non-members

Dec 2-6 – Turkey and Tinsel

Warners Hotel, Sinah Warren

Enjoy an early celebration of Christmas and New Year on a return visit to this excellent hotel complex.

£260.00 pp members/£270.00 pp non-members

Dec 11 – Christmas Party

£24.00 pp members/£27.00 pp non-members

Day trip bookings will only be confirmed on receipt of a non-refundable £10.00 deposit pp. For the longer events in May and December this deposit rises to £30.00 pp.

To book for a trips(s) please ring the office on 01582 427921 or write in to the office address at the end of this Newsletter. As usual VPA members may bring a maximum of one non-VPA member per trip.

Note the higher price for non-members. We do require your pension number and a contact number on application and also a stamped addressed envelope for each trip. Please also note that any member/non-member who cancels a booking 4 weeks or less before the date of the trip may also be requested to pay for the cost of any event tickets purchased by the VPA.

Finally, travel insurance is not included in the price of any of our trips. We strongly advise that you make your own arrangements to give peace of mind.

2019 Golf Events

May 16 – Team Texas Scramble

Abbey Hill Golf Course

June 20 – Singles Championship

Redbourn Golf Course

Oct 1 – Pairs Championship

Aylesbury Vale Golf Course

Upcoming Events in the North

April 6 - 10, Cavendish Hotel, Exmouth

5 day spring holiday

£195 pp. **Fully booked**

April 19 – Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour

Dreamcoat

Chester Story House

5.00 pm performance

Tickets £30.00 pp

May 23 – Trip to North Wales including

Barmouth

Leaving Club at 9.00 am

Cost £10.00 pp

June 20 - Bowness and Windermere

Leaving Club at 9.00 am

Cost £10.00 pp

July 18 - Morecambe Freeport

followed by afternoon tea at Midland Hotel

Leaving Club at 9.00 am

Cost £10.00 pp

August 15 - Tweedmill and Llandudno

Leaving Club at 9.00 am

Cost £10.00 pp

September 19 - Lancaster

Leaving Club at 9.00 am

Cost £10.00 pp

October 9 - Blackpool

Leaving Club at 10.30 am

Cost £10.00 pp

October 17 - Salford Quays and Hat Museum

Leaving Club at 9.00 am

Cost £10.00 pp

November 25 - Tinsel and Turkey, Bognor Regis

Royal Norfolk Hotel **SOLD OUT**

5 day holiday

Full day trip to Portsmouth and half day trip to Chichester

Two lunches at Hotel

Cost £215 (to be confirmed)

Deposit of £40.00 required when booking

Tea Dances

April 9, 16, 23, 30

May 14, 21, 28

In Memoriam – Luton

Crosby, Stephen James, Division 324

Died 27.2.19, Aged 60, Retired 2002

Dunn, Leonard Ronald, Division 074

Died 21.1.2019, Aged 75, Retired 1993

Penfold, James, Division 210

Died 23.2.2019, Aged 73, Retired 1996

Stares, James Richard, Division 361

Died 20.2.2019, Aged 69, Retired 2000

In Memoriam – Ellesmere Port

Appleton, Harold James, Division 663

Died 31.1.2019, Aged 69, Retired 2002

Barnes, Harry, Division 640

Died 22.1.2019, Aged 67, Retired 2004

Clarke, Leslie Halewood, Division 628

Died 22.2.2019, Aged 84, Retired 1992

Davies, Alan, Division 672

Died 20.1.2019, Aged 67, Retired 2004

Prince, George, Division 650

Died 28.2.2019, Aged 62, Retired 2004

All information on deceased pensioners is provided by the Pensions Department.

How to Access the Newsletter and 2019 AGM Minutes on the Internet

www.thepensiondepartment.co.uk/vpp/pensioner_pages

Facebook

www.facebook.com/groups/VauxhallPensionersAsociation

Register For Email Prompts

If you wish to receive an e-mail prompt when the Torque Magazine and Newsletter are available online, please send your email address to:

alicia.fereday@vauxhall.co.uk

Useful Telephone and Contact Information VPA South

VPA Office 01582 427921

Office is manned Tuesday and Friday

between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm.

Email pens@vauxhall.co.uk

VPA Office, UK1-100-020, Griffin House,

Osborne Road, Luton, LU1 3YT.

Vauxhall Pensions Department 01582 282956

Email marion.mcdonald@gm.com

Cherie Denton, Welfare Officer 01582 427204

Email cherie.denton@vauxhall.co.uk

VPA North

Anne Atherall 01244 325891

If you have a story you would like to tell, then please get in touch with Norman McGregor via the VPA office or

email normanmcgregor3@gmail.com

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