

Pensioners' Newsletter – April 2016

News from the South

Hi everyone,

Well, where were you? A very disappointing 31 VPA members turned up at the Riverside Suite for this year's Southern Plants AGM, where James Highnam, the new Director of Finance for Vauxhall, and Chris Thexton, HR Director UK and Ireland, provided updates on the current performance of GM worldwide operations with details concerning GM Europe and Vauxhall. Rob Assinder, Director of Pensions, then presented the latest position regarding the Vauxhall pension plan which, despite ongoing injections of money by the company, remains in deficit. Members of the OnStar team were also on hand to give a detailed presentation, showing the benefits of this system, which is now being fitted to a number of Vauxhall models. Following a number of questions from the floor, Chris Thexton explained the rationale behind the recent changes to the various car plans and the disparity that exists between the price levels applied to pensioners and those of employees/contractors. Since January 2016, this has risen to up to £90 per month depending upon the model chosen. Employees/contractors can also have a second car for an additional £25 per month making even this £55-£65 cheaper than a pensioner pays. He stated that he would not commit to any changes in the future, but would work together with the VPA to see if opportunities could be found to increase the number of pensioners taking part in the scheme, as any reduction in the price would require a business case based on higher participation by pensioners. The VPA will continue to work towards achieving a better deal, not only for its members, but for all pensioners. On a lighter note, I hope you are all well and ready to take advantage of the longer days and hopefully the better weather which must come eventually!

John Boast

News from the North

Hi folks,

I hope you are all making the most of the dry spring weather at the moment. After a winter full of rain, it is certainly a welcome respite. We were lucky enough to escape for a couple of weeks to the sun and what a transformation welcomed us home. All the spring flowers in full bloom and the blossom trees are beautiful. The AGM was held at our March social evening. It was lovely to see so many people taking the trouble to attend, but disappointing to see once again no new people wanting to join the Committee. The officers were also all returned unopposed. While we were away, there was a trip to

Bridgemere Garden Centre. I am told it was a successful trip where everybody enjoyed a lovely lunch courtesy of the club. The next trip is on 30 April to Llandudno for the Victorian Extravaganza, names for which are now being taken, along with the Mystery Tour on Wednesday 18 May, which hopefully will be as big a success as last year. I wonder where we will be taken to this time? The cost for both of these trips is £10 each.

Further to the year's itinerary posted in February, there is a new addition. This is a Turkey and Tinsel holiday. This year we are going to Scarborough, staying at the New Southlands Hotel. It is five days from Monday 28 November to Friday 2 December. We will have a day in Whitby and a day in York. The cost is £161 pp with a deposit of £65. Names will be taken for this at the April social night. I do hope the spring continues to be kind to us all and the gardeners among us can get on with the work. Till next time,

Dave Williams

Edwin Easydorchick

Wendy Woollaston has written in on behalf of her father, who has just turned 94 and served in the RAF in the Second World War. One of his crew was called Edwin Easydorchick, whom she believed died in 2011 and at some stage worked at Vauxhall. Should anyone reading this article know of Edwin or any surviving family, please let me know as Wendy's father has some photographs of the crew which might be of interest. I can be contacted via email or the VPA office.

Memories

I received an e-mail from Mike Peters, who I knew when he was a manager in the reliability department back in the late 1970s.

"I joined VM in 1950 and after doing a year as office boy, I was placed as a three year trainee in the guard maintenance section of the safety department in H block press shop. The group comprised of six fitters, Don Farquhar, George Anderson, Harold 'Happy' Abrahams (who incidentally was the father of Sylvia Holes), Tom Thelwell, Harry Titchener and John 'Jack' Simpson. I was placed for training with Jack and learned turning on an old belt driven lathe, welding and sheet metal work. I remember this group well because they presented me with a 0-1" micrometer when I was transferred to the five-year apprenticeship, which I still have.

"The interesting part is that last year John Piggott sent me a copy of the Vauxhall *A Century in Motion* publication and in reading this I found on page 19 that employees from the old Vauxhall Iion works had transferred to Luton in 1904/5. One of

those was John Simpson, and it states that he finished his career in the safety department and retired in 1955. So in the 20 months I worked with him until December 1952, I was never aware of his service history, nor did anyone else make any reference to it. As he joined VM in 1904, it must have made him the first employee to have completed 50 years' service, but I cannot recall any fuss being made about it.

"I moved to Norfolk in 2000 so do not return to many events, but still look forward to seeing the newsletter every two months and also keep in touch with several people from the quality control and reliability departments as we have regular reunion lunches."

If there are people who remember John Simpson and his service milestone, please email or write via the VPA office and I will pass on to Mike.

Just For Fun

This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious as to just how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so ordinary and plain that you would think nothing was wrong with it. In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is highly unusual though. Study it and think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out. Try to do so without any coaching!

Laws of Life

After your hands become coated with grease, either your nose will itch or you will want to pass water.

Any small items (e.g. nuts, screws etc) when dropped will automatically roll to the least accessible corner.

If you dial a wrong number you always get a reply never an engaged tone.

If you change lines in a traffic or supermarket queue, the one you were in will always move faster.

People whose seats are furthest from the aisle usually arrive last.

The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act.

3 Mar - Brick Lane Music Hall

The VPA 2016 programme got off to a good start when 46 members set off bound for Brick Lane Music Hall in the London Borough of Newham. The music hall is based in the former St Marks Church, a magnificent building inside and out. The inside decor is very stylishly done and nothing is too much trouble for the staff, who were very friendly. The entertainment was an adult pantomime with music hall singalongs thrown in. It was risqué, with plenty of innuendo and double entendre. In the interval, we were served with afternoon tea, scrumptious sandwiches and cakes, then back to the entertainment with a comedian who insisted we call him Silly Billy. Once he found out there was a party in from Luton in the house, we were all the butt of many of his jokes, all too rude to repeat, but it was great fun.

24 Mar - Illegal London including visit to Scotland Yard's Black Museum

Two full coaches hell-bent on ending the day as successors to the Kray twins or Inspector Morse left Luton mid-morning. We met up with our guide outside Madame Tussauds, but she was no dummy (sorry about that) and entertained the VPAites with facts and amusing tales. We had lunch at the Mad Hatter en route to the Museum of London to view the contents of Scotland Yards' Black Museum. Normally only seen within the police community, the exhibits are on show to the general public until the end of April. A thoroughly good day was had by all. Thanks to those who organised the trip.

April Quiz

The theme this issue is pot luck:

- 1 What was the name of Dick Turpin's horse?
- 2 Which group of workers does ABTA represent?
- 3 What can be cardinal or ordinal?
- 4 What word can go after *neighbour* or before *wink*?
- 5 Which Frank created Billy Bunter?
- 6 What is a scout rally called?
- 7 What is said to breed contempt?
- 8 What is the female equivalent to an earl?
- 9 What colour is a female blackbird?
- 10 Who had the catchphrase "stop mucking about"?
- 11 Sue Barker played which sport?
- 12 What word can go before *auction*, *courage* and *uncle*?
- 13 Where would you see a fine lady upon a white horse?
- 14 What is alopecia?
- 15 Beauty of Bath and Discovery are types of what?
- 16 On a Monopoly board, what colour is Trafalgar Square?
- 17 What is a Pontefract cake made of?
- 18 What word can go after *pad* and before *smith*?
- 19 In which month is St David's Day?
- 20 What part of the body did Adam not have that all other men do?

As ever the winner will receive an M&S voucher for £10. The closing date is Friday 20 May. Good luck to all who enter.

Answers to February Quiz

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1 Mustard | 11 Cucumber |
| 2 Peaches | 12 Strawberry |
| 3 Carrot | 13 Aubergine |
| 4 Pear | 14 Gooseberry |
| 5 Cauliflower | 15 Shallot |
| 6 Spinach | 16 Basil |
| 7 Blueberry | 17 Beetroot |
| 8 Plum | 18 Leek |
| 9 Garlic | 19 Sage |
| 10 Raspberry | 20 Pea |

We had a record number of entries for the February quiz since the start of our quizzes in August 2012. All but two were correct.

As tradition demands I used the boss's hat and the name Christine Haslam was drawn out.

Congratulations to her from the VPA and a voucher is on its way.

Upcoming Events in the South

- 21 Apr** - Bath (coach only) £16 pp
19 May - Tour of Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Club and Museum £24 pp
4 June - Annual outing to Eastbourne £13 pp
28 July - Bressingham Gardens (optional steam train ride) £23pp
18 Aug - Thames River Cruise & Buckingham Palace £30 pp
15 Sept - Mystery Tour (coach only) £16 pp
6 Oct - Faversham and Whitstable (City and Village tours) coffee and lunch included £31 pp
10 Nov - Dickensian Christmas. Visit old meat and fish markets, Mayfair, Fortnum & Mason (inc coffee and fish and chip lunch) £31 pp
5 Dec - Tinsel & Turkey, Bembridge Coast Hotel, (Warners) Isle of Wight (4 nights) £224 pp + coach
Dec TBA

Tea Dance Schedule

- Apr 6, 20
May 4, 18
June 1, 15, 29
As usual events are held in Riverside Suite. Entry is £1 per person with a start time of 2.00pm

VPA Golf Section Dates 2016

- 12 May** - The Steve Brooker Cup, a Texas Scramble competition at Abbey Hill Golf Club
16 June - The VPA Championship, a singles competition at Whipsnade Park Golf Club
4 October - The Peter Johnson Trophy, a pairs competition at Aylesbury Vale Golf Club.
The details of these events plus entry forms will be sent by e-mail to all regular players in early spring. Should any other golf playing VPA member with a club handicap wish to participate, then please register by contacting either Mike Roberts or Jim Heaney at the VPA Office, UK1-100-020, Griffin House, Osborne Road, Luton, LU1 3YT.

Upcoming Events in the North

- 30 April** - Llandudno Extravaganza
£10 pp. Depart Club 9.00am
18 May - Mystery Tour
£10 pp. Depart Club 9.00am
15 June - Lakes tour and railway trip
Depart Club 9.00am
25 June - meal venue TBA
13 July - Electric Mountain and Llanberis
Depart Club 9.00am
17 August - Powys Castle and gardens
Depart Club 9.00am
14 Sept - Ffestiniog Railway and Caernarvon
Depart Club 9.00am
23 Sept - meal venue TBA
12 Oct - Blackpool trip
Depart Club 10.00am

28 Nov - Turkey and Tinsel
Five days staying at New Southlands Hotel, Scarborough. Including a day in Whitby and a day in York. £161 pp. Deposit of £65 required.
The cost of some trips has not yet been finalised but I will let you have them in due course.

Tea Dances

- April 19, 26
May 10, 17, 24, 31

In Memoriam – Luton

- Almond**, Liliana, BCV
Died 12.1.16, Aged 84, Retired 1986
Augustine, Jacob Stanley, Division 089
Died 6.2.16, Aged 78, Retired 1993
Barton, Arthur Thomas, Division 838
Died 21.12.15, Aged 90, Retired 1987
Bellamy, Valentine Thomas, Vauxhall
Died 1.2.16, Aged 96, Retired 1976
Bennett, John Robert, BCV
Died 19.12.15, Aged 85, Retired 1987
Benstead, Fredrick Charles, BCV
Died 27.2.16, Aged 92, Retired 1984
Browne, Donal Joseph, Division 089
Died 24.12.15, Aged 90, Retired 1987
Cooper, Ronald John, Division 089
Died 21.1.16, Aged 96, Retired 1982
Crick, Eric George, BCV
Died 5.12.15, Aged 88, Retired 1987
Cusack, Philip Herbert, Division 099
Died 23.1.16, Aged 70, Retired 2006
Dignam, Patrick, Division 089
Died 26.1.16, Aged 85, Retired 1993
Dodson, Evelyn, Vauxhall
Died 21.12.15, Aged 99, Retired 1975
Empson, Audrey, Vauxhall
Died 9.1.16, Aged 65, Retired 2002
Fatkin, Alan Oswald, BCV
Died 2.3.16, Aged 83, Retired 1987
Francis, Geoffrey Charles, BCV
Died 16.12.15, Aged 91, Retired 1984
Garrett, David Victor, Division 354
Died 25.1.16, Aged 73, Retired 1997
Gatward, Frederick, Division 187
Died 11.2.16, Aged 95, Retired 1984
Ginger, David, BCV
Died 2.2.16, Aged 85, Retired 1987
Gregorec, Max, Vauxhall
Died 9.1.16, Aged 96, Retired 1984
Griffin, Leonard Thomas, Vauxhall
Died 20.1.16, Aged 88, Retired 1983
Haddon, Robert John Stallard, BCV
Died 15.2.16, Aged 87, Retired 1987
Haria, Mahindrakumar Meghji, Division 032
Died 31.1.16, Aged 67, Retired 2002
Henry, Kathleen Mary, Division 198
Died 16.11.14, Aged 82, Retired 1992
Hodges, Geoffrey David, Staff
Died 28.2.16, Aged 85, Retired 1988

Hunter, George Wilfred, Staff
Died 23.11.15, Aged 89, Retired 1986

Kurys, Julian, BCV
Died 7.2.16, Aged 85, Retired 1988

Lay, Thomas George BCV
Died 13.1.16, Aged 89, Retired 1987

Lenciv, Ivan Day, Vauxhall
Died 28.12.15, Aged 90, Retired 1990

Lines, Maurice Ernest, Division 838
Died 21.12.15, Aged 83, Retired 1988

McPherson, Zena Salome, Division 037
Died 10.12.15, Aged 78, Retired 1992

Muckett, Owen, Division 033
Died 12.2.16, Aged 84, Retired 1993

Mullin, Wilson Leroy, BCV
Died 10.1.16, Aged 85, Retired 1987

Munroe, Morris, Vauxhall
Died 14.1.16, Aged 71, Retired 2003

Newton, Barry George, Division 188
Died 26.2.16, Aged 80, Retired 1990

Nichols, David, Division 527
Died 16.12.15, Aged 69, Retired 2006

Olney, Peter Malcolm, BCV
Died 9.12.15, Aged 84, Retired 1989

Patterson, St Auby George, BCV
Died 10.2.16, Aged 82, Retired 1988

Poole, John, Staff
Died 21.1.16, Aged 83, Retired 1988

Rickard, Ronald William, Vauxhall
Died 6.2.16, Aged 93, Retired 1982

Rotheram, Albert, Division 526
Died 28.1.16, Aged 78, Retired 1992

Selley, John Robert, Vauxhall
Died 1.2.16, Aged 74, Retired 2001

Shipp, David Gordon, Division 303
Died 6.1.16, Aged 77, Retired 2001

Smith, Horace Edward, Vauxhall
Died 8.2.16, Aged 101, Retired 1979

Staddon, Johanna, Division 526
Died 1.3.16, Aged 79, Retired 1994

Stronell, Albert William, Vauxhall
Died 30.11.15, Aged 100, Retired 1976

Sutherland, Kenneth Percival, Vauxhall
Died 19.1.16, Aged 89, Retired 1987

Tibballs, Heather Courtenay, Division 187
Died 2.1.16, Aged 90, Retired 1984

Walls, Michael Andrew, Division 347
Died 9.2.16, Aged 78, Retired 2000

Webb, William Charles, Staff
Died 25.12.15, Aged 89, Retired 1986

Westwell, Frank, Vauxhall
Died 5.12.15, Aged 86, Retired 1988

Whaite, Arthur Alfred, Division 499
Died 15.2.16, Aged 84, Retired 1994

In Memoriam – Ellesmere Port

Bladen, Donald William, Division 638
Died 21.1.16, Aged 78, Retired 1998

Brade, William, Division 643
Died 5.3.16, Aged 91, Retired 1983

Breen, John, Vauxhall
Died 3.2.16, Aged 92, Retired 1987

Brown, Philip John, Division 616
Died 13.1.16, Aged 86, Retired 1992

Cook, Aubrey Gordon, Division 643
Died 4.1.16, Aged 95, Retired 1982

Coventry, Elizabeth Patricia, Vauxhall
Died 6.2.16, Aged 100, Retired 1990

Douglass, Ronald, Division 616
Died 25.2.16, Aged 88, Retired 1992

Foxall, John Kenneth, Division 670
Died 9.2.16, Aged 82, Retired 1996

Gresty, Albert Edward, Division 641
Died 12.1.16, Aged 72, Retired 2006

Levy, Ernest, Division 617
Died 13.11.15, Aged 83, Retired 1992

McConnell, William Mirvan, Division 627
Died 14.1.16, Aged 79, Retired 2000

Milligan, Michael, Division 670
Died 13.2.16, Aged 81, Retired 1997

Ratchford, Thomas John, Division 627
Died 8.2.16, Aged 76, Retired 1999

Robinson, Victor, Division 643
Died 1.2.16, Aged 89, Retired 1983

Smith, Philip Graham, Division 627
Died 21.1.16, Aged 78, Retired 1999

Stevenson, William Arthur, Division 691
Died 19.1.16, Aged 71, Retired 2006

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

How To Access the Newsletter and 2015 AGM Minutes on the Internet

www.thepensiondepartment.co.uk/vpp/pensioner_pages

Facebook

www.facebook.com/groups/VauxhallPensionersAsociation

Register For E-Mail Prompts

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

chloe.burrowes@vauxhall.co.uk

Useful Telephone and Contact Information

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E-mail marion.mcdonald@vauxhall.co.uk

Cherie Denton, Vauxhall Welfare Officer 01582 427204

E-mail 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

e-mail normanmcgregor3@gmail.com

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