

Pensioners' Newsletter – June 2015

News from the South

Hi everyone,

Can anyone tell me what has happened to Spring this year? One day we have warm bright sunshine and the next cold, thunderstorms and hail! The plants in my garden don't know what to do. Let's hope that it improves over the next few weeks or it will be Autumn again before we know it. In this issue of the Newsletter, you will find an article about one of our Committee members, Ted Read, who has been invited to Buckingham Palace to meet the Duke of Edinburgh (read the article to find out why). I would like to add my congratulations to Ted and hope he and his wife Olive have a fantastic day! I would also like to thank Roger Woolnough, who has agreed to become one of the Welfare Fund trustees. In this role, he will sit on the Welfare Committee, which meets on a monthly basis to decide where help can be provided to both current and retired Vauxhall people who need it. So don't forget, if you know of any Vauxhall person in need of financial help or some advice, please let Cherie Denton, Vauxhall Welfare office know. Well, I've got my wet weather trousers, my rain jacket, my woolly hat and my sun cream in the bag, so I'm off to play golf!

John Boast

News from the North

Dear all,

When I last wrote to you we were looking forward to our holiday in Scotland. Well it did not disappoint. It was a long way to go, but on such a comfortable coach the journey soon passed. The hotel was superb, with lovely food and very welcoming staff. We visited Glamis Castle, a whiskey distillery, a winery and a huge highland estate, where we were able to hand feed the deer. On our free day, some went to Inverness on the train, some of us had a fantastic day at the Highland Wildlife Park and some energetic souls donned boots and went walking. The weather was beautiful all week with lovely warm sun, which just about made the holiday perfect.

We had our AGM in April with all officers being returned and this was followed by our hot pot supper. As no work had been started to convert the function room, we were able to hold our May social there, much to the relief of everyone. We again combined the evening with a meal of chicken and chips followed by entertainment. It remains to be seen whether we will still be in the room for June as we seem to be on a need to know basis, which is very unsettling not knowing from month to

month where we are.

Our first day trip was last week, with a visit to Bodnant Gardens and then on to Llandudno. Sadly, it had a poor take up but the nineteen of us that went had a good day. After the awful weather we have had, we were somewhat apprehensive but we had pre-booked the sun and it did not let us down as it shone all day. Bodnant Gardens has been much extended since our last visit - the woodland and gardens are now open right along the stream to the pool so it was very tranquil - the azaleas and rhododendrons were a sight to behold.

At our June social on the 2nd, we will again be having a meal. This time it is scampi and chips. As we are in limbo as to which room we will be in, we have not booked an artist but I know our MC Simon will keep us entertained with his guitar and singing.

Concerning the trip to Bolton Market on 23 July - unfortunately Rivington Hall where we were to have called for refreshments cannot cater for a coach, so we are in the throes of looking for an alternative. I do hope there will be more support for our trips than the Bodnant Gardens trip.

Well, I do hope we are going to have a lovely summer because I am sure we are all heartily fed up with the cold wind and rain which have been the order of things of late. Maybe we will be able to get out and do the gardens for summer so until next time have a good summer. Cheerio,

Dave Williams

VPA President Retirement Comment

I announced my retirement as President of the VPA at the AGM in March. When Tony Lines persuaded me in his inimitable way to take the position, I did not expect to be in post for 11 years! However, it has been a most enjoyable time for me and I feel the team has done a lot in that period to keep the VPA alive and well. Some highlights I particularly remember are changing the financial model to make the organisation viable, persuading the company to give a pension rise to pre-1988 retirees, improving communication with pensioners, ensuring continuation of the company financial contribution to the VPA and making the Pensioner's NCP car scheme more attractive. Very important too has been the maintenance of good relationships with the company - we need to ensure that they continue to listen to us. My most lasting memory though is the good spirit, commitment and hard work of all the people involved with the VPA. They have made things happen and have been a pleasure to work with. I would single out two people in

particular who deserve praise for all they have done to keep us going - the two Chairmen over this period, Mike Roberts and John Boast. I am very pleased that David Kirke has agreed to take over as President. He is an excellent replacement and I know he will be a great asset to the VPA. I will still remain as a Vice President and look forward to continuing to stay in touch with VPA members and the Company.

Bruce Warman

VPA New President's Comment

I am delighted to have been asked to become President of the Vauxhall Pensioners' Association, succeeding Bruce Warman. Bruce has done a wonderful job in this role for over 10 years and deserves our thanks for all his hard work on behalf of pensioners.

At the AGM, we presented Bruce with a small thank you gift and wished him well for the future. Bruce will remain a member of the VPA Executive Committee, which meets with the company twice a year to discuss issues of importance to both the company and to pensioners.

A brief word about myself. I joined Vauxhall in 1971 as an engineering student, retiring in 2011 as Aftersales Director after many varied and exciting roles in between. These roles took me to Africa, the Middle East and Europe, and involved cars, vans and Bedford trucks. I am fortunate to have worked with some great Vauxhall people wherever I went. I joined the VPA Executive Committee on retirement, so I have had excellent tuition from Bruce already! As our world moves more and more towards digital forms of communication, it is important that the VPA moves with the times. Together with the company, we are working to collect more pensioner email addresses in order to communicate quickly and more regularly with our members wherever they are in the world. I very much look forward to representing Vauxhall pensioners as your President. If there are any matters you would like taken up, please contact me via the VPA office.

David Kirke

Ted Read Meets the Duke

Burma Star Association veteran Ted Read, 91, has received a personal invitation to meet the organisation's patron, HRH the Duke of Edinburgh. Ted said: "The invitation is for an event on 20 May and I have been asked to make myself known to one of the equerries as the Duke would like to have a chat."

Former Denbigh pupil Ted joined the army in 1942 and trained in India, before being sent to Burma where the 25th Dragoons took part in the Battle of the Admin Box.

When Ted was demobbed, he worked for Luton's electricity board before moving to Vauxhall, where he worked in the Pensions

and Investment Department, eventually becoming the press officer for the Vauxhall Mirror magazine. I hope to report back to you in the next Newsletter with details of Ted's big day.

Forest Centre/Country Park, Marston Moretaine

In a continuous effort to inform you of places of interest, we are focussing on Marston Vale in this issue. I have recently visited it for a walk and also to test drive the cafeteria.

Needless to say, I found the latter more enjoyable than the former!

More than a million trees have been planted in the Vale since 1991, when the forest team started work, and many of the early ones are making their presence felt on the landscape.

The Forest Centre and Millennium Country Park are vital assets at the heart of the 61 square mile Forest. The Park offers five miles of safe, level and surfaced trails that are easy to use throughout the year and includes a beautiful sensory garden that is a tranquil haven, but also very close to the car park and centre. The Forest Centre has free parking and a superb café, which serves a wide range of meals and snacks, overlooking the Country Park, where many different types of birds can be seen. The centre also has a shop, cycle hire and facilities for business meetings. Most of the land is planted with trees and is open to the public all the time. Most sites have surfaced tracks, making them easily accessible to everyone, including wheelchair and pushchair users. There are seats, picnic tables and information boards, and at Bedford's Gateway Woods and Rectory Wood there are 'natural play' facilities for older children to enjoy. Sound attractive? Everything you need to know about the sites is available at

www.marstonvale.org I can thoroughly recommend a visit, it need not cost anything but initially you will get some idea of what is on offer. Incidentally, from November through March they hold free weekly lunchtime talks. I recently attended one on the subject of doorstep scams and found it both informative and interesting. So if you do try it please let us know what you think.

June Quiz

The answers to this month's questions are all colours or include a colour in the answer (e.g. blueberry)

1. Famous Strauss waltz
2. World's first national park in 1872
3. In perfect health
4. Colour in a magnet
5. Significant date
6. Peace offering or part of a tree
7. Racecourse in the north east of England
8. Copy of a drawing or plan

9. A flower, some people love it
10. US military decoration/tablet type drug
11. Warning of imminent danger
12. Said to run in the veins of nobility
13. To abandon on a desert island
14. Unnecessary red forms, rules for example
15. Turn a crime backwards to get a national hero
16. Mixture of cider and stout/Guinness
17. Light this and retreat
18. 1963 film with Peter Sellers/David Niven
19. Manfred von Richthofen known as this
20. US banknote

As usual a £10 M & S voucher goes to the winner. Entries must be received by July 22. Good luck.

Answers to April Quiz

1. John Noakes
2. 4
3. Bugs Bunny
4. Al Murray
5. Tommy Cooper
6. Porridge
7. Kym marsh
8. Fawlty Towers
9. Colin Firth
10. Dame
11. Maggie Smith
12. Dougal
13. Hawkeye
14. Ab Fab
15. £750
16. Mini
17. Cartwright
18. Jedward
19. The Bill
20. Worzel Gummidge

The winners were put into hat and chosen. Winner was David Walton and a M & S voucher on its way.

Ashdown Forest, April 23

A full coach picked up the tour guide in East Grinstead who gave a lively commentary on the way to Heaven Farms Stable Tea Room, by which time the sun was out. After this stop it was back on the coach for the tour of the



Daphne, Doreen and Audrey - the VPA answer to the Beverley Sisters

Ashdown Forest, which embraced stunning heathland and a covering of wild gorse which when contrasted to the blue sky gave an awesome sight. The coach then returned to Heaven Farm for lunch before a visit to Saint Hill Manor, the home of the late Ron Hubbard,

who founded the Church of Scientology. After a tour of the house they sat down to a strawberry cream tea and then returned home.

Abbey Hill Golf Club - May 7

With a hint of spring in the air 21 VPA'ites played in the annual Texas Scramble competition at the Abbey Hill Club, Milton Keynes. The team comprising Jim Gleasure, George Chalmers and Mike Roberts were winners of the Steve Brooker cup, with Alan Everitt, Mike King and Eugene Fox finishing as runners up. In third place were Chris Cleary, Jim Heaney and Lou Chadwick. The team including our illustrious chairman, one John Boast, evidently had to start again as they lost all their balls! Still it is the taking part that counts (yeah sure!) The nearest the hole was won by Alan Smith with Chris Cleary hitting the longest drive on the 10th hole. A good day was had by all and ended with refreshments in the clubhouse and a short speech from Mike Roberts, who organised the day.

Upcoming Events in the South

Saturday June 6

Annual outing to Brighton - coach only
£12.00 pp

Thursday June 25

Visit to Winchester (**fully booked**)

Thursday July 16

Kennet & Avon Canal trip (**fully booked**)

Wednesday August 26

Lochs & Glens tour including Edinburgh tattoo (**fully booked**)

Thursday September 17

Visit Bakewell and Derbyshire Dales (**fully booked**)

Thursday, October 15

Tour of BBC Broadcasting House, London (**fully booked**)

Monday November 23

Tinsel & Turkey - 4 nights at the Langstone Cliff Hotel in Dawlish Warren (**fully booked**)

Thursday December 3

Christmas Dinner & Dance £23.00 pp

VPA Golf Section - 2015 events

Thursday June 18 - Singles Competition at Whipsnade Park Golf Club

Wednesday October 7 - Pairs Competition at Bedfordshire Golf Club, Stagsden

Tea Dance Schedule

June 3, 17

July 1, 15, 29

August 12, 26

Upcoming Events in the North

Wednesday June 10

Severn Valley Steam Railway

Single journey from Bridgenorth to

Kidderminster to rejoin coach to visit

Shrewsbury £11 pp. Depart from Club 8.30 am

Thursday July 16

Bolton Market £10 pp
Coach fare only. Depart from Club 9.00 am

Wednesday, August 12

Anglesey County Show £13 pp

Wednesday October 7

Blackpool £10 pp. Depart from Club 10.30 am

Monday November 30

5 day Turkey and Tinsel trip staying at the Abbey Lawn Hotel, Torquay
£179 pp (a non-returnable deposit of £50 pp is required when booking)

Friday December 18

Christmas Dinner

Wednesday, January 6 2016

Palace Theatre, Manchester to see matinee performance of The Bodyguard £25 pp

Tea Dances

June 9, 16, 23, 30

No dances during July/Aug

In Memoriam – Luton

Ahmed, Mohammed Shafique, Division 089

Died 26.3.15, Aged 75, Retired 2007

Alauddin, Mohammad, Division 089

Died 25.3.15, Aged 81, Retired 1998

Armstrong, Ronald, Division 091

Died 26.4.15, Aged 91, Retired 1987

Blendell, Michael, Division 187

Died 27.4.15, Aged 82, Retired 1995

Brooks, John Albert William, Division 955

Died 24.3.15, Aged 72, Retired 2005

Brown, William, VM Staff

Died 27.4.15, Aged 90, Retired 1990

Browne, Nathaniel, Division 089

Died 22.4.15, Aged 83, Retired 1995

Courtney, Roy, VM Staff

Died 23.3.15, Aged 78, Retired 1990

Crosby, Victor Stanley, Division 089

Died 18.3.15, Aged 93, Retired 1982

Davies, H.G., VM Staff

Died 16.3.15, Aged 86 Retired 1987

Davies, Thomas, Division 955

Died 30.4.2015, Aged 92, Retired 1981

Fevyer, Anthony, VM Staff

Died 24.4.15, Aged 85, Retired 1988

Gelmini, Carlo, Division 499

Died 19.4.15, Aged 57, Retired 2007

Goldthorpe, John Charles, Division 073

Died 16.3.15, Aged 92, Retired 1983

Graves, Bernard, Division 089

Died 30.4.15, Aged 86, Retired 1984

Harbham, Rama, Division 838

Died 18.3.15, Aged 83, Retired 1993

Hewitt, Thomas, Division 089

Died 21.3.15, Aged 94, Retired 1983

Hughes, Robert Clwyd, Division 955

Died 16.3.15, Aged 89, Retired 1988

Jones, Trevor Gwilym, Division 955

Died 21.3.15, Aged 85, Retired 1989

Lewis, Mary, Division 838

Died 20.4.15, Aged 90, Retired 1985

Lines, Ernest William, Division 099

Died 14.3.15, Aged 92, Retired 1983

McFetridge, Michael Kenneth, Division 955

Died 16.3.15, Aged 63, Retired 2006

McGuirk, Kathleen Anne, VM Staff

Died 16.3.15, Aged 87, Retired 1987

McMellon, Harold, Division 344

Died 30.3.15, Aged 86, Retired 1989

Mitchell, Doug, VM Staff

Died 27.3.15, Aged 85, Retired 1988

Mycroft, George Trevor, Division 089

Died 16.3.15, Aged 97, Retired 1979

Newitt, Dennis John, Division 089

Died 16.4.15, Aged 86, Retired 1985

Nippard, Gordon, Division 838

Died 18.4.15, Aged 81, Retired 1996

O'Neill, Mary, Division 838

Died 25.4.15, Aged 90, Retired 1984

O'Rourke, Mark, Division 213

Died 26.4.15, Aged 84, Retired 1993

Puran, E.J., Division 089

Died 17.3.15, Aged 84, Retired 1981

Raymond, Leonard, Division 016

Died 24.4.15, Aged 95, Retired 1982

Sheaf, Joseph, Aftersales

Died 24.3.15, Aged 87, Retired 1992

Tearle, Michael, Division 344

Died 24.4.15, Aged 79, Retired 1996

Weaver, Harold Charles James, Division 955

Died 14.3.15, Aged 86, Retired 1990

Wilcox, Brian, Division 073

Died 30.4.15, Aged 90, Retired 1987

Willmer-Lawrence, Jack, Division 099

Died 30.4.15, Aged 96, Retired 1982

In Memoriam – Ellesmere Port

Bennett, George, Division 691

Died 18.4.15, Aged 81, Retired 1998

Doran, Frank, Division 600

Died 5.5.15, Aged 83, Retired 1993

Downey, Thomas, Division 616

Died 26.1.15, Aged 78, Retired 1999

Griffiths, Ernest, Division 643

Died 16.4.15, Aged 73, Retired 2007

Hughes, John Henry, Division 643

Died 27.3.15, Aged 76, Retired 1996

James, Maurice, Division 643

Died 28.3.15, Aged 83, Retired 1990

McGrath, Joseph, Division 638

Died 9.3.15, Aged 79, Retired 2000

Williams, Gwilym, Division 643

Died 25.4.15, Aged 81, Retired 1992

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

Due to lack of space contact details have been excluded from this issue only. Details can be accessed via previous issues or via the website www.thepensiondepartment.co.uk/vpp/pensioner_pages or by phoning VPA Office on 01582-427921.

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