

# ***Pensioners' Newsletter - June 2013***

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## **News from the South**

Hi Everyone:

Well, at last the weather seems to be on the change. I am currently looking out of the window at a clear blue sky and the sun is shining - amazing! I also managed a game of golf yesterday without wearing all the wet gear, must be the first time this year. However, it didn't stop me losing a few balls in the jungle that our club amusingly calls rough. I've also managed to turn off the heating at last (wallet breathes a sigh of relief). If this continues perhaps the gardeners amongst you will be able to plant out your bedding plants without fear of the frost and Spring will finally have sprung. Just the time to think about getting out and about on one of the VPA outings, so have a look at the list. You can be sure of a welcome and a good day out.

However, I guess one of our pensioners has seen all this before and Tom Fox, our Vice Chairman, visited him to pass on congratulations from the VPA Committee on reaching the grand age of 100 years, so happy belated birthday to Gordon Bedingfield.

Well that's all from the South, but I do hope we all enjoy some sunshine over the next few weeks.

*John Boast*

## **News from the North**

Dear All:

I know it's June and it's supposed to be summer, but it really does not feel much like it. The gardens and plants really seem to be struggling and what the weather does not destroy the pigeons seem to be finishing off. However, we do seem to have lots of birds nesting around the garden, all busy hunting for food for their young, but even they appear to be having a hard time. Let's hope summer arrives soon.

We have had some good trips over the last couple of months. The Bury Market trip was a great success and we were even blessed with a few glimpses of the sun. Lots of packages found their way back to the coach before we went on to Bygone Times - this was enjoyable and a real trip down memory lane. The place was stuffed to the roof with antiques and collectables. These raised much discussion over things we could remember from childhood.

In May, a full coach enjoyed a day in Llandudno, the highlight of which was a trip to the theatre to see *Sleeping Beauty on Ice*. This was performed by the same Russian ice company that we saw a couple of years ago

performing *Swan Lake*. It really was breathtaking - the music, the skill of the skaters and together with the costumes and scenery it all made for a superb afternoon.

At the beginning of May 28 people went to Spalding for a short break to the Flower Festival. Although I didn't go I am assured by those who did that they had a good time. They stayed at the Marriot Hotel and visited what turned out to be the last flower festival. A visit to Lincoln was arranged on the return journey. Please note that due to the lack of support the trip to the Yorkshire Show in July has been cancelled, but the trip to the Shrewsbury Show will go ahead as advertised. Details can be found towards the end of this Newsletter. It only remains for me to say to those venturing away on holiday that I hope you enjoy it and are blessed with some REAL summer weather and come back refreshed, and for those staying nearer home I hope the weather cheers up here on the Wirral. That's all folks!

*Dave Williams*

## **Vauxhall Memories**

Dick Stangan, ex-Engineering, sent in the following items. When working at the Chaul End Test Centre he was asked by the rifle section if they could visit Chaul End and hone their skills by shooting rabbits. Dick told them that there were none, but they replied that they often visited Millbrook which had a plentiful supply. What Dick knew, and they didn't, was that Chaul End had a fox!

His other memory concerns the Research Laboratory at the same site, where in the absence of any existing, instruments needed for vehicle test work were designed and constructed. One such job was to make a portable television transmitter to enable engineers to monitor vehicle component behaviour during testing. When the instrument was duly designed and built the publicity benefit to the Company was recognised. Hence a well-known motoring correspondent, Courtney Edwards, was invited to visit for a demonstration, which required that pictures from the test vehicle were transmitted to a TV set in the lab. The question of what to use for an aerial was the problem. Brake pipes came to mind and several very short lengths were requested from Car Assembly. When Dick visited the factory and asked if a requisition was required to get them out of the area he was asked if they were needed for Company business. He replied "Yes" and all was ok and he took the parts. Word of this cheap way of

obtaining a TV aerial for domestic use soon became common knowledge and Dick received lots of requests as to how they were made. Needless to say he didn't enlighten those who asked!

Thanks to Dick for his memories. Anyone can send them in - my e-mail address is at the end of this Newsletter or you can send them to the office.

### **There's Hope For Us All**

On 11<sup>th</sup> April the Daily Mail published an article by Gwyneth Rees featuring Ralph Hoare, a pensioner and gardener. So what I hear you say. Well, Ralph is 104 years young and planted his first flower - a Japanese anemone - 98 years ago! With the increasing popularity in gardening and the consequential increased thirst for knowledge, Ralph, with support from a home and garden furniture centre, is now answering questions through his Twitter account #askralph (do what I do and ask the grandkids). Since this was launched by Furniture Village in early April this year the questions have flooded in. Questions range from the easiest vegetables for young children to grow (according to Ralph lettuce and cress) to when should you pull up your potatoes (when flowering is over and leaves start to turn brown). Should Ralph not know the answer (an unlikely event), he will turn to his well-thumbed reference book - The Small Garden by C.E.Lucas Phillips - to satisfy the enquirer.

Short of grapevines, which hold no interest for him, there is hardly a common plant he hasn't grown and he has views on them all. Carrots and parsnips are the most difficult vegetables to grow with potatoes and onions the easiest, as long as the shoots are hidden under compost to protect them from birds. Tomatoes are best grown in pots (sudden decline in growbag sales!) but geraniums (Ralph calls them by their old fashioned name of pelargoniums) are best grown in a trough.

He says the biggest change in gardening he has observed has been the introduction of specialist fertilisers and slug pellets and he truly believed that the most important ingredients to successful gardening are hard work and preparation.

Despite his age and a creaky left knee he still does most of his work himself, although he uses a tall hoe for weeding and a grabbing tool for picking things up. His great-grandchildren help with dead-heading the roses, but under close supervision.

"Gardening is all about having something to look forward to," he says. "It gets me through the winter. If I'm ever depressed or lonely, I think to myself never mind, the roses will be along soon. It gives me the willpower to keep going." Truly a remarkable and inspirational

person who should be held in our thoughts when, as we all do, we feel sorry for ourselves or moan about really unimportant matters. Read more about Ralph, especially his top ten gardening tips, in our August issue.

### **Now That I'm Older Here Is What I Have Discovered**

I started out with nothing, and still have most of it.

My wild oats are mostly taken with prunes and All-Bran.

Having finally got my head together my body is falling apart.

Funny, I don't remember being absent minded? It's hard to make a comeback when you haven't been anywhere.

Funny, I don't remember being absent minded? The world only beats a path to your door when you are in the bathroom.

If God wanted me to touch my toes he would have put them on my knees.

It's not hard to meet expenses, they're everywhere.

These days I spend a lot of time thinking about the hereafter....I go somewhere to get something and wonder what I'm "here after".

Funny, I don't remember being absent minded? Some days you're the top dog, other days you're the tree.

When I'm finally holding all the right cards, everyone wants to play chess.

### **June Quiz**

The answers to the following questions are all related to sweets.

- 1 Where refined people live
- 2 9, 10, 11
- 3 Fallen fruits
- 4 Carrier for dairy product
- 5 Corks for mouths
- 6 Punishment for nuts
- 7 Liked by Little Richard
- 8 10 pin bowling
- 9 A dating agency
- 10 Wanderer
- 11 Type of dog
- 12 Where does Lenny drink?
- 13 Valentine symbols
- 14 Definitely not chewy
- 15 Perhaps black and white
- 16 Small piece of snow
- 17 Night time explosion
- 18 What to with a baton in the USA
- 19 Used to be 26 miles
- 20 American half time

The closing date is Friday, 19th July and as usual the winner will receive a M & S gift token. Good luck!

### **April Quiz Results**

Answers were:-

- 1 My Wife Next Door
  - 2 Not in Front of the Children
  - 3 On the Buses
  - 4 One Foot in the Grave
  - 5 Only Fools and Horses
  - 6 Open All Hours
  - 7 Please Sir
  - 8 Porridge
  - 9 Rising Damp
  - 10 Robin's Nest
  - 11 Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em
  - 12 Sorry
  - 13 Steptoe and Son
  - 14 The Good Life
  - 15 The Likely Lads
  - 16 The Liver Birds
  - 17 Till Death Do Us Part
  - 18 To the Manor Born
  - 19 Bread
  - 20 Yes, Prime Minister
- The winner was Dave Taylor who will shortly receive his voucher.

#### **Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> May - Camden Market**

On a hot, sunny day a coachload of VPA'ites visited Camden Market and Lock. With hundred of stalls it was heaven for the ladies and hell for the gentlemen. For those who chose not to shop it was possible to take a trip on a longboat from Camden Lock, mooring at Little Venice and then returning to base, a perfect way to spend a summer's day. Well done to Sylvia for playing the role of headmistress for the day!

#### **Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> May - Black Country Museum**

The museum occupies 26 acres of historically significant shops, homes and workshops. Included are a 19th century school (when youngsters could read, write and do maths in their heads), a general stores, glasscutters workshop, coal yard, back-to-back cottages, a brass foundry and a blacksmith's forge. Also on site were cars, buses and trolley collections. Some of the group ventured down a shallow pit coal mine illuminated by candle torches (the shape of things to come?). A major attraction was the canal boat trip through a maze of tunnels. All-in-all a really enjoyable day for those who went.

#### **Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> May - Quiz Night**

As is usually the case Graham and Pauline Walton ran a good quiz with a series of interesting questions interspersed with a good deal of gossip and humour. The team otherwise known as 'His and Hers' (Anne Timms, Katherine Holden, Pat Coleman and Mike Smith) emerged triumphant after a keenly fought contest. Runners up were 'Back Burners' who pipped 'Silver Surfers' by half a point.

No individual names for losers in this Newsletter!

#### **Upcoming Events in the South**

**Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> June** - Oxford and Friars Court for High Tea - £22.00 p.p.

**Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> June** - Annual Outing to Eastbourne - £12.00 p.p.

**Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> June** - Savill Gardens, Windsor - £19.00 p.p including entry. Britain's finest ornamental gardens for all seasons. 35 acres of inter-connecting gardens, each of which has its own unique attraction.

**Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> August** - Thursford Experience Norfolk - £20.00 p.p. including entry

**Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September** - Southend Coach only - £10.00 p.p.

**Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> September** - Chelsea Hospital and Poppy Factory - £18.50 p.p.

**25<sup>th</sup> November for four nights** - Turkey and Tinsel, Russell Court Hotel, Bournemouth £170.00 p.p. (deposit £30 p.p. by 30<sup>th</sup> August) Guaranteed fun, frivolity and frolics

**Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> December** - Christmas Party £21.00 p.p.

**Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> December** - Christmas Market, Rochester - Coach only - £15.00 p.p.

You can get more details or book through the office (01582 427921).

#### **Golf Dates for 2013**

**Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> June** - Three Locks

**Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> October** - South Beds

#### **Quiz Nights for 2013**

Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October

Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December

#### **Tea Dance Schedule**

5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> June

3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> July

#### **Upcoming Events in the North**

**Abba Night - 4<sup>th</sup> June**

40 Year Celebration Night/Meal

£12.50 p.p. Tickets/menu available on next Club Night

**York Trip - 26<sup>th</sup> June**

Leave Club at 9.00 a.m.

£5.00 p.p. (Fully booked)

**Shrewsbury Flower Show/Fireworks - 10<sup>th</sup> August**

Leave Club at 9.00 a.m.

£21.00 p.p.

**Ludlow Good Food Show - 13<sup>th</sup> September**

£7.00 (includes entry to show)

**Dunoon and the Scottish Highlands - 1<sup>st</sup> October for four nights** staying at the

Esplanade Hotel, Dunoon

£209.00 p.p. plus £20 single supplement

£30 non-refundable deposit

**Blackpool – 9<sup>th</sup> October**  
Leave Club at 10.00 a.m.  
£5.00 p.p.

#### **Tea Dances**

June 11th, 18th, 25th.  
There will be no tea dances in July/Aug.

#### **Luton Lottery (drawn 10<sup>th</sup> April 2013)**

J. Nanton	P2003956	£88.84
P.J. Thacker	P1005897	£88.84
K.A.M. Dickson	P01236F	£44.42
B.R. Reeves	P1000357	£44.42
M.D. Van Ross	P087810D	£44.42
L.M. Stephenson	P1006644	£22.21
K. MacPherson	P028964D	£22.21
C. Claridge	P1008262	£22.21
L.M. Nurse	P1083884F	£22.21
W.G. Knight	P1000659	£22.21
A. Everitt	P1005972	£22.21
P.L. Negus	P1006431	£22.21

#### **E/Port Lottery**

Unavailable

#### **In Memoriam - Luton**

**Aylesbury**, Cyril, BCV  
Died 3.3.13, Aged 89, Retired 1981  
**Armstrong**, Steven, Division 499  
Died 28.2.12, Aged 52, Retired 2010  
**Boore**, Jack, Division 007  
Died 26.4.13, Aged 89, Retired 1982  
**Braham**, Elizabeth, Division 527  
Died 23.2.13, Aged 65, Retired 2006  
**Brown**, W.H.C., Division 729  
Died 16.4.13, Aged 91, Retired 1981  
**Buckingham**, John James, Division 105  
Died 31.3.13, Aged 91, Retired 1976  
**Chapman**, Robert, Division 049  
Died 18.5.13, Aged 85, Retired 1987  
**Clarke**, Malcolm, Division 135  
Died 29.4.13, Aged 78, Retired 1992  
**Dunham**, Ronald Eric, Division 748  
Died 25.3.13, Aged 87, Retired 1981  
**Ewbank**, James, BCV  
Died 25.2.13, Aged 80, Retired 1990  
**Fry**, David Valentine Hamer, BCV  
Died 19.2.13, Aged 84, Retired 1988  
**Harvey**, Thomas, Division 015  
Died 17.2.13, Aged 89, Retired 1982  
**James**, Ainsley, Division 033  
Died 22.3.13, Aged 76, Retired 1994  
**Jarman**, Frederick George, Division 029  
Died 25.2.13, Aged 91, Retired 1982  
**Joseph**, S., Division 046  
Died 17.4.13, Aged 82, Retired 1992  
**Line**, Wilfred, Division 582  
Died 31.3.13, Aged 91, Retired 1982  
**Loosley**, Leslie, Division 838  
Died 2.4.13, Aged 83, Retired 1985  
**McGee**, John, Division 884  
Died 1.4.13, Aged 98, Retired 1976

**O'Donnell**, Betty, Division 150  
Died 1.5.13, Aged 80, Retired 1991  
**Pattinson**, Edward Victor, Division 865  
Died 18.3.13, Aged 81, Retired 1988  
**Pichur**, Senko, Division 838  
Died 21.2.13, Aged 84, Retired 1987  
**Pillinger**, Edward A., Division 032  
Died 18.3.13, Aged 79, Retired 1991  
**Reynolds**, James, Division 485  
Died 6.4.13, Aged 92, Retired 1984  
**Ross**, William, BCV  
Died 16.3.13, Aged 78, Retired 1988  
**Spark**, D., BCV  
Died 21.5.13, Aged 81, Retired 1988  
**Young**, Edward John, Division 844  
Died 4.4.13, Aged 83, Retired 1986

#### **In Memoriam - Ellesmere Port**

**Grimes**, Peter, Division 608  
Died 19.2.13, Aged 55, Retired 2007  
**Heaton**, Robert, Division 642  
Died 21.4.13, Aged 77, Retired 2000  
**Pennington**, William, Division 678  
Died 5.4.13, Aged 80, Retired 1992  
**Room**, Anthony, Division 642  
Died 6.2.13, Aged 72, Retired 1998  
**Smith**, Leslie James, Division 616  
Died 6.2.13, Aged 84, Retired 1988

#### **How To Access the Newsletter and 2012 AGM Minutes (New Introduction) on the Internet**

[www.thepensiondepartment.co.uk/vpp/  
pensioner\\_pages](http://www.thepensiondepartment.co.uk/vpp/pensioner_pages)

#### **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: [ashley.daly@vauxhall.co.uk](mailto:ashley.daly@vauxhall.co.uk)

#### **Useful Telephone and Contact Information VPA South**

VPA Office 01582 427921  
Office is manned Monday, Tuesday and Friday  
between 10.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m.  
E-mail [vpa@gm.com](mailto:vpa@gm.com)  
Vauxhall Pensions Department 01582 721122  
E-mail [marion.mcdonald@vauxhall.co.uk](mailto:marion.mcdonald@vauxhall.co.uk)  
Cherie Denton, Vauxhall Welfare Officer  
01582 427204  
E-mail [cherie.denton@vauxhall.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:normanmcgregor3@gmail.com)

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