

# **Pensioners' Newsletter – April 2011**

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## **News from the North**

We have had our AGM and March Social Night. They were very well attended and thanks to everyone for taking the time to be present. There were no major issues raised and our bank balance continues to be healthy.

A presentation was made with a cheque for £1,000 being donated to our local Hospice of the Good Shepherd and received by Mr. David McClenaghan, the Chief Executive.

Please note that the April Social Night has been cancelled due to members being on a week's Spring Bank Holiday.

Please take note of forthcoming dates which appear later in the Newsletter.

Finally, will members please ensure that they sign in all visitors and place the £1 fee per visitor in the box situated on the booking table. Many thanks.

*Margaret Knoblett*

## **News from the South**

Hello everyone: I hope you are enjoying the milder weather and have been able to get out into the garden. It has seemed like a very long winter and I for one are very pleased to see the sunshine. Let's hope we are in for a good summer.

The Southern VPA held its Annual general Meeting in the Recreation Club last week when a good turnout were able to hear a presentation on the state of the Company and the pension schemes from Richard Molyneux, Director of Finance and Rob Assinder, Director of Pensions. This prompted a number of questions, particularly about the loss of the pre 1992 half index linking of our pensions, which will cease following this April's increase. Richard explained that with GME still in a loss making situation and the Vauxhall pension scheme in a deficit, there was no possibility of the increase continuing or being reintroduced for a number of years. Be sure that the VPA will keep this issue at the top of our regular meetings with the Company and in future Pension Board meetings in order to ensure that this is reintroduced at the earliest opportunity. On a brighter note the Company were able to report that GM in America were making a profit and that GME, although not in a profit making position yet, were performing ahead of the targets set out in the recovery plan.

Don't forget if you want to brighten up your summer come along to some of the events planned by the VPA for the coming year. The details as usual are in this Newsletter.

*John Boast*

## **Introducing Your Committee**

Les Potter was employed by Vauxhall Motors for 43 years having joined in 1957 as a millwright. He worked in many areas in the factory, although most of his time was spent in the AC Paint Shop. He served as a shop steward for 30 years representing AEW skilled tradesmen and sat on various committees.

Prior to joining Vauxhall Les spent two years in the RAF working in an underground bunker on "hush hush" activities. Anybody who says that working in the dark best prepares you for a life at Vauxhall should immediately go and sit on the naughty stair! While at Vauxhall Les played football for the Vauxhall Taverners, a team mainly made up of the AC Paint Shop employees, and golf at South Beds.

Les retired in 2000 much (in his own words) to the relief of some foremen and managers! He then was involved in giving guided plant tours, which he thoroughly enjoyed, and only stopped when the Luton Passenger Plant was closed. He was then asked by the Welfare Department to join the team that visited Vauxhall Pensioners. Les has carried out this function ever since. Basically his role is to visit and report to the Welfare Committee with regard to requests for help.

In July 2007 Les, along with his wife Brenda, were invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace in recognition of his efforts in these welfare activities. With typical modesty he felt it to be an honour accepted on behalf of all the Vauxhall people who are involved in helping ex-colleagues.

The final words belong to Les who says "looking back over my Vauxhall years it was like having a family around you. People from all walks of life and from all over the world worked together to produce good cars, vans and trucks".

## **Doorstep Crime**

Unfortunately we live in times of increased crime, often targeting the senior members of our community. We have been contacted by the Luton Doorstep Crime Taskforce asking that we advise you of the following. Say no to cold callers. Do not open the door unless you know who's on the other side of it. Always check the caller's ID and if you're concerned phone the Doorstep Hotline on 01582 547100 for advice.

## **Switchover Help Scheme**

The traditional analogue TV signal will be switched off and switched to digital from 30th March for people living in Luton and served by the Sandy Heath transmitter. The Switchover Help Scheme has been set up by

the Government with the aim of reaching out to eligible people to ensure help for those who need it. By the time you read this you will know whether you need help or not. You qualify for help if you are aged 75 or over, have lived in a care home for 6 months or more, get or are entitled to disability allowance, are registered blind or partially sighted and get attendance allowance or mobility supplement.

To find out where your local advice point or road show will be, visit [www.digital.co.uk](http://www.digital.co.uk) or call 08456 50 50 50.

### **Ex Chairman joins the convicts**

Ex VPA Chairman, Mike Roberts, recently returned to the UK having spent a year, with his wife Gill, visiting family in Australia. Although far from their first trip it was certainly the longest and gave them plenty of quality time, especially with their grandsons aged 11 and 8 years.

Based in Adelaide they had ample opportunity to explore the Southern Australian countryside. With both boys being sports mad they were able to keep the family tradition of golf and cycling alive (although not together!). While over there the 2011 Tour Downunder cycle race was held. This race is centred in the Adelaide Hills and is 62 kilometres long. The boys were joined by Mike, their father and uncle, and completed the course in just under three hours. None of the mopeds required a pit stop!

As for golf, the lads were taken for numerous lessons by Mike and he in fact joined the Mount Barker club playing at least twice a week with a group of fellow retirees. He expects a number of the group to get their own back by visiting him later this year.

Last September (springtime in Australia) Mike, Gill and the two boys had a houseboat holiday on the River Murray. They also visited Tasmania, Kangaroo Island, Sydney, Noosaville (to spend time with the other daughter) and many wineries in the Barossa and Clare Valley regions. Tasmania is a beautiful island with stark penal settlements where the system was designed to "grind rogues honest". Sounds like a mission statement for the Vauxhall Training Department!

Sydney is an exciting city with lots of vibrancy and things to see and do. During their stay they visited all of the usual harbour locations, the Botanical Gardens, Government House, the Maritime Museum, the Opera House, the Rocks area, Kings Cross (cheeky), Bondi Beach and a German Beerkeller. Mike cannot recall its name, but believes he had a good time!

Of course his visit coincided with the Ashes test match series which saw an English victory. Mike obtained a ticket to go to a pre match

event at the Adelaide Oval which involved drinks, nibbles and listening to Ian Botham, Ian Healy (former Aussie cricketer) and Bob Bevan (humorous after dinner speaker). He also spent a day at the match, but unfortunately had to pay to get in. What a hard life!!

To quote Mike "life in Australia was fair dinkum and it was wonderful to see the grandchildren growing up, experience the friendship of the Aussie people, enjoy the warm weather and the warm oceans. On the downside the sterling dollar exchange rate was not good, the threat of bush fires, the cyclones and floods in Queensland, the cold tasteless beer and the strangeness of celebrating Christmas in 35 degrees centigrade.

Whingeing, of course, is a great pommie tradition".

Despite all this, however, Mike and Gill are planning to go back in January 2012.

### **Mickies Palace – 23<sup>rd</sup> February**

A smaller than usual group visited the Radio Times Show on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. Lunch was included and all that went had an amusing and entertaining day.

### **RAF Hendon Air Museum – 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

It was chocks away for a group of eager "bigglesites" (just made up that word) as the coach left Luton to travel to Hendon. On arrival they wasted no time in viewing all of the many attractions on site. These included shops selling war memorabilia, wartime air raid shelters, exhibitions relating to Amy Johnson and Louise Bleriot, a Battle of Britain experience which included details of all the servicemen who died in conflict and a wonderful display of over 100 planes ranging from early fighter planes to more recent fighter jets.

The group had a most interesting and an enjoyable day.

### **Quiz Night – 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

Another successful evening saw a team made up of Denise Peck, Brian Peck and Norman McGregor narrowly beating Dennis Cowap, Doreen Cowap and Susan McGregor into second place. The "booby prize" of a bunch of bananas went to Maureen Clark, Jean McConkey and Gerald McConkey. Thanks to Pauline and Graham Walton for the usual excellent running of the quiz.

## **Upcoming Events in the South**

### **Wembley Stadium Tour – 12<sup>th</sup> April**

Visit the (new and expensive) home of English football. Live the dream by holding the FA Cup aloft and all the other things you dreamt of as a child.

### **VPA Golf Competition - 5th May**

This competition is a Texas Scramble (?) and will be held at the Abbey Hill Golf Course. For details of this and any other activity, please ring the office number at the end of this Newsletter.

### **Stratford on Avon – 12<sup>th</sup> May**

Coach only at only £12.50 per person gives you the opportunity to visit the birthplace of William Shakespeare, take a river trip (assuming this is the one fine day of the year!), look at the RSC Theatre and partake of lunch. As an infrequent diner at The Garrick, a town centre 17th century pub, I can heartily recommend its lunch time menu with good food between £8.00 and £12.00.

### **Annual Charabanc to Portsmouth and Southsea – 4<sup>th</sup> June**

We absolutely promise (fingers crossed) that unlike the Nags Head annual outing in Only Fools and Horses, the coach will not explode. We can say, however, that for the £9 per person coach fee you should have a really good day. At Portsmouth you can visit HMS Victory, walk around the Mary Rose museum and take a boat trip around the harbour - all at optional cost. Southsea is a picturesque resort giving the ladies a good shopping opportunity and the men a chance to relax.

### **VPA Golf Section - June 14<sup>th</sup>**

Singles Tournament at Caddington Golf Club. Details can be obtained from the office.

### **London Eye and River Thames Cruise – 23<sup>rd</sup> June**

For £38 per person you can look out over London from the comfort of one of the pods. The view is really something to behold and it is odd to look down over the Houses of Parliament. This is followed by a river cruise along the Thames. This is truly a capital day out. Apologies for that truly awful pun!!

### **Windsor - 16<sup>th</sup> July**

Coach only at £8.50 per person - forget the problems of parking and enjoy all that Windsor has to offer. On a good day you might see the Queen - on a bad day you might see Fergie!!

### **Future Quiz Night Dates**

10th May, 18<sup>th</sup> October, 6<sup>th</sup> December

### **Tea Dance Schedule - 2011**

The dates for Ted's Tango Teaching Sessions are as follows. Each date is on a Wednesday.  
April 6th and 20th.  
May 4th and 18th.  
June 15th and 22nd.  
July 6th and 20th.  
August 3rd and 10th.  
September 7th, 14th and 28th.  
October 5th and 26th.  
November 9th and 30th.  
December 7<sup>th</sup>

## **Upcoming Events in the North**

### **Social Night - Tuesday, 3rd May**

Free Hot Pot Supper - with all the "scouse" trimmings. Also featuring Will Barrow, comedian and entertainer.

### **Swan Lake on Ice - Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> May**

at the Liverpool Empire.

Coach departs at 1.00 p.m. from the Social Club Car Park

### **Staffordshire National Memorial**

#### **Arboretum - 25<sup>th</sup> May**

Depart 9.00 a.m. Cost £5.00

#### **Cheshire Show – 22<sup>nd</sup> June**

Depart 9.00 a.m. Return 6.00 p.m.

Cost £11.00

#### **Shrewsbury Flower Show - 22<sup>nd</sup> July**

Depart 9.00 a.m. Cost £19.50

#### **Botanical Gardens, Churchtown, Southport 27<sup>th</sup> July**

Depart 9.00 a.m. Cost £5.00

### **Tea Dances**

Tea dances in April are 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> at the Whitby Sports and Social Club from 1.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. Your host will be Ernie Jones.

### **In Memoriam – Luton**

**Allen**, Roy Sidney, Division 824

Died 3.3.11, Aged 79, Retired 1986

**Andrews**, Eileen Mary, VM Staff

Died 29.1.11, Aged 87, Retired 1982

**Angell**, Owen Claude, VM Staff

Died 13.3.11, Aged 86, Retired 1987

**Ball**, Peter George, Division 082

Died 26.1.11, Aged 71, Retired 1993

**Baron**, Vera Audrey, Division 037

Died 13.2.11, Aged 90, Retired 1980

**Brightman**, Keith, Division 049

Died 17.5.2009, Aged 81, Retired 1986

**Broughton**, John William, Division 435

Died 26.2.11, Aged 85, Retired 1981

**Burgess**, Dorothy Madge, VM Staff

Died 3.12.2008, Aged 91, Retired 1975

**Chapman**, Rex Donald, VM Staff

Died 10.1.11, Aged 90, Retired 1981

**Cook**, Colin, IBC Staff

Died 28.1.11, Aged 71, Reired 1998

**Cox**, Alfred Herbert, VM Staff

Died 2.1.11, Aged 94, Retired 1974

**Czunyi**, Paul, IBC Staff

Died 20.1.11, Aged 70, Retired 2006

**Dodwell**, Amos John, Division 830

Died 29.1.11, Aged 86, Retired 1981

**Downing**, Ernest George, Division 233,

Died 31.1.11, Aged 94, Retired 1980

**Griffiths**, Wilfred Charles (Charles) Div 838

Died 1.2.11, Aged 79, Retired 1986

**Hawkesworth**, Stanley Robert, VM Staff

Died 21.1.11, Aged 85, Retired 1981

**Hodges**, John William, Division 015

Died 16.2.11, Aged 67, Retired 2000

**Jarrett**, Alfred, Division 873  
Died 25.1.11, Aged 85, Retired 1981

**Jones**, Maurice Glyndwr (Glyn) VM Staff  
Died 26.2.11, Aged 79, Retired 1990

**Malkani**, Indru Naraindas, Division 009  
Died 7.1.11, Aged 78, Retired 1987

**Mangold**, Joan Maud, Division 037  
Died 28.1.11, Aged 88, Retired 1981

**Marsh**, James Finharty, Division 838  
Died 12.9.10, Aged 79, Retired 1986

**Marshall**, Charles David, VM Staff  
Died 5.2.11, Aged 88, Retired 1980

**Matthews**, Wilfred, VM Staff  
Died 7.3.11, Aged 80, Retired 1987

**McGuire**, John Victor, Division 511  
Died 30.1.11, Aged 67, Retired 1996

**Meakins**, Sidney Arthur, VM Staff  
Died 8.3.11, Aged 91, Retired 1974

**Middleton**, Colin, VM Staff  
Died 15.1.11, Aged 82, Retired 1989

**Moss**, Harry Victor, VM Staff  
Died 14.1.11, Aged 82, Retired 1988

**Neale**, Edmund Percy Charles, BCV Staff  
Died 7.3.11, Aged 81, Retired 1996

**Nelson**, Cynthia Mary, Division 999  
Died 21.2.11, Aged 87, Retired 1979

**Newham**, Raymond Arthur, VM Staff  
Died 3.2.11, Aged 91, Retired 1981

**Norman**, Chreighton Harold, VM Staff  
Died 14.1.11, Aged 87, Retired 1981

**Pepper**, Anthony Michael, VM Staff  
Died 22.2.11, Aged 82, Retired 1989

**Price**, Jeanie, Division 037  
Died 5.2.11, Aged 90, Retired 1980

**Sharp**, Norman, Division 054  
Died 16.1.11, Aged 90, Retired 1981

**Smeraglia**, Guiseppe, Division 851,  
Died 26.1.11, Aged 88, Retired 1986

**Smith**, Ronald James Thomas, VM Staff  
Died 13.3.11, Aged 82, Retired 1986

**Smith**, Victor, VM Staff  
Died 15.1.11, Aged 88, Retired 1981

**Symonds**, Francis Graham, VM Staff  
Died 2.2.11, Aged 87, Retired 1985

**Watson**, Timothy, IBC Staff  
Died 7.1.11, Aged 73, Retired 1993

**Weeks**, Nicholas Frank, Division 002  
Died 20.12.10, Aged 90, Retired 1981

**Wells**, Stanley, Division 830  
Died 12.1.11, Aged 88, Retired 1981

**West**, Terence, VM Staff  
Died 18.1.11, Aged 82, Retired 1987

**Wilder**, Derrick William, Division 523  
Died 13.2.11, Aged 85, Retired 1988

**Winter**, Matthew, IBC Staff  
Died 18.2.11, Aged 80, Retired 1993

**Yearley**, Terance John, Division 082  
Died 17.12.10, Aged 80, Retired 1995

**Yewen**, Cyril Arthur, Division 839  
Died 18.1.11, Aged 87, Retired 1981

**Yolan**, Simon, Division 198  
Died 24.2.11, Aged 78, Retired 1982

Died 26.2.11, Aged 72, Retired 1999

**Burson**, Reg, Staff, Division 675  
Died 19.2.11, Aged 88, Retired 1980

**Campbell**, Ronald Andrew, Division 616  
Died 27.1.11, Aged 80, Retired 1995

**Davies**, Francis, Division 618  
Died 23.1.11, Aged 62, Retired 2005

**Edwards**, Robert, Division 616  
Died 11.2.11, Aged 78, Retired 1992

**Forshaw**, Charles Noel, Division 628  
Died 31.1.11, Aged 80, Retired 1995

**Keenan**, William, Division 626  
Died 16.2.11, Aged 88, Retired 1981

**Lloyd**, David Thomas, Division 612  
Died 2.3.11, Aged 75, Retired 1989

**Mann**, John Donald Thomas, Div 625  
Died 26.1.11, Aged 97, Retired 1974

**McIntyre**, William, Division 715  
Died 25.1.11, Aged 83, Retired 1987

**Morgan**, Cyril, Division 625  
Died 19.1.11, Aged 82, Retired 1987

**Nuttall**, Joseph, Division 628  
Died 17.2.11, Aged 84, Retired 1988

**Poole**, Norman Benjamin, Division 627  
Died 27.1.11, Aged 82, Retired 1986

**Pugh**, William, Division 636  
Died 30.1.11, Aged 86, Retired 1986

**Richardson**, Derrick Thomas, Division 625  
Died 13.2.11, Aged 79, Retired 1986

**Smith**, Anthony Ingram, Division 636  
Died 15.2.11, Aged 89, Retired 1981

**White**, Graham Michael, Division 663  
Died 18.1.11, Aged 65, Retired 2010

**Williams**, Francis, Division 663  
Died 22.1.11, Aged 80, Retired 1995

**Worrell**, Stan, Division 641  
Died 8.3.11, Aged 78, Retired 1997

#### **How To Access the Newsletter on the Internet**

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

#### **Useful Telephone and Contact Information**

##### **VPA South**

Cherie Denton, Vauxhall Welfare Officer  
01582 427204

E-mail [cherie.denton@uk.gm.com](mailto:cherie.denton@uk.gm.com)

Vauxhall Pensions Department 01582 721122

E-mail [marion.mcdonald@uk.gm.com](mailto:marion.mcdonald@uk.gm.com)

VPA Office 01582 427921

Office is manned Monday, Tuesday and Friday  
between 10.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m.

##### **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 [norman.mcgregor@googlemail.com](mailto:norman.mcgregor@googlemail.com)

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

#### **In Memoriam – Ellesmere Port**

**Armstrong**, Kenneth Albert, Division 682