

# ***Pensioners' Newsletter – December 2010***

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## **News from the North**

Well, the end of 2010 has arrived. Our members have had a very good year, with many new venues to visit. We welcome your suggestions for 2011, so keep them coming in. Feedback has been excellent and the entertainment has also been good. Gerry, our MC will note all your recommendations. On your behalf I say a big thank you to Gerry for all his hard work throughout the year and thank you, our members, for your support. The feedback from the Blackpool trip was that everyone enjoyed the day. We had good weather and the illuminations were better than ever.

Winne Pawson, a Committee member, did a moonlight walk in late September. The £150 sponsorship money went to our local Hospice in loving memory of our dear friend Eric Singleton who spent his last few days at the Hospice. RIP. Well done Winnie.

The Committee and your Chairman, Ken Royal, wish you all a very Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year and to all our overseas readers, we send our best wishes to you all. Keep reading your News from the North. I hope everyone enjoys the Christmas dinner this year.

*Margaret Knoblett*

## **News from the South**

Well this is the last Pensioners Newsletter of 2010. I hope you have enjoyed the 'new look' version that we have sent out over the past few months and I would like to take the opportunity of thanking two of our committee members, Norman McGregor and Jean Skipp, for all their work in designing, compiling and issuing what I think is a really good read. If you paid £5 to receive the newsletter as a hard copy inside the Torque magazine, please be aware that when your subscription is due for renewal you will receive a letter with your Torque magazine, advising you how to do this. Alternatively, don't forget you can now get the Newsletter free, on-line at the web address shown later in this issue.

So, it is only left for me to get up in the loft and dig out all the old Christmas decorations, dust off the tinsel and of course wish each and every one of you a peaceful Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

*John Boast*

## **Introducing Your Committee**

This issue we are featuring our Minutes Secretary Jean Skipp who is responsible for keeping us all in order (and doesn't she just love it).

Jean started work at Vauxhall in 1968 when the Company had in the region of 32 000 people on the payroll. She remembers the long lines of buses in Kimpton Road along with the bread and dripping and fresh doughnuts sold daily in the Main Canteen. So, if you see a lady in Luton with a tupperware of sandwiches and writing down bus registrations in central Luton it is likely to be Jean.

She joined as a clerk in the Employment Office in M Block. Prior to joining Vauxhall she had worked for a private investigator for 4 years. There was only Jean and her boss and he was out most of the time "sleuthing" so it was a big shock when Jean started her Vauxhall working life in a large, noisy and people filled office. She was unsure if she would last a second day, but something must have suited as she stayed for 32 years.

Another memory of those days was the Recruitment Officers travelling the length and breadth of the country recruiting labour for the track. How times change!

Her next position was Secretary to the Manager of Industrial Relations after which she transferred to Plant Personnel as the Secretary to the Plant Personnel Manager based in V Block. When in Industrial Relations in the 1970's there were many problems associated with the annual Pay negotiations and the introduction of new working practices which Jean calls "exciting times".

When Jean retired in 2000 the number of employees had fallen to around 4000.

In her early working years Jean joined the Riding Section of the Recreation Club and was for many years its Secretary. Another memory she recalls is of Jack who used to man the newspaper kiosk at the steps to the Canteen who always found time to laugh and joke with customers. It is amazing how often other people's memories feature people we otherwise forget.

In retirement Jean enjoys spending time on her garden and having seen photographs I can tell you it is a garden to behold. In fact she has opened it to the public to raise funds for her local church.

All of her Secretarial positions were obviously preparing Jean for the big one and in 2004 she became Minutes Secretary of the VPA. More recently Jean has been involved in the production of the Newsletter. So any complaints blame Jean and not me (the usual position of a Vauxhall manager ).

### **Vauxhall Visitors**

We would like to introduce you to a group of thirty very important, young at heart pensioners. These are the people who make up the Vauxhall Visitors team. They meet on a regular basis under the leadership of Tom Fox, who is also the Vice Chairman of the VPA, and Cherie Denton from Vauxhall Personnel. The group has been operating for the past 25 years and responds whenever a call for help is received. They are all volunteers who give up their time to go out and visit pensioners who need help, advise or just a chat about the old days with another Vauxhallite. These visits have resulted in hundreds of cases where it has been possible to find solutions to individual problems through the Welfare Committee. The visitors are very busy at this time of year as in addition to their usual activities they also take on the role of delivering 200 Christmas hampers on behalf of the VPA.

If you feel you are in need of help and would benefit from a visit or if you would like to become a visitor and help others, please contact Tom or Cherie (contact details at the end of this newsletter). Don't think you are too old to be a visitor - our eldest one is 90!!!!

### **Home Safety Talk - 12th October**

A packed Trophy Room listened to Jane Clark deliver an interesting and informative talk on fire safety in the home. It had the desired affect on the VPA members as no-one scalded themselves on the tea or coffee or set themselves alight! Incidentally should anyone wish to have a visit from Fire Officers to check their premises for fire hazards and, at no cost, provide and fit two 10 year non-battery smoke alarms, please ring the office for contact details.

### **Golf Day - 14th October**

On a pleasant October morning 28 retirees gathered at the South Beds golf course to compete for the Peter Johnson cup, a pairs Stableford competition (no I haven't a clue either). Golfing standards reached a new high with 10 of the 14 pairs bettering 40 points. An outstanding score of 50 points by Peter Johnson (yes the trophy sponsor) and Dick Shortland won the day. In second place on 47 points were Ken Flint and Andrew Duthie

followed by Paul Housman and Les Duncan on 46 points. The day concluded with a meal and drinks with £100 being raised for the Keech Hospice.

### **Quiz Night – 19<sup>th</sup> October**

A smaller number than usual attended, although those that did come oozed class and quality. The winners on the night were Pam and Mick Smith who were joined by Patricia Kendall. Other players offer them our congratulations, albeit through gritted teeth!

### **Other 2010 events**

At the time of our print deadline we had not held the Tinsel and Turkey weekend, nor the Christmas Party. We shall report on these in the next issue

### **Homesitters**

We have been contacted By Homesitters Limited who employ mature, usually retired people to look after homes and pets throughout the whole country. The level of frequency is up to the individual and what you get is a modest remuneration, a food allowance and travel expenses. The latter two items are tax free. If you need more information you can ring Wendy Reed (HR Consultant) on 01296 630730 or e-mail her on [admin@homesitters.co.uk](mailto:admin@homesitters.co.uk). If anyone does follow this up I can feel an article coming on.

### **Diary of VPA (Luton) Events – 2011**

As you will be reading this in December it is timely to provide details of all of next year's trips. All prices are per person.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> January**

"Holiday on Ice" Show and shopping at the Bull Ring Birmingham £40.00

#### **24<sup>th</sup> February**

Mickies Palace "Radio Times" Show plus lunch £22.00

#### **15<sup>th</sup> March**

AGM – see details in this Newsletter

#### **22<sup>nd</sup> March**

RAF Hendon Museum **Coach only** £10

#### **12<sup>th</sup> April**

Wembley Stadium Tour £17.50

#### **5<sup>th</sup> May**

VPA Golf Day at Abbey Hill. Texas Scramble Cost tbd

#### **12<sup>th</sup> May**

Stratford-on-Avon **Coach only** £12.50

#### **4<sup>th</sup> June**

Annual outing: Portsmouth/Southsea

**Coach only** £9.00

**14<sup>th</sup> June**

VPA Golf Day at Caddington. Singles.

Cost tbd

**23<sup>rd</sup> June**

London Eye & Thames River Cruise £38.00

**16<sup>th</sup> July**

Windsor **Coach only** £8.50

**18<sup>th</sup> August**

RHS Hyde Hall Chelmsford (RHS members free entry) £17.00

**18<sup>th</sup> August**

VPA Golf Day 3 Locks Team "waltz"

Cost tbd

**15<sup>th</sup> September**

Mickies Palace "Swinging Sixties" Show plus

Lunch £22.00

**7<sup>th</sup> October**

Greyhound racing at Peterborough (they always beat me!) with meal and afternoon shopping £25.00

**13<sup>th</sup> October**

VPA Golf Day South Beds Pairs

Cost tbd

**21<sup>st</sup> November**

Tinsel & Turkey at the Carlton Hotel, Torquay.

4 nights Monday to Friday morning £164.00

plus coach with a deposit of £50.00 required

by 30<sup>th</sup> June

**8<sup>th</sup> December**

Christmas Party £19.50

I hope you agree that the above represents a varied and interesting selection. Deliberately in recognising the economic situation facing us all there are more coach only trips on offer than usual.

The VPA does need your support, so please endeavour to attend as many as you see fit, plus you get the added thrill of meeting your committee members. (editor's note : are you sure you want to write that!)

**Tea Dance Schedule - 2011**

The dates for Ted's Tango Teaching Sessions are as follows. Each date is on a Wednesday.

January 5th and 19th.

February 9th and 16th.

March 9th, 16th and 30th.

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 7th

You will be guaranteed a good time and we promise that Ann Widdicombe will not show up!

**Speaker Meetings and Quiz Nights**

No dates have yet been set. We will have them for the next issue.

**2011 Annual General Meeting**

The 2011 AGM will be held in the Riverside Suite on Tuesday 15th March at 2.15 p.m.

Refreshments will be served prior to the meeting. As previously the Company will present data relating to the pension plans and the VPA will recap the highlights of the past year. Remember this is your chance to have a say, so please put this date in your diary.

**Diary of VPA (Ellesmere Port) Events – 2010/2011**

**Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Supper Vauxhall Social Club** 7.30 p.m. onwards. Good entertainment provided.

**4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

Belgrave Hotel, Tenby and Pembrokeshire Coast £219

**4<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

Swan Lake on Ice, Liverpool Empire Theatre Matinee £12.50

Details on other trips have yet to be finalised. They will be included in the next issue.

**In Memoriam – Luton**

**Ashraf**, Mohamed, Division 033

Died 2.10.10, Aged 78, Retired 1997

**Atkinson**, Cecil Emanuel, Division 046

Died 25.9.10, Aged 85, Retired 1986

**Brown**, Lilian Agatha, Division 198

Died 26.10.10, Aged 74, Retired 1989

**Bunning**, Frank Eric, VM Staff

Died 28.10.10, Aged 84, Retired 1987

**Burton**, Frank, Division 066

Died 14.10.10, Aged 92, Retired 1981

**Burton**, John Henry, Division 049

Died 8.10.10, Aged 77, Retired 1987

**Butterfield**, Raymond Gerald, BCV Staff

Died 18.9.10, Aged 86, Retired 1985

**Desai**, Naresh Thakorelal, Division 037

Died 28.9.10, Aged 68, Retired 1992

**Egan**, Clifford, Division 848

Died 27.7.10, Aged 81, Retired 1987

**Evans**, Arthur William (Bill), Div 838

Died 2.10.10, Aged 87, Retired 1981

**Gazeley**, Patrick Arthur, Division 002

Died 15.9.10, Aged 85, Retired 1986

**Gepp**, Ronald Leslie, Division 037  
Died 25.10.10, Aged 81, Retired 1991

**Green**, Percival (Percy), Division 823  
Died 14.9.10, Aged 83, Retired 1986

**Guinan**, Cornelius Francis (Con) BCV Staff  
Died 24.12.09, Aged 85, Retired 1986

**Hayes**, Arthur Henry, Division 146  
Died 5.10.10, Aged 89, Retired 1981

**Horsman**, Eric Charles, BCV Staff  
Died 10.10.10, Aged 80, Retired 1985

**Keane**, Ronald Arthur, BCV Staff  
Died 26.9.10, Aged 84, Retired 1987

**Keymer**, Peter John, Division 055  
Died 9.10.10, Aged 67, Retired 2001

**Kilby**, Arthur, Division 017  
Died 21.9.10, Aged 81, Retired 1986

**McCann**, Patricia Noreen, Division 198  
Died 29.10.10, Aged 79, Retired 1988

**McMahon**, John, Division 132  
Died 7.7.10, Aged 85, Retired 1987

**Mead**, Gordon, Division 150  
Died 27.10.10, Aged 72, Retired 1999

**Miller**, Dennis Cyril, Division 431  
Died 4.11.10, Aged 82, Retired 1983

**Mitchell**, Brian Edmund, VM Staff  
Died 9.10.10, Aged 79, Retired 1990

**Muscella**, Rocco Luigi, Division 485  
Died 1.11.10, Aged 77, Retired 1987

**Parker**, Dennis Leslie, VM Staff  
Died 29.9.10, Aged 87, Retired 1981

**Payne**, Peter Samuel, IBC Staff  
Died 3.11.10, Aged 79, Retired 1996

**Petgrave**, Earl George, IBC Staff  
Died 17.9.10, Aged 76, Retired 1994

**Price**, Brian George, Division 354  
Died 17.10.10, Aged 76, Retired 1994

**Puttick**, Maurice, Division 002  
Died 21.9.10, Aged 80, Retired 1986

**Ryan**, Lawrence Victor, Division 873  
Died 10.9.10, Aged 90, Retired 1981

**Sierakowski**, Franciszek, Division 073  
Died 11.10.10, Aged 87, Retired 1981

**Sinfield**, Raymond Douglas, Division 527  
Died 27.9.10, Aged 84, Retired 1991

**Smith**, Bridget Mary, Division 150  
Died 8.9.10, Aged 67, Retired 2001

**Tarbox**, Arthur John, Division 082  
Died 19.9.10, Aged 80, Retired 1989

**Thomas**, Frank, Division 438  
Died 29.8.10, Aged 88, Retired 1983

**Thomas**, Relan, Division 032  
Died 21.8.10, Aged 78, Retired 1992

### **In Memoriam – Ellesmere Port**

**Aldcroft**, Frank, Division 671  
Died 8.10.10, Aged 89, Retired 1981

**Burgess**, John, Division 638  
Died 23.9.10, Aged 70, Retired 31.3.2004

**Byers**, John Robert, Division 671  
Died 3.10.10, Aged 78, Retired 27.11.1987

**Fernandez-Hart**, Gerard, Division 637  
Died 2.11.10, Aged 86, Retired 13.3.1981

**Grosart**, Alexander, Division 637  
Died 13.10.10, Aged 85, Retired 28.10.1988

**Needham**, William, Division 716  
Died 26.9.10, Aged 86, Retired 27.2.1987

**Owen**, William Gordon, Division 629  
Died 14.8.10, Aged 82, Retired 31.10.1989

**Smith**, Dennis Arthur, Division 650  
Died 26.9.10, Aged 82, Retired 30.4.1989

**Stockwell**, Donald, Division 623  
Died 2.11.10, Aged 84, Retired 27.2.1981

**Taylor**, Ken, Division 663  
Died 22.10.10, Aged 63, Retired 30.9.2006

**Wakerley**, Harry, Division 622  
Died 19.10.10, Aged 85, Retired 26.6.1981

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

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

If you do not have a computer, find someone who has and ask them to print it off for you or ask at your local library for their help. We hope to expand the Pensioners Page to include all manner of details about the VPA although this will take time.

### **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.