

# ***Pensioners' Newsletter – February 2021***

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## **News from the South**

Hi Everyone:

I hope you have all managed to stay safe during this latest period, when infection rates have continued to rise. Jean and I have been staying at home apart from food shopping and it's amazing how much we have saved on petrol. However I must say that Amazon has taken a real bashing and I now have a garage full of cardboard boxes. Still, at last things are starting to look more positive as the Covid-19 vaccination programme rolls out. I already know several people who have had the jab and I cannot wait until it's my turn. I have even started looking at holidays, but not for 2021. I am also positive about us being able to run some of our planned trips later in the year which will be great! Please keep to the Government's guidelines and keep safe over the next few weeks as we look forward to seeing you all during 2021.

*John Boast*

## **News from the North**

Dear All:

I cannot believe it is almost a year since we were forced into this unnatural way of living and I don't think we are any nearer normality.

I hope you had a peaceful if very different Christmas. I reckon if we are out of this by next Christmas there will be a lot of celebrating.

I trust you are all well and that most if not all of you have had at least the first vaccination. I think this lockdown has been very different from the first one, not least because of the weather. We were very lucky to have had such a lovely summer. Unfortunately Jenny succumbed to the virus at Christmas, but am happy to report she is well on the way to full fitness which is just as well as I was getting dangerously close to having to use the iron and expand my culinary expertise.

As you may imagine we are no nearer knowing about the April holiday. We have been in touch with Alfa and they have delayed balance payment till March 15 by which time we may know a bit more, but obviously it all depends on how and when the Prime Minister eases and lifts the lockdown. I am becoming increasingly unsure it will go ahead, but will have to wait as if I cancel we will lose our deposits so will be in touch with you all when I have more news be it good or bad. I know I said we wanted to see our new grandson while he was still a baby, but that is looking increasingly unlikely. Still I realise we are in the same boat as millions of others.

I have no idea when the Club will reopen and we can meet up, but be assured when we are allowed it will. Till then stay safe. Regards

*Dave Williams*

## **Watch out for Vaccine Scams**

Unfortunately there are always criminals who will take advantage of the roll out of the coronavirus vaccine to commit fraud.

The most important thing to remember is that your vaccination is **free of charge**

### **The NHS will never:**

- ask you for your bank account or debit/credit card details
- ask you for your PIN number or banking password
- arrive at your home unannounced to administer the vaccine
- ask you to prove your identity by sending personal papers such as passport, driving licence bills or pay slips.

We must all be extra careful to avoid this scam.

Please be alert and safe

## **Be a Super Shopper**

In these Covid-19 times going to the shops for essential items can be risky. Be a super shopper and shop smart by using the following guidelines to help you stay safe.

Before shopping you should:

- plan ahead to minimise the number of trips
- try to go when the shop is likely to be at its quietest
- prepare a list so you can get in and out quickly.

When you go shopping you should:

- go on your own if possible
- wash/sanitise your hands before and after shopping
- wear a face covering
- keep your distance from others, ideally a distance of a minimum of 2 metres
- pay by card instead of cash as this may reduce infection transmission.

Shopping for a vulnerable person

- leave the shopping on their doorstep, if possible
- ring the bell or phone them to tell them it is there
- stand back while they collect it
- ask them to pay you online rather than in cash.

Follow all of the above and you can help yourself stay safe.

## **February Quiz**

Reverting to Pot Luck questions, here we go:

- 1 Red Admirals and Tortoiseshells are types of what?
- 2 Which pie is Melton Mowbray renowned for?
- 3 Which has more annual rainfall - the Sahara or Antarctica?
- 4 Which sport occurs at Chepstow?
- 5 Which brothers made the first manned powered flight in 1903?
- 6 What is sold in an apothecary?
- 7 Which animals live in an earth or lair?

- 8 Along with white what other colours feature on the flag of Italy?
  - 9 What snake is Cleopatra reputed to have poisoned herself with?
  - 10 According to the carol how many ships came sailing by?
  - 11 From which musical does the song 'Don't Cry for Me Argentina' come from?
  - 12 What type of bean is made into a baked bean?
  - 13 What is a poinsettia?
  - 14 In the novel what kind of animal was Tarka?
  - 15 Which characters sang 'The Bare Necessities' in the Jungle Book?
  - 16 In which decade did Britain convert to decimal currency?
  - 17 Sardinia is part of which country?
  - 18 What are collected by a philatelist?
  - 19 What type of bird are Ring, Turtle and Collared?
  - 20 On which horse race course are Bacher's Brook and the Chair?
- Hope that the above provides you with amusement.

### December Quiz Answers

- 1 Donner, Dasher, Dancer
- 2 Macy's
- 3 Ebenezer
- 4 Germany
- 5 Came to life and danced
- 6 8 maids a milking
- 7 White Christmas
- 8 Kissing Santa Claus
- 9 Coca Cola
- 10 Wattle
- 11 Combination of brandy and rum on crushed ice
- 12 Yule log
- 13 Old woman called Befana
- 14 A bell
- 15 White
- 16 6
- 17 To and From
- 18 4 or 5
- 19 A one horse open sleigh
- 20 Santa Baby

### Ray Gipson

Ray recently contacted the VPA in order to share his memories of his 40 years of being a member of the Vauxhall Team.

Here is his story in his own words.

"After serving 3 years on active service in Malaya with a mobile front line supply unit attached to a Gurkha Infantry Brigade I applied for a job advertised at the Diss (Norfolk) Labour Exchange by Vauxhall Motors as a Vehicle Rectification Fitter. An interview was arranged with Mr Frank Little, Area Manager, who accepted me for employment. Little did I know that when looking at an advert for the new Vauxhall Victor automobile while waiting in the Union Jack Club in Singapore to board my ship back to Blighty that I would shortly be working on these cars!

I started work in Division 041 Rectification in May 1957. I was located in AC Block which was a new building still not completely constructed

and consisted of 5 areas in which corrective work was carried out on vehicles coming off the production line, mainly the new F Type Victor, although when workload required jobs on the E Type and CA Van would be undertaken. To better myself I attended evening classes in the apprentice school in J Block. These classes consisted of intermediate maths, engineering drawing, inspection and marking off, lathe work and oxy-acetylene welding. The latter proved to be very useful as there was a need for welding on the vehicles. I progressed over the next 3 years to the point where I reached the position of a Senior Fitter on Majors. This was an area where the replacement of engines, axles and other major works were carried out.

In 1959 the Bedford TK Truck was released. The TK was a forward control vehicle, a new approach for Bedford. Given the increased workload on this range of vehicles in 1960 I was transferred into the Rectification group at the Dunstable Plant. Also at this time I married the girl next door! In 1961 I was asked if I was interested in working in Service Facilities (part of the Service Station) for a time. The move suited me as I lodged in the factory vicinity. The department had received a large order for Bedford TJ5s which required a 12 inch chassis extension to the rear overhang. After this order was completed I remained and worked on cars which had been ordered by employees (in those days all employee cars were prepared in-house). This work consisted of pre-delivery checks, radio fitments and sundry items such as fitting reverse lamps and the left hand wing mirror which were not basic specification items. At this time I was offered a position on staff as a writer in the Luton Service Station office compiling service manuals which enabled the vehicle fitters to carry out repair work, but declined the offer.

In 1963 the Victor FB was released and I was asked to re-join Division 041. This was not my happiest time and during the next 5 months I applied on many occasions to be transferred back to Service Facilities at Dunstable. Eventually after threatening to leave the Company I got my wish and returned to Service Facilities and continue the work I did before.

In the early 1960's the demand for specialised vehicles was increasing and the Sales Department were receiving many enquiries for numerous variations to that of the basic vehicle specification. The most popular at the time were for upgrading transmissions and rear axles. Initially this work was carried out by Service Facilities, but later it was the responsibility of production under the guidance of selected and skilled SID workshop fitters. The longest conversion I was involved in building was for the RAF which entailed extending an ELR4 wheelbase by 48 inches (standard wheelbase was 193 inches, so almost 25% longer) and a 24 inch extension to the rear. With the increase of orders for wheelbase changes I was given the responsibility of overseeing a new section Frame Rework. I spent 3 months in getting this section up and running.

As the complexity and volume of vehicle orders grew the department became the responsibility of Bedford Engineering and I attained staff status and assumed a liaison bringing production and the SID department together.

In 1973 SID was transferred from the Dunstable Plant into Bedford Engineering AJ Block in Luton. With this move I was moved onto management grade and was allocated onto the TM Heavy Truck Engineering group along with other responsibilities such as wheel and tyre updates. I was involved in managing the building of many vehicle variants. Examples that spring to mind are low profile trucks for British Airways, 60 tonne tractor units for use in the Middle East and many others too numerous to mention here. Sales orders for up-rated TM Heavy Duty vehicles continued into the 1980s, but it seemed to me that too many orders were not getting beyond the initial enquiry stage and with this feeling in mind in 1983 I requested a transfer back to Dunstable to mainly oversee the installation of the 300 petrol and 330 diesel engines in the KM 4x4. In 1986 I was asked to transfer to the Millbrook Proving Ground as a Vehicle Test Engineer. The work entailed testing on a wide range of GM vans from across the worldwide GM Plants. With the uncertainty over the futures of the commercial vehicle side of the business in the UK it was a fairly straight forward decision to make, although I went with some sadness.

I cannot give details about the range of vehicles we tested at Millbrook, partly through confidentiality and partly through the sheer number and scale of them. I also spent some time in the Safety Laboratory.

In 1995 I was offered, and accepted, early retirement. As was often the way in those days 2 months after leaving I was invited to go back as a contractor to do the same work as before and fill in when the work demanded it. I did this in 1996/7 before finally saying goodbye for good.

4 years ago I moved back to my birth county of Norfolk having previously lived in Dunstable and Milton Keynes”.

### **What do the Greeks say instead of "It's all Greek to me"?**

The phrase dates back to medieval monks who understood Latin but not Greek. When they came across Greek in a manuscript they would write ‘Graecum est : non legitur’. (This is Greek and cannot be read). Local variations of the phrase appeared around the world. In Balkan countries they say "it's all Spanish to me", in Bulgaria they say "it's all Patagonian", in Finland "it's all Hebrew" and in Greece they say "to me, this appears like Chinese." Of course there is no such language as Chinese, but the Mandarin version of "it's all Greek to me" is either "this sounds like ghost's script" or "this is the language of the birds", while in Cantonese you would say "this is like chicken intestines". Much more fun. In a related fashion instead of saying "it's raining cats and dogs" the Welsh might often say "it's raining old ladies and sticks".

### **Proposed Golf Dates – 2021**

**May 14** – Texas Scramble, Abbey Hill

**June 18** – Singles Competition, Redbourn

**Sept 29** – Pairs Competition, Aylesbury Vale

### **Upcoming Events in the South – 2021**

**Subject to Covid-19 restrictions:**

**Thursday, March 4, Cadburys World**

**Thursday, March 18, Tina Turner, The Musical**

Matinee performance, including carvery meal

**Thursday, April 15, Trentham Estate Shopping**

**Village** – shops, cafes, restaurants, large garden centre all set in charming timber lodge, plus outdoor ceramics and crafts

**Saturday, May 22 – Royal Albert Hall**

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra perform your favourite film music, including fish and chips lunch

**Saturday, June 5 – Brighton**

Coach only

**Wednesday, June 16 – Nottingham**

Princess Cruise on River Trent + roast beef dinner

**Thursday, July 15 – Bletchley Park**

Home of the code breakers during World War Two

**Thursday, August 12 – Wye Valley/Royal Forest**

**of Deal** – drive into the forest, which is full of

myth, legend and tradition, for morning

refreshments. Lunch in Monmouth, birthplace of

Henry V followed by a cruise looking out for

various wildlife, including cream tea

**Thursday, August 26 – Quainton**

A day in this lovely village, including visits to the steam railway and the mill

**Thursday, September 16 – Countryfile Adam**

**Hanson's Farm**

Tour the Cotswolds and a visit to the TV famous farm, including carvery lunch

**Thursday, October 7 – Gloucester**

**Warwickshire Steam Railway**

Fish and chips lunch while rolling through the countryside being drawn by a vintage steam locomotive

**Thursday, October 21 – Mystery Tour**

including carvery lunch

**Thursday, November 18 – London – Carvery Lunch/Christmas Lights**

Afternoon visit to London for Carvery Club lunch before a coach tour of the Christmas lights, with Blue Badge guide

**Monday, November 29 – Friday, December 3**

**Turkey and Tinsel** – 4 night half board festive break at Warners Hotel, Alvaston Hall, Cheshire with daily excursions

**Wednesday, December 8**

**Christmas Dinner and Party** in the Riverside Suite

### **Upcoming Events in the North - 2021**

**Monday, April 5 2021 – Eliot Hotel, Newquay**

5 day holiday. Departure time and car parking details to follow. Visiting the Eden Project, Bodmin and Padstow. Approximately £200 pp.

**Tea Dances** - temporarily on hold

### **In Memoriam – Luton**

**Baker**, Doreen Patricia, Staff  
Died 2.11.20, Aged 83, Retired 1994  
**Bow**, Anthony Brian, Division 015  
Died 3.11.20, Aged 81, Retired 1995  
**Bowes**, Colin Stephen, Division 150  
Died 18.12.20, Aged 84, Retired 2001  
**Brebner**, Graham Stewart, Division 348  
Died 30.10.20, Aged 70, Retired 2002  
**Dell**, Bernard George, IBC  
Died 7.12.20, Aged 90, Retired 1996  
**Dublin**, Walter, Division 041  
Died 31.12.20, Aged 81, Retired 1993  
**Fleming**, David Richard Walker, Div 180  
Died 24.11.20, Aged 79, Retired 1994  
**Hancock**, David George, Staff  
Died 5.11.20, Aged 93, Retired 1990  
**Haugh**, James Michael Gregory, Staff  
Died 9.11.20, Aged 81, Retired 2004  
**Hewitt**, Robert James, Division 330  
Died 6.12.20, Aged 81, Retired 2002  
**Hockley**, Clive Joseph, IBC  
Died 2.12.20, Aged 86, Retired 1993  
**Hooper**, Ernest Franklin, Division 343  
Died 11.11.20, Aged 87, Retired 1993  
**Hutchinson**, John James, Division 099  
Died 24.11.20, Aged 79, Retired 1999  
**Ireland**, Leonard James, IBC  
Died 8.11.20, Aged 90, Retired 1995  
**Lynn**, Fraser Willson, Division 333  
Died 6.11.20, Aged 80, Retired 1994  
**McGuire**, William Charles, Division 053  
Died 21.12.20, Aged 77, Retired 2001  
**Norris**, Charles William, IBC  
Died 20.12.20, Aged 86, Retired 1994  
**Patel**, Savitaben Keshavbhai, Division 041  
Died 27.11.20, Aged 80, Retired 1994  
**Pugh**, Thomas John, Staff  
Died 30.11.20, Aged 91, Retired 1989  
**Reynolds**, Keith Litchfield, Division 343  
Died 27.12.20, Aged 85, Retired 1993  
**Small**, Rickford Orlando, Division 526  
Died 11.11.20, Aged 88, Retired 1992  
**Stevenson**, Robert George, IBC  
Died 19.12.20, Aged 86, Retired 1994  
**Tavaglione**, Matteo, IBC  
Died 19.10.20, Aged 94, Retired 1987  
**Wilson**, Vera Joan, Vauxhall  
Died 24.11.20, Aged 89, Retired 1989  
**Wright**, John Dow, Division 113  
Died 30.10.20, Aged 81, Retired 1994

### **In Memoriam – Ellesmere Port**

**Bastow**, Martyn William Hedley, Division 627  
Died, 21.11.20, Aged 72, Retired 2006  
**Bruce**, William, Division 608  
Died 28.10.20, Aged 89, Retired 1994  
**Cato**, Frank, Division 641  
Died 19.11.20, Aged 88, Retired 1993  
**Forster**, David Arthur, Division 616  
Died 1.12.20, Aged 84, Retired 1990  
**Garner**, Franklyn, Division 640  
**Died 18.11.20, Aged 83, Retired 2002**  
**Haslop**, Leslie John, Division 600  
Died 8.11.20, Aged 87, Retired 1998

**Hendy**, Thomas, Division 641  
Died 22.12.20, Aged 88, Retired 1997  
**Herrod**, Donald Corson, Division 642  
Died 6.12.20, Aged 89, Retired 1991  
**John**, Graham James, Division 670  
Died 19.12.20, Aged 82, Retired 1997  
**Kimpton**, John Edward, Division 641  
Died 13.11.20, Aged 87, Retired 1993  
**Leech**, Brian John, Division 616  
Died 12.10.20, Aged 83, Retired 2002  
**McVey**, James, Division 627  
Died 6.11.20, Aged 87, Retired 1994  
**Plunkett**, Stephen, Staff  
Died 1.11.20, Aged 90, Retired 1989  
**Pryce**, Dennis, Division 670  
Died 8.11.20, Aged 82, Retired 1999  
**Raven**, Robert George, Vauxhall  
Died 30.11.20, Aged 82, Retired 2001  
**Roberts**, Philip Charles, Division 616  
Died 14.11.20, Aged 68, Retired 2006  
**Robertson**, Graeme William, Division 663  
Died 8.12.20, Aged 74, Retired 2006  
**Sheridon**, Frank, Division 691  
Died 1.12.20, Aged 90, Retired 1995  
**Shorthouse**, Kendrick, Division 617  
Died 19.12.20, Aged 83, Retired 2001  
**Tuffy**, William James, Division 628  
Died 26.11.20, Aged 87, Retired 1998  
**Vickers**, Douglas William, Division 629  
Died 27.11.20, Aged 85, Retired 1992  
**Whiles**, Granville Raymond, Division 616  
Died 20.10.20, Aged 88, Retired 1994  
**Whittle**, Colin, Division 691  
Died 4.11.20, Aged 79, Retired 2002  
**Williams**, Lawrence, Division 618  
Died 29.10.20, Aged 82, Retired 1998  
**Young**, Herbert, Division 663  
Died 7.12.20, Aged 89, Retired 1994  
All information on deceased pensioners is provided by the Pensions Department.

### **How to Access the Newsletter and 2019 AGM Minutes on the Internet**

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

#### **Facebook**

[www.facebook.com/groups/VauxhallPensionersAsociation](https://www.facebook.com/groups/VauxhallPensionersAsociation)

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

##### **VPA South**

**All contact details for the new VPA office will be announced when these are known. In the meantime please phone 01582 759851.**

**Vauxhall Pensions Department** 01582 282956

Email [marion.mcdonald@gm.com](mailto:marion.mcdonald@gm.com)

**Welfare Fund** 07460 171565

Email [welfarefund@vm.co.uk](mailto:welfarefund@vm.co.uk)

Website [www.vauxhallwelfarefund.org](http://www.vauxhallwelfarefund.org)

**VPA North** Dave Williams 0151 6088701

If you have a story you would like to tell, then please get in touch with Norman McGregor email [normanmcgregor3@gmail.com](mailto:normanmcgregor3@gmail.com)

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