

# intouch

For annuitants of ExxonMobil subsidiaries in the UK and Ireland

## Changing lives one at a time

Richard Bavister and Peter Cattermole are ExxonMobil annuitants who give their time and expertise to a nationwide charity called Remap. It helps disabled children and people of all ages live more independent lives by providing solutions to everyday problems when there are none commercially available.

Its 800+ volunteers respond to thousands of requests every year, providing their services free of charge. They use their engineering and technology skills to design and custom-make equipment to help improve disabled people's quality of life and independence.

Richard first joined Remap as a volunteer in 1998. Fast forward 22 years and incredibly he is still involved. Peter retired from ExxonMobil in 2018 and initially joined the charity's Surrey branch. He became a trustee of Remap in 2019 and more recently, its chairman.

### What does volunteering entail?

Volunteers join a local branch of up to 30 people. Projects are allocated according to skills, location and availability. "As a volunteer, you don't have to commit to a specific amount of time every month," says Peter. "It is up to you how involved you are."

Our role as a volunteer is problem-solving adds Richard. "We listen to our clients to find out exactly what they need and then engineer a bespoke piece of equipment for them. We make and modify things to create a solution."

### Why get involved?

Peter and Richard have found their volunteering experiences to be a worthwhile use of their time in retirement and are urging fellow ExxonMobil annuitants to join them at Remap.

Peter says charities such as Remap need the type of expertise and organisational skills that former employees of ExxonMobil can offer. "We are looking for volunteers to fill positions across the country and whilst the roles are unpaid, all expenses are reimbursed," he says.

"When you ask our volunteers why they are involved, they tell me it's because they get a kick out of helping people," he says. We change people's lives and its incredibly rewarding."



Peter Cattermole



Richard Bavister

Richard agrees. "When you retire you leave your career with a bundle of skills," he says. "As a volunteer for Remap, you really are putting something back into society. It's the most uplifting thing you can do. To see a young child smile is wonderful – it really is very moving."

**Remap is currently seeking more volunteers to join their nationwide team. Vacancies exist for people with a range of skills from administration and fundraising, through to DIY or model making and specialist engineering skills. Discover more at [www.remap.org.uk](http://www.remap.org.uk) where you can find your nearest group or make a donation.**

### Meet James ...



When James and his family met Remap they didn't realise how much their lives would be changed. Mum Katie, tells us how working with Remap transformed her son's life.

"We first met Remap when James was four years old. He has vocal cord palsy which means that he can only speak with a very quiet voice, due to a paralysed vocal cord. When there is any background noise it is extremely difficult to hear him.

At nursery, James rarely interacted with other children because of the difficulties in communication. It also created quite a problem at school and when out with him in his wheelchair or in the car. James was very patient about repeating himself, but we were very concerned that he would get discouraged from trying to talk.

We met Niall, our Remap volunteer engineer and together we refined our ideas until we had a workable solution. The amplifier that we now have is small enough to fit on a belt and is light enough that it doesn't bother James. James now talks to his peers and can communicate with his friends. He has so much more confidence and is more independent too.

Our speech therapist believes this will benefit James hugely, both now and long term as hopefully it will protect his voice from further damage from straining to make himself heard.

So, a huge thank you from our family and especially James. Remap is a fantastic charity with remarkable people like Niall. Amazing.

If you have a story you would like to share with *InTouch* magazine, email [InTouch@exxonmobil.com](mailto:InTouch@exxonmobil.com)



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## A tribute to ‘Gerry’ - Gerald Philip Gilbert



Gerald and Pamela

**Gerald was born in 1928 in Bedfordshire, the son of an agricultural worker. Aged 11, Gerald won a scholarship to the Bedford Modern School where he learnt English, Latin, French, German and Italian. He also became an accomplished sportsman.**

Mathematics and science were his best subjects at school and he later won a bursary to study Mechanical Engineering at Imperial College in London, after completing his national service.

On graduation, Gerald took a position with Caltex in Bahrain, where he worked at the Awali refinery. It was there he met Pamela, a data operations supervisor. They married and daughter Judith was born in Bahrain, before they returned to England where Gerald worked at BOC, before moving onto Mobil. Philip and Elizabeth later joined the family who moved to Walton-on-Thames where they lived in Bridge Street for almost fifty years.

During his career, Gerald worked on many projects in locations such as Scotland, France, Italy, the USA and Norway. One highpoint was the construction of the Statfjord B platform in Norway. He celebrated his 50th birthday there with Bløtkake (Norwegian cream cake), and friends wearing Norwegian national dress toasted him with Aquavit. Gerald even learnt Norwegian as his sixth language!

Back in Walton-On-Thames after living overseas with Pamela, Gerald took on many roles in their local community including at St Mary's Church. He was also the Treasurer of the Walton Allotments society and he ran a productive plot for many years. Clearly all his travelling hadn't taken him too far from his farming roots.

In addition to local causes, Gerald supported charities including Practical Action, Marie Curie, Save the Children and Médecin Sans Frontier.

Gerald was very proud of the achievements of his children, his grandchildren, all his nephews and nieces, and the many people that he helped and mentored. As his health deteriorated, he and Pamela moved a short distance to Newlyn in Weybridge, where they celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary last year. In January, Gerald passed away peacefully surrounded by his loved ones.

## ‘Handy Oil’ to the DIY rescue!

**So, who doesn't get drawn into a spot of home maintenance in retirement – willingly or otherwise?**

Brian Holmes, who retired in 2004 from ExxonMobil Marine Fuels, Leatherhead as a global Controls Advisor wrote in to tell us of his recent DIY exploits...

Brian says: "I've had a bit of trouble with some sticking internal door locks and a stiff front door lock of late, so decided to see if I could resolve the issue before embarking on purchasing replacements.

I recalled having a very old can of Esso Handy Oil in the shed, so took the offending locks apart, gave them a clean and put a few drops of the oil on the moving parts before reassembling. The front door was not so easy to take apart, so I decided to put a couple of drops on each shoot bolt as an easy first attempt. Lo and behold all now work perfectly. Amazing.

Thank you Brian for sending us a shot of your handy oil which will bring back a few memories for some!



## Keeping busy in lockdown

**2020 has proven to be a challenging year for many people, as we have been forced to spend more time at home, often unable to see family and friends. Finding ways to pass the time by helping our neighbours and local communities has been one way to find a little joy.**

ExxonMobil annuitant Vince Docherty writes to 'In Touch' to tell us of his experiences. "Prior to retiring, I was a safety analyst and ergo lead in Midstream, when it was Distribution and Pipeline," says Vince. "Now retired, I've used my experience to give informal advice for home working neighbours during the pandemic.

"In November, I also did eight separate consultations with my local church about all the COVID-19 regulations and how the church could continue some activities within the safety framework. Of course, bell-ringing, food delivery, chair spacing, WiFi installation, YouTube live streaming, weddings, funerals, flower arranging, cleaning sessions, historic buildings conservation and simple repairs were never expected when the church was built in 1350, but they need to keep up-to-date within the COVID-19 restrictions!

Thanks Vince – it's great to hear how your expertise is being put to good use in retirement.



Letters to the Editor

It is always a pleasure to receive feedback from our readers and so we thought it would be nice to include excerpts from your responses to the stories featured in our previous issues of 'In Touch'.

History at Ermyn House

*"I lived off Ermyn Way during the closure of the Goblin factory and the building of Esso House. Whilst the Goblin factory was operational it was almost impossible to access Ermyn Way during the start and end of the working day. There were no traffic lights with the Leatherhead Road and on each corner of junction stood an oak tree, both of which disappeared with the widening of the junction.*

*"Before World War 2, there was an artificial silk (rayon) works on the site before Goblin, using two wells for the water supply. Peter Tarplee's book "Past Industries of Ashted, Leatherhead and Bookham" is a good source of information of the industrial heritage of the site. I understand that the latest excavations were made where the visitors car park now resides - it seemed to be the highpoint of the site."* **Ann Cawdery**

*"My latest copy of 'In Touch' triggered memories of my time working at Esso House during the period 1988 to 1990. Yes, that was the period when it was being built, and I resided in a hut shared with the Building Management Company, Higgs & Hill. My role was the Project Accountant and kept track of all the finances incurred during the building. Being one of only five Esso people on site, I also participated in safety checks on the workforce, which required walking all over the site during construction.*

*"I distinctly remember the discovery of the Saxon graves, and looking at the skeletons in the ground. I still have my copy of the Saxon Secrets in Surrey booklet, together with a limited edition print showing an illustration of how the site may have looked in Saxon times."* **Malcolm Bowden**

*"I was Public Affairs Advisor for the 'Leatherhead Project'. During my visit to the site one morning, a foreman reported that in digging foundations they had unearthed a body. I phoned the police who said that if the body was over 50 years old they were not interested. They confirmed that the remains were ancient, so I got in touch with Surrey County Council Archaeological Department. We agreed to delay further work so that a dig could take place."* **John Sylvester**

Mike's Centenary Mug

Thanks go to David Robinson who has kindly offered his Esso glass 'Centenary Mug' to Mike Reed as a replacement for his well-used and much cherished one which has suffered a crack.

No ordinary people

On 16 May 2008, Chris and Denise Arthey were touring South Texas on their motorbike, when they were hit by a drunk driver. The accident left them severely injured, with both losing their left legs among other injuries. Following a long and painful recovery, they've since put their energies into building a new life, inspiring many people along the way.

Chris retired from his ExxonMobil career in January 2016 (incidentally, he was half way up Mount Kilimanjaro with his son at the time!) but continues a busy and active life with his wife, a former teacher, and their family. Chris says: "We've found that each day is a series of choices. If you put enough choices in a row, then that makes a good day. If you put enough good days together, that makes a good week and if you carry on, you can build a good life again."

Both Chris and Denise undertake motivational speaking engagements around the world, sharing their experiences to help others find their own inner strength.

Maintaining their physical fitness is also important to the couple, and Chris has taken part in marathons and triathlons worldwide. "Whilst many of my planned sporting challenges were postponed in 2020, I did manage to compete in the Surrey Half Marathon and Blenheim Palace Triathlon," says Chris. "I was particularly pleased to be only three seconds slower than when I first competed at Blenheim in 2016!"

Chris and Denise have written a biography about their experiences which will be published soon. **If you would like to book them to speak at an event, you'll find their contact details at [www.chrisarthey.co.uk](http://www.chrisarthey.co.uk)**



Chris competing in the Blenheim Palace Triathlon



Living the Thai life!

**Annuitant Jeff Stevens retired from ExxonMobil after a career culminating in Project and Site Construction Management roles. Now enjoying life in Thailand, he still found time to drop us a few words to keep 'In Touch'.**

"I retired in 2010 but continued to work for a few years as a project consultant contractor with ExxonMobil in Qatar and Iraq," writes Jeff. "I retired eventually to live in Thailand with my Thai wife and stepson.

"We are lucky that Thailand has managed the recent COVID-19 pandemic reasonably well and although restrictions apply for international travel, local and regional travel has been possible complying with the appropriate protocols.

"Here in Thailand, I eat well on our own organic rice, fruit and vegetables from our farm. I exercise daily – a 20km bicycle ride, a

45-minute swim and weight training. I am also a volunteer English teacher at our local town school which I love. For relaxation, I enjoy global news, sports and documentaries on television."

Jeff says that once COVID-19 has passed, he and his wife plan to travel across parts of Thailand they have yet to visit. That all adds up to an active retirement indeed Jeff!



Jeff Stevens and friend



# Oz travel diaries

Being retired can be a rewarding time, especially when it's filled with worthwhile activities. Developing new interests or finally having the time to indulge in some long-awaited travel is the order of the day.

Here is an excerpt from the 2019 Western Australia travel diaries of ExxonMobil annuitant Andy Hocking and his wife, reminding us of how things were before the COVID-19 pandemic took hold and hopefully inspiring you to plan your next trip for when the time is right.

## Oz day 1 - Sunday 3 March

We sleep until just after dawn. It's still early but we're on the wrong bodyclock still. Ready to go out for breakfast, it's the cider house down the road for eggs benedict and strong black coffee. It's hot! Late afternoon, we've got tickets to go see the outside cinema in Kingston Park Perth city. Sitting on allocated bean bags. As the picnic gets eaten, day turns to night, it's warm and the clear sky shows up the stars as we enjoy the film - what a great experience. We glimpse the city at night - it's like Hong Kong but smaller. Tired, we head back for an alfresco nightcap watching the possum feeding.



## Oz day 2 - Bank holiday Monday 4 March

Early to rise for breakfast in the alfresco area where colourful parrots are feeding. Andy has arranged for us to see koalas today at the local wildlife sanctuary. We have our picture taken while holding them - surprisingly heavy at 8kg and smelling of eucalyptus, it's quite an



experience! After that it's parrots, wide mouth somethings that look like owls, fresh-water crocs, dingoes, emu, peacocks, ostriches, kangaroos, deer, bobtail lizards, echidnas and ice lollies - did I mention it was hot!

## Oz day 5 - Thursday 7 March

The overnight rain brought the temperature down. We decide to call our camper 'Sheila'. We meander through countryside to our next destination "martins tank campsite" near Preston Beach. We find our pitches and make camp. After lunch, we go for a walk and bump into a kangaroo and its offspring. We round a salt-water lake and watch the wading birds, plovers and gulls. Back at camp, Caroline is cooking up a chicken curry and Andy is chopping veg to be able to entice the possums out of the trees once it gets dark. Surely enough, after dinner we sit in the light of the torch and down they come to feed in front of us. We can hear others in the bush hissing and squabbling.

## Oz day 6 - Friday 8 March

This morning we head down to Preston Beach for a paddle in the Indian Ocean but I don't want to get eaten by sharks. Next stop is the Thrombolites at the top of lake Clifton - these are organic coral that look like rocks, but are some sort of 600-million-year-old life form. Karen and I stop at a winery on the way back for a sample of the local brew. On the way to bed, we come across a big spider web and a huge giant orb spider, while getting photos Andy walks into the web and we leg it as the spider comes hurling towards us, it's scary!



## Oz day 10 - Tuesday 12 March

Today it's a full-day winery tour of Margaret River to experience many delicious delights from around the region including wines, craft beers, chocolates, cheeses and more. This includes a gourmet winery lunch and an exclusive behind-the-scenes winery tour. We've had a fantastic day, a bit of a wine crawl if you like. So tonight, it's cold meats and a cup of tea, no more alcohol please. We've met more Brits, some Poms and some Americans. I would recommend this tour to anyone especially if you've not done this region.



## Oz day 24 - Tuesday 26 March

So, we're going to go to the pinnacles today, the limestone rock formations in the desert. They are truly spectacular poking up from the orange sand. Did I mention it was hot? After a great drive around, we head back to Cervantes camp. We seem to be surrounded tonight by the Perth camper hire fleets.



## UK Tuesday 2 April

So, an 11-hour flight to Dubai from Perth, two hours in the lounge and a seven hour flight Dubai to Heathrow. The sun shone to welcome us home as we reached Dorset.

Distance Travelled - 14,500 kms. That's all until our next amazing adventure, where will it be?

Outback Andy and kangaroo Karen, over and out!