

KierLink

The magazine for the Kier Fellowship Trust | Issue 41 | Autumn/Winter 2020

A celebration of the life of Richard 'Dick' Side



RICHARD (DICK) SIDE
PAGE 6

THE GLAMOROUS SIDE OF
BEING AN INTERNATIONAL
ESTIMATOR
PAGES 20-23

RAILWAY MODELLING – A VERY
FULFILLING HOBBY!
PAGES 26-27



18 September 1946 to 4 May 2020

Beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend



Neil Meixner

Chairman's matters and Administrator's report

As we write this end of year message at least there is some better news on the horizon with vaccines apparently coming to us from all quarters, but we all need to keep up our vigilance and not succumb in the last few months of this dreadful epidemic.

"What a year!"

Life will return to normal hopefully by mid-2021 and rest assured when it does your area organisers will be poised to roll out a full calendar of events for you to enjoy.

Please do take part and support these great events as they come to your attention.

Closer to the time you can find further information on these events at:

www.fellowship.kier.co.uk

You can add event reports, blogs and photographs by sending them to Andrea McDaid at: andrea.mcdaid@yahoo.com

You will see, despite the obvious lack of events this year, there are some great articles in this edition of KierLink. We are always seeking interesting items for inclusion in future editions. If you have been on a memorable holiday or have celebrated a special event, please contact any member of the editorial team namely, Andrea McDaid at the above email address, Neil Meixner or Brendan O'Boyle at: kierlinkmag@gmail.com and we will be pleased to assist you.

Interest in the Trust remains strong with new members joining from most divisions of the company and membership is currently standing at 1,363 compared with 1,350 this time last year.



Brendan O'Boyle

In these difficult times it is gratifying that so many people still want to keep up with their former colleagues. If you know of new retirees or leavers why not see if they'd like to join the Fellowship. The Application form is available at: <http://www.fellowship.kier.co.uk/joining-us/>

Please make sure that if you change your address you give your new address to your area organiser and Brendan O'Boyle. We will update our records so that you can continue to receive copies of the KierLink magazine. It is helpful to have any new telephone number as well so that you can receive invitations to events.

If you require help or information with any matters relating to the Kier Group Fellowship Trust please contact Brendan O'Boyle by email as shown below:

brendan.o'boyle.ext@kier.co.uk

Regards Neil & Brendan

Editor's note

Dear members. Happy New Year! I hope it's a better one!

We have all found ourselves in a completely unique situation since March last year. I would use the word 'unprecedented' but it's been completely exhausted haha.

Many of us will have found this a challenge but equally a lot of people have found it... quite nice! Here's a few 'positives' from some people I know:

- No commuting to work (getting stuck in traffic or delays)
- Spending quality time with immediate family while working from home
- Exercising every day
- Catching up on DIY and pursuing hobbies
- The weather was amazing!

The negatives are obvious for everyone, but for me initially these:

- The first time I went into a supermarket with my mum after the first Lockdown was announced it felt like Armageddon!
- Who bought all the toilet rolls? I know of one person (via a friend) that stocked up with over 100! I'm still interested to know how many she has left
- Who bought all 'my' pasta, mince and sauces? Italian food is one of my favourites and "I was not happy!"

Thankfully the second Lockdown wasn't quite so bad in the supermarkets. As from the beginning of September 2020 I took a part-time Trolley-Dolly role so I know!

We just have to keep being patient, stick to the rules and things will get back to normal at some point. I'm sure next Christmas and New Year celebrations will be back to normal. Meanwhile, at least with the amount of technology available now we can Zoom/Skype etc, to see our loved ones.

Take care all and very best wishes, Andrea



Andrea McDaid

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Copy deadline for Spring/Summer 2021 issue:

**FRIDAY
18 JUNE**



Email andrea.mcdaid@yahoo.com



Message from the Chief Executive

Hello and welcome to the winter edition of KierLink. There is no doubt that this year has been challenging for us all and I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on 2020 and the work we have continued to deliver across the Group, under very challenging circumstances.

Throughout the pandemic, Kier colleagues continued to deliver vital work for our clients and communities in line with the Government's guidance and, as an industry we acted quickly and implemented Site Operating Procedures to keep our workforce safe.

We were able to assist the NHS by being involved in the construction of three surge hospitals and providing FM services to 16 hospitals. We continued to keep the road networks moving, kept people connected to their water, electricity and broadband as well as continuing to offer 24/7 emergency call outs where needed across the whole business.

We released our full year results as normal in September, which included an update on our strategic review and the impact of Covid-19 on the Group. The progress we made in the first nine months reflected the successful execution of many elements of our strategic plan, as we began to experience the benefits of the decisive cost-reduction action we've taken.

Whilst first-half volumes were lower, this was anticipated as significant contracts concluded and frameworks transitioned. The outputs of our strategic plan allowed profits to improve despite these reductions in revenues. As a result, we were trading in line with expectations in the period up to 31 March 2020.

As you will know, Covid-19 has had an adverse impact across the industry. We are not exempt from this and, in the final three months of the financial year, it impacted the Group's performance as we adapted to working under revised Site Operating Procedures.

Although we have faced difficulties this year, we are a good business and have had fantastic successes throughout 2020. This includes being awarded the Highways England £160m Area 4 maintenance

and response contract, being appointed to deliver a £106.6m mixed-use scheme in London and our Utilities and Infrastructure businesses secured a place on the £2.6bn Thames Water AMP7 Capital Programmes framework.

This year, we have also started embedding our culture of Performance Excellence, an enduring way of working that will guide all of us in Kier on how to run our business effectively and drive consistency across the Group.

Under Performance Excellence we have launched five workstreams – processes, people, cash management, project execution and future of work. These workstreams are responsible for ensuring we operate safely, astutely and to the best of our ability, as well as looking at how we must evolve to meet the changing needs of our future workforce and clients.

We have also launched our new values – trusted, collaborative and focused. Our values underpin and support everything we do – they are at the core of our Performance Excellence culture and should be at the heart of any decisions we make or conversations we have with colleagues and clients.

Whilst there is still more to be done, we are making progress on our strategic goals and we have a strengthened senior team in place to deliver our clear plan and vision of where we want the business to be.

"Thank you for your continued support and I hope you had a safe and enjoyable festive season."



Andrew Davies

A warm welcome to the following new members

Name	City/town	Area	Worked for	Years of service
Toni Aisbett	Biggleswade, Bedfordshire	Tempsford	Kier Ltd	12
Richard Banks	Lindford, Hampshire	Maple Cross	Kier Southern	36
Luke Baxter	Northolt, Greater London	Maple Cross	Kier Southern	19
Geoff Bull	Horsham, Sussex	Tempsford	Kier Build	31
Marcelo Carlstrom	Isleworth, Middlesex	Loughton/Witham	Kier London	10
Moira Carthy	Gnosall, Stafford	Central	Kier Facilities	12
Simon Daniell	Bedford, Bedfordshire	Tempsford	Kier Workplace Services	4
Michele de Massimi	St Neots, Cambridgeshire	Tempsford	Kier Property	30
John Dowdle	Fuerteventura, Spain	Bristol/Newport	Kier Western	38
Martin Edworthy	Newton Abbot, Devon	Plymouth	Kier Western	17
Kevin Gilbert	Wisbech, Cambridgeshire	Waterbeach	Kier Eastern	37
David Gisbourne	Evesham, Worcestershire	Central	Kier Major Projects	7
Michael Godfrey	Wisbech, Cambridgeshire	Waterbeach	Kier Eastern	45
Anthony Henocq	Stevenage, Hertfordshire	Tempsford	Kier Infrastructure	11
Jonathan Hillier	Cambridge, Cambridgeshire	Tempsford	Kier Utilities	15
Peter Hollingsworth	Norwich, Norfolk	Waterbeach	Kier Highways	40
Julian Holmes	Torquay, Devon	Plymouth	Kier Western	30
Andrew Holt	Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire	Tempsford	Kier Construction	10
Matthew Houghton	Stafford	Liverpool/Manchester	Kier Highways	5
Russell Kavanagh	Wilden, Bedfordshire	Tempsford	Kier Group	12
Tina Kendall	High Ongar, Essex	Loughton/Witham	Kier London	41
Christopher Kingsnorth	Aldershot, Hampshire	Maple Cross	Kier Southern	2
Paul Knowler	Marlborough, Wiltshire	Central	Kier Construction	5
Lynn Miller	Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire	Maple Cross	Kier Southern	5
Peter Nicholas	Marlborough, Wiltshire	Central	Kier Build	18
Gareth Owen	Fairwater, Cardiff	Bristol & Newport	Kier Western	26
Tina Parkin	Little Paxton, Cambridgeshire	Tempsford	Kier Workplace Services	15
Jens Parry	Torfaen, Monmouthshire	Bristol & Newport	Kier Western	41
Yusuf Patel	Blackburn, Lancashire	Northern	Kier Living	8
Phil Platt	High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire	Maple Cross	Kier Highways	5
Peter Radley-Martin	Tonbridge, Kent	Maidstone	Kier Southern	31
Shaun Reynolds	Bournemouth, Dorset	Solent	Kier Southern	21
Susan Ruff	St Neots, Cambridgeshire	Tempsford	Kier Facilities	28
Glyn Salmon	Newbury, Berkshire	Central	Kier Central	18
Hazel Simcock	St Neots, Cambridgeshire	Tempsford	Kier Living	20
Ian Squire	Dunstable, Bedfordshire	Tempsford	Kier Infrastructure	21
Graham Winnett	High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire	Maple Cross	Kier Southern	6
Sean Yeo	Great Doddington, Northants	Rushden	Kier Eastern	35

Richard William Side: 1946-2020

'A TRUE GENTLEMAN'

Richard (Dick) Side was born on 18 September 1946 and spent his formative working years with Trollope & Colls as a trainee surveyor. He gained site and contracts management experience with Wiltshier, a south east contractor where he attained his first directorship.

Dick joined Kent builders Wallis in 1983 as managing director of its London division. Many of you will know the history but Wallis was sold to Beazer in 1985 and a year later Beazer swooped to takeover Kier. Subsequently Hanson acquired Beazer and in 1992 Dick was amongst the prime movers in the successful management and staff buyout that saw Kier independent once again. Finally Kier Group plc was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1996.

During this time, and after the buy-out, Dick was a key architect in the development of regional contracting which grew steadily in its size and profitability. Dick supported and encouraged colleagues with his guidance and knowledge of Kier, its ways and its personnel. He always provided the right strategy at the right time. He was appointed deputy managing director of Kier Regional in 1992.

The Kier Group Board in 1998 was inspired to form the Kier Group Fellowship Trust (the Fellowship) to support social interaction of the Fellowship members. Dick became company nominee on the Trust Board charged with the task of ensuring that the Fellowship functioned effectively and met its objectives.

Dick enjoyed continued success and in 2003 became the main board director responsible for the Group's regional construction activities. Dick held sway during many extraordinarily successful years before formally retiring from



Dick Side

Kier in November 2008.

For both Dick and Liz their 'Kier story' may have ended in retirement but Dick, as chairman, continued to work tirelessly toward the continued development of the Fellowship. He promoted both the annual 'Tempsford garden party' and KierLink – the main publication to keep members in touch and informed. It was his leadership and cajoling that not only ensured the Fellowship responded to the ever changing Kier, but also inspired the retirees and long servers. The Fellowship owes its continued success to the influential Dick Side.

In the Spring of 2015, Dick stepped down as chairman, but remained a Fellowship board member until January 2018. He continued to contribute to its success. Dick and Liz keenly supported and enjoyed the dinners & reunions – in particular the 'National golf day'. Golf was one of their shared passions. Dick also loved photography and football. He was an accomplished amateur player and was proud to have been at Wembley on 30 July 1966 when England won the World Cup. His other interests included supporting the charitable works of The Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers of London.

Throughout his career Dick was wholeheartedly supported by his wife Liz and their two children Mark & Lorraine. Dick and Liz's retirement was spent with the family. They loved to visit America to see their son and his family as well as travelling to their second home in Portugal to, amongst other things, play golf and welcome the family. He leaves a large gap in their lives since he left us on 4 May 2020.

"Indeed, Dick, 'a true gentleman', will be greatly missed by us all."

Obituaries

Our thoughts are with the loved ones of those who have passed away.

George Algar	19/01/2020	Kathleen Holmes	10/04/2020	Carl Salkeld	14/05/2020
Yvonne Apperley	17/05/2020	Joyce Hood	31/07/2020	Kenneth Saunders	28/03/2020
William Barnes	30/04/2020	Robert Humphries	02/09/2020	Mollie Saunders	04/12/2020
David Barnett	12/09/2020	Anthony Jackson	26/04/2020	Janice Sargent	11/04/2020
Brian Barraclough	06/11/2019	Mike Janes	10/11/2020	David Searle	16/03/2020
Ronald Bourton	31/03/2020	Ian Jennings	09/04/2020	Arnold Selby	21/02/2020
Kenneth Bradbury	16/04/2020	Angela Joseph	23/08/2020	John Shepherd	21/03/2020
Brian Bradley	27/09/2020	Graeme Kidd	07/06/2020	Richard (Dick) Side	04/05/2020
Colin Brickstock	01/10/2020	Richard Lee	20/09/2020	Barry Simms	26/06/2020
George Chambers	17/06/2020	Winifred Loader	12/08/2020	Betty Smith	28/01/2020
Sheila Clifford	23/03/2020	Valerie Mann	01/2020	William Smith	18/06/2020
Ernest Collier	03/05/2020	Terence McCall	18/08/2020	Keith Snelling	20/02/2020
Pauline Conley	20/09/2020	Mary McDonald	20/04/2020	Helen Soutar	26/09/2020
Les Cracknell	15/04/2020	Peter McMeekin	13/06/2020	George Surridge	Unknown
Angela Davis	11/06/2020	John Moore	31/08/2020	Manuel Tavares	01/04/2020
Geoffrey Davis	15/02/2020	Alan Munday	14/03/2020	Elsie Tozer	22/03/2020
John Dent	02/07/2020	Roy Nock	02/05/2020	Betty Wager	05/03/2020
Julia Dodds	14/02/2020	Antony Norris	06/04/2020	Anthony Waterhouse	11/06/2020
Walter Edwards	16/02/2020	John Ormston	15/02/2020	Michael Webb	28/02/2020
James Fell	29/02/2020	Peter Parr	03/04/2020	Thomas Welsh	03/06/2020
Andrew Foster	18/02/2020	Pierre Pedersen	24/03/2020	Kenneth Whitton	02/03/2020
Yvonne Freeman	12/02/2020	Bryan Phillips	21/08/2020	Terry Wilson	03/11/2020
Nicholas Gerald	19/02/2020	Graham Pickard	29/02/2020	Muriel Wolsey	13/03/2020
Terry Hale	24/02/2020	Annette Price	15/02/2020	Kenneth Woods	17/08/2020
Edith Hawke	11/04/2020	William Price	29/05/2020		
Gordon Hesketh	30/04/2020	Rodger Reed	18/03/2020		

Two tales of one city...

(AND A FEW OTHER PLACES) BY JEFF TAYLOR

Shirley and I first visited Rome in March 1975 as two impoverished students with inter rail cards. These cost £49 each and allowed for a month of 'free' train travel in Europe.



In those days there was no internet or mobile phones, and we didn't have credit or debit cards, so off we set with what we hoped was sufficient money in the form of travellers' cheques to last the whole 10 days of our trip. We also had a Pan European rail timetable, costing £1.25, printed monthly by Thomas Cook.

"What could go wrong!"

Well after a pleasant train journey from Maidstone East rail station we caught the ferry from Folkestone to Calais and then the train to Paris. From there we were supposedly heading overnight to Pisa. However, on reaching Paris we discovered that the Italian train drivers were on strike – though rumour had it that it would end the following day. We had a quick discussion and decided to travel overnight to Modane on the French/Italian border and wait for a train to Rome missing out Pisa. Luckily the rumours were true and after 13 hours sitting in the cold station, a train arrived to take us to Turin where we caught another to Rome...

"... and so we spent our second night on a train!"

In 2019 we travelled in on Easyjet, for £45 each return in 1975 terms, and it only took 2.5 hours! It was a quick rail and tube journey from the airport to



our hotel, booked on the Internet. How times have changed!



Inside the Colosseum 1975

In 1975 we first went to the Colosseum, the must see building in Rome. It was difficult to reach it as it was circled by roads, and the Italian drivers ignored the pedestrian crossings. Still, we made it across and went inside. What an amazing sight! Although the floor had gone you could still imagine how it must've looked when it was in use.

In 2019 the area around it was now pedestrianised so we had an easy walk to reach it but, compared to 44 years ago, it was crowded. However, Shirley,



The Colosseum 2019

as usual, had booked timed tickets so we were able to walk straight in. It was still a marvel of engineering and we enjoyed a leisurely walk around inside, admiring the workmanship (and the scaffolding). There were also amazing displays showing how it used to look and function.



The Forum 1975

Near the Colosseum is the Forum, which was the second place we visited in 1975. It has many buildings, pathways, and covers a very large area. With limited time we just walked through the main area looking at the various

features and taking a few photos, including the one of Trajan's Column. Despite being tired we still found it very interesting. In 2019 we took a whole day to fully explore all the areas. It was far bigger than we'd imagined – perhaps more had opened since we last came? It was a great tour, with the use of computer projections bringing the old murals to life.



The Forum 2019

In 1975, from the Forum we headed to the Vatican City. We visited the outside taking a few photos which as you can see was practically empty. Although we visited the Sistine Chapel, we took no photos – it probably wasn't allowed. This time we took a whole day, and the area was extremely busy with queues for everything. We managed to see the Sistine Chapel which had two-plus hours queue.

"It was busy inside but well worth it."



Shirley in St. Peter's Square

From St. Peter's in 1975, we headed back to the Youth Hostel passing near the Castel Sant' Angelo where Tosca supposedly jumped from the battlements in the opera. After two nights sleeping on trains it was good to have a proper night's sleep. From Rome we travelled to Salerno for a visit to Pompeii. This we found incredible – just the sort of place we both love. Apart from all the amazing buildings and casts of the people who didn't escape the volcano, the most memorable feature for me was the wheel ruts worn into the cobbles. Just an ordinary feature but showed that people did really live there and had done for a long time before the eruption.



Jeff approaching an empty St. Peter's Square



St. Peter's Square 2019

On the journey, we knew we'd missed a lot in Rome so we revised our itinerary. We decided to go back to Rome from Pompeii, spend an extra day there, then just visit Pisa on the train early in the morning on the way to Florence. Thus, we'd have seen all we planned and be back on schedule.



The Trevi Fountain 2019

We visited the Pantheon, which we can now see was very dirty in 1975 compared to now. It was still impressive however (especially for an engineer) as it still has the world's largest unreinforced concrete dome, nearly 2000 years after it was built. We also visited the Piazza del Popolo.



The Trevi Fountain 1975

On our second Rome day in 1975, we visited the Trevi Fountain. We found it was a lot cleaner in 2019, but also far busier. It was actually quite difficult to move round, with lots of tour groups and their guides. At least the majority seemed to be using Bluetooth headsets so there was no shouting.



Crowds at the Trevi Fountain 2019



Pompeii 1975

In 1975 it was used as a coach park which spoilt the view of the impressive column. Now it has been pedestrianised and is a much more enjoyable place to visit. Nearby is a church containing famous Caravaggio paintings. We visited this in 2019 enjoying the many artworks.



The Pantheon 1975 (a bit dirty)

In 2019 we stayed opposite the Plaza del Popolo and although Shirley didn't remember having been there, I had a

sense of déjà vu when we entered. It was only when we got home and found the old photos that we realised we'd been there before.



The Pantheon 2019 (a lot cleaner)

In 1975 we left Rome for our early morning visit to Pisa where it was raining. We stayed long enough to take a few photos then caught the next train to Florence where we spent two glorious days. It was lovely to have time to explore. Our final visit was to Venice where we used the water buses – a real novelty!

For 2019 we travelled by train to Ravenna to see the mosaics in various churches which were beautiful. We also used bicycles from the hotel to visit a nearby Roman port (now landlocked) which was fascinating. Then we moved onto Bologna where we spent our final day before flying home.



Piazza del Popolo 1975

The journey home in 1975 was by train and required another night sleeping in the carriage. As for money, on the last leg from Paris, we only had sufficient funds for one cup of coffee and two croissants, or one croissant and two



Piazza del Popolo 2019



A mosaic in Ravenna 2019

coffees. We chose the former as the French coffee was large enough to share. So, in the end we had brought enough money, **but only just!**



Pisa in the rain 1975

Around the regions

Bristol and Newport

Some garden wildlife: Our one-acre rural situation garden on the edge of the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, always has wildlife of interest. In this strange year, following the 'monsoon' rain all last winter, 'Lockdown' brought near-continuous sunshine.

For several years we have had rare Hawfinch visiting a black sunflower feeder. We hope they will return soon for a fourth consecutive winter.



Hawfinches

Our spring flowers were excellent with over 1,000 primrose plants and nearly 2,000 cowslip flower spikes. Ladies Smock (Cuckoo Flower) was also good and was visited by many Bees-Flies (Bombylius major).

We keep weekly bird records for the BTO Garden BirdWatch Survey: <https://bto.org/our-science/projects/gbw>

Most of our 22 varied design bird boxes had nests with Great and Blue Tits,

Nuthatch, Jackdaw and Stock Dove, all successfully fledging young. Woodmice used one box and Red-tailed Bumble Bees another.

The Honey Bees occupied a 'Little Owl' box, which had successfully overwintered and outgrew space. On 7 May a large swarm emerged and settled in our nearest apple tree. These docile bees were collected and were destined for a new hive at a school nearby in Chepstow.

In June there were at least two young Greater Spotted Woodpeckers while an adult male was feeding from fat balls when it started raining. It flew to the garage and had a look for insects under the eaves, then stayed there for 10 minutes sheltering from the shower!



Amara Plebeja Beetle



Greater Spotted Woodpecker

My report of the iridescent green Amara Plebeja Beetle was only the second record for my 10km grid square, the last being in 1994. Amateur recorders can contribute a great deal of new data to local and national records.

Holly Blue butterflies seemed numerous this summer. A 'first' for us was this Small Copper Butterfly on Golden Rod. This perennial flower is great for attracting a large variety of insects which included a spectacular Ichneumonid wasp Gasteruption Jaculator, I think?

We had masses of holly berries but, apart from some I rescued by cutting and putting in water in the greenhouse. I expect by the time you read this, the Redwings and Blackbirds will have finished the lot!

What a haven of wildlife interest and sanity our garden has been during this Covid-19 isolation!

David Priddis



Ichneumon wasp Gasteruption Jaculator

Loughton & Witham

Lunch with speaker: 'The Swinging 60s', 20/02/2020

We held our annual lunch with a speaker at Mulberry House with a party of 69 members, partners and guests sitting down for a three-course lunch. As always, people arrived early and the bar was open for guests to enjoy a drink whilst they chatted to friends and former colleagues before an excellent lunch was served by the ever reliable team at Mulberry House.



Relaxing after lunch

Our speaker this year was Nick Dobson. Nick is a former head librarian who, when Essex Library Service contracted, decided that he wasn't ready to retire and has made himself a second career in public speaking fulfilling some 250 engagements each year. Nick speaks on a diverse range of topics and the subject that we had chosen was 'Swinging London', an account of London in the decade that started 60 years ago. Nick's talk was both informative & entertaining and certainly brought back a few memories.

All in all, it was a very good lunch and afternoon that was enjoyed by all present.

John Abbott

Royal Opera House tour/lunch at Sarastro, 22/03/2020

Thirty-two members met for the organised tour of The Royal Opera House (ROH), Covent Garden and afterwards lunch at Sarastro – Covent Garden's world-famous theatrical restaurant.

It had originally been intended to be a back stage tour but due to Covid-19 the ROH organised a 'front of house tour', videos and a talk on behind the scene activities. Our guides were representatives from the ROH who were excellent and most informative. We ended up having two tours in one! Additionally, we were able to witness part of a rehearsal for the opera 'La Traviata'.

The ROH proved to be an interesting and exciting place to visit and was thoroughly enjoyed by all the Fellowship members.

After a short walk from the ROH we arrived at the Sarastro restaurant in good spirits to enjoy a delicious Mediterranean cuisine in a truly extraordinary setting.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the memories of the tour, the Sarastro experience, an enjoyable meal and our jovial, entertaining coach driver!

Chris Oats



ROH talk

Maple Cross

On a fine Thursday between the end of storm Ciara and before storm Dennis arrived, we met at Biggles again which has become home to our Valentines Day lunch.



We had 33 members attending which is a good number and it was great to catch up after the Christmas break.

We were joined by our newest member (at the time) Dave Patterson & his wife Barbara. Technically Dave was not a member at the time as he still had six days left to work, however it was good to see him and learn about the latest goings on at Maple Cross.



After lunch, Norman gave his after-dinner round-up, though at Biggles he had to give it twice due to the chimney which divides the room. Still that only occurs because it's so popular.

He advised that as well as the future events listed at the back, he is also trying to organise another Thames

cruise. Hopefully the funds will stretch that far.

At the end of the meal we all said our goodbyes though some lingered longer enjoying a chat.



Jeff Taylor

Rushden

We started the year with our annual visit to the Royal Albert Hall for 'The Mountbatten Festival of Music' featuring the Massed Bands of The Royal Marines. A party of 46 boarded the coach and certainly enjoyed the evening of various styles of music and ceremonial pomp.

For some, the evening was enhanced by the appearance of Harry and Meghan as chief guests – their last engagement as 'Royals'.

However, within weeks the country came to a standstill with Coronavirus – surely it couldn't affect our programme of events? It obviously did, with a lockdown of several weeks and general uncertainty.

Our group had to cancel the following events:

Date	Event
29/03/20	Ascot Races family fun day
15/05/20	Five days, four nights for the Isle of Man break, with 44 members having paid in
05/07/20	Steam train and Wroxham Boards
25/07/20	Kneller Hall picnic and concert

05/08/20	Eastbourne and concert
18/09/20	Four days, three nights at Northumbria and Beamish Museum

As at the end of November 2020, we are still in Lockdown. However, we were taking a chance and hoping we could still operate two events before Christmas:

Date	Event
03/12/20	Annual Christmas lunch
04/12/20	Four days, three nights at Potters Leisure Resort for the Christmas Spectacular

Numbers have been curtailed by Covid-19 but we are hopeful Boris will allow these events to take place safely.

Our annual New Year break has been cancelled by the travel company – we were due to visit Craiglands Hotel in Ilkley, Yorkshire. Twenty-six members had booked and paid their deposits. Once again, another victory for Covid!

Membership in our area has risen slightly to 162.

We hope 2021 can eventually 'return to normal' and events return to past years.

Brian Hill

Solent

Covid-19 lockdown

Thankfully, I will never be asked the question: "What did you do in the war?" But have been asked: "What did you do in the Lockdown?" I'm sure we all have many and varied tales of what we got up to in our leisure time, this is what I did.



Early in 2018 I was successfully treated for prostate cancer. My interests in cycling and raising money for charity prompted me to raise money for the Prostate Cancer charity by taking in unloved bikes, refurbishing them with plenty of TLC and then offering them at affordable prices with the proceeds going to the charity. In 2018 I successfully completed 20 bikes and 24 in 2019.

Over the winter of 2019/2020 I completed seven bikes ready to offer them for sale in the spring. Well, Covid-19 changed things



in more ways than one! As the bikes were stored in my shed and green-house I listed them on Gumtree (other electronic marketplaces are available) at the beginning of April as I needed the space for the summer. I stressed that I would operate safely under the newly introduced Covid-19 guidelines. I had sold them all within a week!

As I enjoy working on bikes, and my normal sources of obtaining them were unavailable, I decided to post a message on a local community hub end of April. I explained what I did and asked that if anyone had a bike they no longer used and wanted to clear a space in their shed/garage/garden then I would be happy to help them out by collecting it. The message was posted on a Friday and by Sunday evening I had 29 bikes in the back garden! They continued to be offered throughout the summer and I even picked up two last week.

The bikes were in various states of repair from those that only required a few hours of work to those which took, on and off, several days. The types ranged from a balance starter bike for two-year olds,



mountain bikes, road bikes, a 1952 handmade racing bike and even an adult tricycle. People were very generous. I managed to complete over a hundred bikes which took countless hours but raised a decent donation for the charity. It ticked a number of boxes for me as it gave the bikes a new life, me enjoyment by working on them and bringing them back to a clean and usable condition, getting people back into cycling in these difficult times and it raised money for charity.

I met many interesting people on my journey. Such a person was a student completing a Master's Degree in 'sports journalism'. He was

working at home in a one bedroom flat and said he was going 'stir crazy' at being confined to quarters and was looking to get out for some space and exercise, cycling seemed to fit the bill. He didn't buy the bike that I had but we got chatting and I told him of what I was doing and my 'journey'. I also said that I enjoyed the recreational side of cycling which I found therapeutic both mentally and physically. A couple of weeks later he phoned me to say he had now bought a bike and was inspired to do some other things from what I had said. He was particularly keen to explore cycling as a way to help with mental health issues.

Over the next few months this developed into a 30-minute film called 'Braking the cycle'. In it he interviewed specialists in mental health,

cyclists with disabilities, people who make bikes for disabled people and yours truly. He also arranged for me to receive a video thank you message from the Prostate Cancer charity as well as an interview and article in the local evening paper and an interview on radio Solent.

All in all, a very busy but rewarding summer for me, as one door closed a number of others certainly opened. I still managed to keep up riding 100 miles a week so will achieve over 5000 miles by the end of the year which wasn't my plan at the beginning of January. I wonder what challenges 2021 will bring?

Peter Wallbank



Tempsford

It will be no surprise to read that our events have been curtailed since March 2020, since when the whole country (indeed the whole world) has been struggling through uncharted territory. We did however have two events before the lockdown.

On 6 February we had 17 for lunch at The Barley Mow, St. Neots, where we were made to feel most welcome. The dining area is quite small so a larger number would have been difficult to accommodate but there was plenty of chat and some lovely grub!



Grafham Water is full!

On 10 March, just before we elderly were advised to stay at home, nine of us had a lunch at the newly refurbished Eaton Oak, Eaton Socon. Once again, we were well fed but I felt that the new layout of the bar and conservatory areas left something to be desired.

In August, our committee met via Zoom, to consider whether it might be possible to arrange a get-together. It was decided that a walk near Grafham Water in Cambridgeshire could be undertaken within the 'Rule of Six' directive, and that it might be possible to follow with a lunch in a popular venue – The Wheatsheaf in Perry.



Beside Grafham Water

Initial enquiries found 11 members interested in the walk and 14 in the lunch – not all walkers would dine, and not all diners would walk. We had to ensure that the restaurant's arrangements were acceptable to the diners and I must admit that, as infection rates around the nation surged, we wondered whether it was right to continue.



Lunch at The Wheatsheaf, Perry

In any event, we continued with both activities on Wednesday 14 October. We were lucky with the weather which remained dry for the whole walk (just 2.75 miles) with warm sunshine towards the end and we had a leisurely lunch at The Wheatsheaf. Many thanks to Ron and Jane (our intrepid walk



Lunch at The Wheatsheaf, Perry

planners) – we all felt much enlivened from the day's outing, despite wearing face masks indoors except when seated.



Grafham Sailing Club

We will shortly be considering what we can plan for the next 12 months or so. We do have a booking for Christmas lunch on 8 December at Pavenham Golf and Country Club, but it is not currently known whether this will proceed, and we wonder whether there will be an appetite for socially distanced lunches and visits.

Harold Thompson

Quarantine quests

Lockdown has given us loads of time to catch up with those jobs we prefer to leave on the back burner. For me, the first few weeks were spent making face coverings, scrubs and washbags but once supplies were freely available, my thoughts turned to a couple of projects I'd started pre pandemic. And so I finished a suit of clothes for a fox and knitted a 100ft scarf. Well not exactly; the fox was a vintage toy whose hunting pinks had become faded and threadbare, and the scarf was several long-knitted lengths sewn together to make a bedcover. Once these were finished, I started work on the construction of a hotel – of sorts. It was of the insect variety made from a pallet that had been taking up space in my garage. And so, Mr Fox is now fantastic, the bedspread is all sewn up and the insects are checking in to Bugingham Palace. I have loads more stuff on the back burner, but hopefully as we return to a more normal way of life with freedom to 'get out more', they can stay there!



Viv Chesterfield



THE GLAMOROUS SIDE OF BEING AN INTERNATIONAL ESTIMATOR BY JOHN MOUATT

After six years with Simplex Piling, I concluded with six months in the UAE introducing new piling techniques to the company there. On returning to the UK, I transferred to Kier from mid-1978 until the end of 1987. I worked for Kier International (KI) as an international estimator. During this period, I visited over 25 countries: Hong Kong, Singapore, Iraq, Turkey, Kuwait to name just a few!

On many occasions I made multiple visits for re-tendering or pre-award negotiations and prepared & submitted over 40 tenders of note for a very wide range of projects. I was successful in significant contract awards – the smallest being in St. Vincent and the largest in Iraq – with many in between in Jamaica, Jordan, and Hong Kong. In all, around £170m of work for KI, either as direct contracts or in JV with other companies.

Most of these contracts were concluded successfully but it is impossible at a tender stage to take every eventuality into consideration – otherwise the contractor would probably never win any work. After all, you have to rely on the project managers to demonstrate their expertise!

Some estimators were 'specialised' in some areas of construction; however all estimators were expected to tender whatever was allocated to them by the estimating director. If we needed advice, there was always an estimator who had tendered that type of project before, so went to them for guidance.

Times to estimate projects varied between 4-12 weeks, sometimes longer, depending on the size and complexity of the project. The golden rule was that you always completed and submitted the tender, unless of course at the final tender review meeting, the responsible director decided the job was too risky and the tender would not be submitted! Needless to say, the estimator's life was pretty hectic and stressful at

times as there was never enough time to complete what had to be done!

One of the essential elements of the tendering process for a project was of course to visit the site, meet the clients and prospective partners, gather local information, costs & prices and in some cases, meet the local Commercial Attaché in the British Embassy.



I have some very memorable experiences from going on these site visits. One such visit was to the Yemen to tender for the refurbishment of the port at Hodeidah (or Al-Hudaydah, or Hodeda, or Hudaida, as it is variously named on different maps!) The port is located mid-way up the western Yemen coastline on the Red Sea and is the major port for the Yemen through which, at that time, a large part of their imports passed through. Unfortunately, because of conflicts, civil disturbances and lack of capital, the port was in a poor state of repair, hardly any of the cranes worked, but the Government had secured international aid and loans for a major upgrade – the subject of the tender.

The Capital of the Yemen is Sana'a which is around 230kms from the port in a easterly direction, but between the two, one has to traverse three major geomorphic regions of the Yemen, comprising a coastal plain for around 70kms – a very mountainous region rising over 3,000m with major wadis, including Wadi Soudeed for around 120kms – and then the Sana'a plateau for the last 40kms. Sana'a sits at around 2,000m altitude. The middle section is really spectacular, then just a two-lane road with hundreds of very steep hairpin bends and very steep drops over the edge! Around 60% of the traffic at that time was trucks (mostly ancient) laden with all sorts of products, going from the port to the capital, travelling very slowly up or down, very steep inclines/declines!

There were then no direct flights to Hodeidah, so I flew into Sana'a, spent a few days there collecting information and doing research. On the day the client was to brief the tendering contractors', I flew down from Sana'a. Now remember, this was in mid-1980s and the Yemen was fairly primitive. It only had basic air service, in fact mostly well-worn, but serviceable, old Douglas DC3's!

There were only two flights a day from Sana'a to Hodeidah. The first left at 6.30am and I booked the last flight back at 5.30pm to allow maximum time on site. This is where the reader needs some imagination!

The plane was old, it had about 18-20 seats in the forward cabin and from about the mid-wing location, the back of the plane was allocated for freight and of course – animals! Well,

A YEMEN SUMMER

the front half was certainly full and so was the back – full of sheep and goats going to the market in the port!

We embarked on time and were given our refreshment for the flight once seated – a polystyrene cup of very strong, very sweet dark tea and only half full. I do remember that there was a certain earthy aroma in the passenger cabin, a mixture of un-washed bodies, animal smells and not helped by the awful air freshener sprayed around the cabin by the helpful flight attendant!

We sat there waiting to take off. We waited and waited... and finally we saw the pilot coming towards us from the terminal building. I thought I was seeing things! He was the spitting image of Jimmy Edwards but must have weighed-in at around 20 stone. He was in a uniform of sorts, a lot fatter, with much darker skin and...

... THE MOST MAGNIFICENT, BUSHY HANDLEBAR MOUSTACHE I HAD EVER SEEN – IT MUST HAVE BEEN AT LEAST 9" WIDE!

He proceeded to walk around the plane, giving it a cursory inspection, with a large cigar clamped in his mouth. He finally

climbed into the passenger door, still smoking, gave us all a cheery smile, a: “Good morning” and walked very slowly down to the pilot’s cabin spraying a puffing thick acrid cigar smoke and ash all the way. Then, only then, did he start the pre-flight checks! Needless to say, we did not take off on time.

A little later he appeared in the cockpit doorway and shouted back to us to fasten our seat belts and stow our bags. About 10 minutes later, he started the engines, revved up, did a short taxi to the end of the runway and gunned it full power along the runway. What I did not know, but should have I suppose, was the runway was quite short and at the end of it was a very deep wadi. The plane immediately dipped down, what to my stomach, seemed a long way, before climbing back up to cruising altitude.

I THEN REALISED WHY WE ONLY GOT HALF A CUP OF TEA!

The remainder of the flight was uneventful, apart from odour and a slight smell of animal urine from the menagerie at the back. The flight was however spectacular as we flew over the very deep, rocky wadis down to the coast. Away from the main towns, the Yemen is quite an arid sparsely populated country and very mountainous with farmers terracing the hillsides to grow crops. The houses are usually built with stone for the first layer and then mud-brick for the upper stories, some four to five levels high. The flight only took around 35 minutes.

The site visit and client meetings all went OK, but I was seriously outnumbered by the other contractor’s representatives. Unfortunately, by the time I got to the engineers to get my questions answered, I overran the time I had allowed. I had a problem getting a taxi back to the airport and missed my flight back to Sana’a!

I was 230kms from my hotel at 6pm, it was getting dark and I was stranded! There were hardly any hotels in Hodeidah, I had meetings arranged early the next morning, so I tried to get a taxi back. After about 30 minutes trying to persuade a taxi to make the journey, I finally found one and agreed the

price – about three times the cost of the flight fare. I agreed to pay half at the start and half when he got me to my hotel in Sana’a, which he was not happy about and after a bit of head shaking, we eventually set off. First, we had to go to his house to tell his wife and collect his bag. Secondly, we had to go and fill up the tank, then, most essentially, he had to kick all the tyres and put some air in them. Lastly, but probably most important of all, to him anyway, he had to pick up a large plastic bag of Khat from a little alcove somewhere behind the petrol station, for the long journey ahead.

FOR THOSE OF YOU THAT MAY NOT KNOW WHAT KHAT IS, IT IS A VERY DARK SMALL GREEN LEAF WHICH THE YEMENIS LOVE TO CHEW AND CHEW AND CHEW, UNTIL THEY HAVE A MASSIVE WAD IN THEIR MOUTHS. THEN, AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME, THEY SPIT OUT THE WINDOW!

What do they get out of it? Khat is basically a stimulant, widely used in the middle east, especially by taxi drivers. It helps to keep them awake and alert, gives a feeling of well-being and euphoria – just what you need when you are embarking on a 230km road trip up and down mountainous, poorly maintained roads, full of grossly overloaded heavy lorries, with steep rocky slopes merely feet from the edge of the road 1,000m down to the valley bottoms, when other drivers, are also chewing the same stuff!

I THEN SOON REALISED WHAT A BIG MISTAKE I HAD MADE!

The journey was an absolute nightmare on very bumpy roads, squealing tyres, with headlights flashing in your eyes all the time! The driver did very kindly offer me a branch of Khat, but I politely refused. Perhaps in hindsight, I should have accepted!

After a few miles into the mountainous part of the journey, I laid out on the back seat, closed my eyes and tried not to

imagine where I was, or what was going on outside of the car. After some time (about 11.30pm), the driver pulled into a hut by the side of the road near a town called Manakhah to what was apparently a café. He said he was going to get a coffee, go to the washroom and invited me for a coffee. By then I was certainly ready for something very strong, but not necessarily a coffee. After another 30 minutes, drink and de-watering, we set off again. Bearing in mind it was now after midnight, the traffic on the road was still very heavy, and now mostly overloaded with trucks because apparently the police did not patrol at night!

I am not sure what time we eventually pulled up outside my hotel – it was probably around 3.00am. I paid him off and staggered past a very surprised half-asleep receptionist up to my room.

When I got up in the morning to set off for my meeting at the British Embassy, the taxi was still outside the hotel and the driver was flat out across the back seat! I decided not to wake him and got another taxi!

The meeting at the Embassy went well and I learnt a lot from the Attaché’ and left with a warning:

“NEVER DRIVE AT NIGHT ON THE HODEIDAH TO SANA’A ROAD, BECAUSE THERE WERE MANY FATAL ACCIDENTS EVERY NIGHT!” SOUND ADVICE!

A few years later, having lived and worked in Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand and then Malaysia (with KI or associated companies – and then employed by another major international contractor), I was asked to represent that company on a UK trade mission to the Yemen. Being sponsored by the Board of Trade, and with a certain right honourable member of the Royal Family, after time in Sana’a we travelled in a long convoy of Mercedes Benz cars – complete with a heavily armed Yemeni Army escort from Sana’a – all the way down to Port Aden, via Dhawran and Ta’izz. The route after all, did pass through bandit country.



At one point we were hosted by the ‘Head Man’ or ‘Mayor’ of a town in a typical Yemeni house for afternoon tea, Yemeni style, delicacies and of course – Khat! On this occasion I did try out a few leaves but have to say it was not at all pleasant – quite bitter and obviously an acquired taste to be developed over years!



PICTURED ABOVE:
Mid 1997: Board of Trade-UK Trade Mission to the Yemen. Myself pictured left with the delegates trying out Khat after having tea with the Mayor of Ta’izz.

DURING MY TIME WITH KI I HAD MANY ‘MEMORABLE’ TRIPS, FOR VARIOUS REASONS. ANOTHER ONE I RECALL WAS TO SWAZILAND, BUT MAYBE ANOTHER TIME...

Easter rally..!



My partner (Mike) and I are members and Rally Stewards of a national motor-home owners' club. Like clubs across the nation, we have had to cancel all our activities since the lockdown started. This is a story of what we did to cheer ourselves up!

The sun was shining (for a change) and Easter looming fast. Not being able to get out and about in Pippa (our Auto-trail Pawnee) our minds turned to what could we do instead? Luckily, Pippa lives on our long drive so, hey, why not have our own Easter Rally!

The fuel bill would be £nil, an EHU was to hand on the garage wall, no site fees to pay and no Police roadside checks to avoid.

Did we mention our drive slopes? Well it is Wales, so out came the ramps to get things moderately level whilst still leaving the



pavement clear. The fridge was stocked, water tank filled, and cupboards checked for coffee, tea etc.

The Auto-Trail banner and Rally Steward signs were set out (now the neighbours are sure we are mad!). The picnic table and chairs were set up on the paved frontage – sadly, the proximity of the front porch restricted the awning to a foot or so of extension.

Having watched the early evening news on Saturday, we trooped out with pillows and teddy-bears to start our very own private 'Easter Rally'. A few glasses of wine and nibbles in the evening sunshine under the bemused looks of the neighbours led us to the time to turn-in.

Hunkering down under the duvet we were soon fast asleep and no doubt startling the odd prowling cat with the snoring coming from inside. We always sleep soundly in Pippa and were only woken by the bird song and sunlight streaming in through the partially lowered blinds around 7am. Tea n biccies in bed and then it was time to get up for our traditional Sunday breakfast of croissants and honey at the picnic table. More strange looks from the neighbours as they walked their dog – we think Bailey was confused too.

Sunday was going to be 'Raffle Day' and I won the main prize of a large Easter egg – Mike won the dish washing as usual! The egg was consumed with great frivolity aided by bread soldiers dipped in lemon-curd to simulate egg-yolk. The rest of the day was spent pottering around the 'site' enjoying the sun, before it was time to roast the duck for dinner.

Easter Monday was fun day with our new ride-on mower attempting to mow our badly damaged back lawn: water-logging, new fencing, new shed and builders had all taken its toll (I'm sure you get the picture) – and here I struggled being a former horse woman and thinking the mower-bike should stay upright when stopped. Mike regained his honour by winning this competition and the prize – finish the job – oops! Mike could not remember how to put the mower back together, so whilst I went on-line to order a new one, Mike went back to doing those damned dishes.

Monday evening saw us winding down and putting Pippa back into lockdown and returning Kolgyn and Felicity (the bears) to their perch in the house. Then, drain down the grey water, turn off the gas, empty the loo and return to normality in the lounge, whatever that is these days!

The traffic was quite light on the journey returning from the 'site', although there were hold-ups in the hall as we attempted to pass each other – maybe a one-way system next time – back door in, front door out.

We hope you all found a fun way to enjoy your Easter weekend, and please stay safe whilst this virus is still in circulation!

Kay Ashton (Tempsford employee 1972-1985, Tempsford consultant 1986 to...)

National golf day...



Nearest the Pin: Derek Adams

The course was in good condition, despite the extremely hot spell earlier in the year. After the round we devoured a very tasty two-course meal consisting of Chicken Pie & Eton Mess. The meal was followed by prizes and these were given in the now traditional format to:



Front 9: Malcolm Burton

On 27 August 2020, 17 members were treated to a great day out at the St. Neots Golf Club organised by Ian Tidey (club member) which included a bacon roll with coffee/tea prior to play commencing at 11am.



Nearest the Pin in 2: Ian Lawson

- Derek Adams: Nearest the Pin
- Ian Lawson: Nearest the Pin in 2
- Malcolm Burton: Best Front 9-15 points
- Julian Armitage: Best Back 9-18 points
- The Fellowship Cup was awarded to Graham Howe with a score of 32 points.



Back 9: Julian Armitage

Congratulations to all the winners and particularly to Graham who made a lovely acceptance speech!



Kier Fellowship Cup Winner: Graham Howe

Next year we will be somewhere around the north side of the M25 in late August, so we hope to see as many members there as possible. **Watch out for further details!**

RAILWAY MODELLING – A very fulfilling hobby!

by Harold Thompson



The coaches – still needing roofs

creating hills & valleys, overbridges & underpasses around track that have been cut and shaped so that the trains run reliably, plus installing safe electrics with hundreds of metres of wires carrying different voltages really keeps one's brain active – although it does tend to produce some aches and pains!



Beach huts and café

Having completed Whichway Junction, I began to miss the involvement – reading forums and magazines about the hobby has its place but lacks fulfilment. So, I looked for another project. This presented two problems: what to create and where to keep it as there is no available space in the loft.



Crazy Golf

There is a corner in my conservatory (recently converted into a living space) into which I was able to squeeze a layout 2m x 1m so that meant I would have to try a smaller scale. Whichway Junction is 00-gauge (a scale of 1:76) so I decided I would have to use N-gauge (scale of 1:148 – roughly 2mm = 1ft instead of 4mm). This time I wanted to try to replicate a real location rather than dream up something freelance and, after considerable cogitation, I remembered Scarborough North Bay Railway (NBR). Scarborough NBR has been a tourist attraction since 1931. It runs trains to a timetable from Peaseholm at its southern end to Scalby Mills at its northern end – a distance of nearly a mile – where the Sea Life Centre is located. It runs on a track-gauge of 20" with locomotives made to about 1/3rd scale. There



Track plan

are three locomotives of LNER Pacific outline running on diesel, an odd 4-6-4 configuration tank locomotive, also running on diesel, and a tiny 0-4-0 Bagnal Sipat saddle tank running on steam – the Sipat was made in 2017 and is only 8'6" long.

Since NBR carries full-size passengers, models of those would have to be much bigger than N-gauge – as indeed would the coaches and buildings to accommodate them. If the real locos and track are 1/3rd scale, then the model people etc, should be three times the scale – almost 0-gauge. I realised the available space could not accommodate 0-gauge buildings, so I decided they would have to be 00-gauge; hence the layout scale is considered to be '009' and all structures are scratch built. The prototype railway follows a winding route from parkland to seaside but, overall, executes a gentle curve round the bay. My model executes a horseshoe journey in order to get it into the 2m x 1m space – the baseboards have a central backscene with countryside on one side and seaside on the other. It is designed to be a portable layout that could be exhibited and fits into my car. Having

four boards complicates track laying, electrics and, indeed, the creation of the boards themselves which need to have a means of support and to be aligned with one another very precisely.

I have developed a number of skills over the last 12 years, but they do not extend to scratch building, working locomotives, and there are no ready-made models of the real locomotives since they are unique. I have therefore settled on an N-gauge model of Flying Scotsman in express blue (to represent Poseidon) and its stable mate 'Gladiator' in BR green (to represent Neptune). I still need to source another stable mate in apple/LNER green to represent Triton. I have repainted a Fairburn tank to look like the 4-6-4 which is bright red and called Robin Hood. For the Sipat



Scalby Mills and Sea Life

(which is called Georgina), I sourced a motor bogie of the correct size (10mm wheelbase) and a matching 3D printed body for which I had to make a cab.

During the time I was considering all this, I joined the St. Neots Model Railway Club and have made some good friends among its members – some of



Locomotives in shed

whom have well-honed skills and I have received valuable advice and help from them. To mention just one – a young man who normally models in 0-gauge – managed to fit a microchip into the roof of the cab of Georgina and to solder the four wires connecting the microchip to the tiny motor and pick-ups. The cab roof is less than 20mm square.

There are two types of coach on the prototype – open sided and fully enclosed. I have scratch-built the bodies for them all and attached them to bogie frames from old N-gauge container flat wagons and coaches. I have just about completed the scenery on the beach side of the backscene, and most of it is done on the Peasholm board. I have yet to start the board containing the boating lake, the open-air theatre and the water chute.



Peasholm signal box

FOR OLD KNEES SAKE!

I was told my knee was ninety when I was thirty-two,

I didn't feel insulted but my knee felt really blue,
So for those of you with knee joints that you'd rather were not there,
This is an ode to mine – it's been a sorry tale to bear.

I've done a lot to my right knee, it must think me a pain,

I've hammered it completely playing football in the rain,
I've tried to break the door down when I slipped upon the floor,
My leg went every which way, sent the knee straight through the door.

It's come up like a big balloon, the size of a football,

I've carried on regardless and haven't cared at all,
I've fallen off three storeys high and landed in the mud,
I hung on to my bucket though and didn't care a rud.

This knee has put up with a lot and always carried on,

Been everywhere together even though it's not felt strong,
Then at the end of every day it's throbbed, ached and complained,
How could you do this to a knee, what do you hope to gain?'

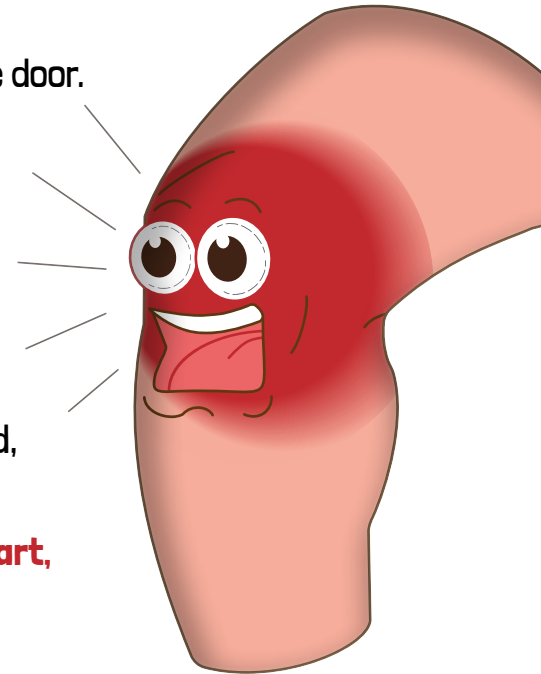
Where other knees are smooth and round and even look quite smart,

My knee's all shapes and sizes and doesn't look the part,
You couldn't say it's beautiful, except that is to me,
For I know what it's been through, what it's done exhaustively.

Well now it's truly knackered and has ground right to a halt,

Won't do a thing I ask it to and is not worth its salt,
But I can't say that I blame it – how much can one knee take?

**BY SANDRA GREEN
(RE HUBBY'S KNEE
IN 2008)**



**So a new knee I am
having, not for me –
but for knees sake!**