

Around the Regions

CHELTENHAM

We are pleased to report that the annual Christmas lunch, held at Cotswold Halls Golf Club, was once again a great success and enjoyed by all.

Unfortunately not everyone who put their names down could make it due to a bout of flu doing its round. However, the organisers began to wonder if it was jinxed when yet another member had to drop out just days before due to a broken tooth and then another, who was to be photographer for the day, slipped and broke his leg an hour before the start! Thankfully there were no further incidents during the meal and the 31 attendees raised a glass or two to toast a 'speedy recovery' for the unfortunate absentees.

RUSHDEN

The year 2001 was a hectic one for the Rushden group with chairman Frank Furlong collecting a jeroboom of champagne for the 'busiest member' in the group.

The highlight of the year was a ten-day holiday in Austria. A splendid time was had by all when for the first time the regular Marriott Kier Group Fellowship Trust travellers and eight new friends journeyed over 2000 miles for a taste of Austria. Nine happy days were spent together visiting stunning lakes and taking time to enjoy the scenery on boat and train trips and even those with vertigo joined in the spirit of the trip and got on board the cable cars. During the holiday we spent a day at Salzburg seeing the cathedral, Mozart's birthplace and the Mirabell gardens that were still very beautiful in the late season. The visit to Bad Ischle incorporated a well earned stop at Zauner's for coffee and cakes. We also visited Hallstatt and while some of the group looked around the old town, the more intrepid explorers visited the salt mines. We also saw the famous Austrian dancing fountains and once again coffee and a piece of delicious gateaux sealed a perfect trip.

Other trips included the Shrewsbury flower show, Lord Mayors show, shopping in Leeds, Royal Armouries Museum and a visit to Lincoln Christmas market. On the Sunday before Christmas we attended the evening carol service in the Guards Chapel at Wellington Barracks - a moving occasion enjoyed by all.

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

How time flies! By the time this newsletter reaches you the Kier Group Fellowship Trust will have been in existence for five years - yes five years! It seems like only yesterday that I was invited to a meeting to consider what kind of organisation we could provide for retired Kier staff and other former employees. The result is history and we hope the Kier Group Fellowship Trust provides comradeship, interest, enjoyment and always an event to look forward to.

There have been a number of retirements from Kier Group recently and I hope that some of these former employees will wish to take part in our activities and give fresh impetus to the committees. Throughout I have always put forward the view that the collective effort of a group of people achieves far more than an individual working on his own. It is so important that we do not overburden any of our regional organisers as they are an essential part of our network and besides, they need to be training able successors.

During the last year the Trust Board has had to grapple with the financial management of the Trust. Five years ago money market rates produced enough money for us to run all our regional activities and still have some left over, but as all pensioners will know, deposit account interest rates are much lower these days. We are therefore having to think of other ways of keeping up the income stream to finance our regional activities which are really critical to what the Trust is about.

In my discussions with members I find that some people have extraordinary hobbies and interests which have flourished after leaving Kier. Some indeed have become businesses. In future issues we will run a feature "*Life after Kier*" so if you have done anything newsworthy, or if a member of your group has done something which you think we would all like to know about, please drop me a line together with some photographs.

John Stamford, email: jsassac@kbnet.co.uk

Our membership continues to increase and the year 2002 looks as though it will be just as busy with theatre trips booked to 'My Fair Lady' and 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' and our annual pilgrimage to the Royal Albert Hall for the Mountbatten Festival of Music.

During the summer months a mystery trip, seaside trip, brewery visit and trip to Peterborough dog track are all planned.



LOUGHTON & WITHAM

The spring luncheon will be held at Sir James Hawkey Hall on 9th May 2002.

WISBECH

Once again Mendis in Wisbech was the venue for our traditional Christmas lunch. Forty past employees and their partners together with French Kier md John Bradley, contracts director Brian Painter and senior contracts manager Paul Greenly met, mingled and munched!

John Bradley updated us on both local and national activities and it was good to see a number of new faces.

As usual FKA were most generous with their hospitality and special thanks to Sonia Battle for her generous help.

As 2001 recedes into history, thoughts are being given to trips to Kew Gardens and Cromer for a matinee performance of the Seaside Special 2002.

NORTH WEST

Our normal November lunch had to be delayed owing to a clash of dates and when a suitable date crept towards December it was decided to make this our festive celebration lunch.

On December 11th we met at our usual venue of the Suites Hotel, where we welcomed some new retirees, meeting with us for the first time since leaving the company.

We were able to enjoy a friendly chat and a drink at the bar before proceeding to the dining room where we were served with a feast of festive fare complete with Christmas crackers and obligatory paper hats!

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, our photographer was not in the same class as David Bailey and the majority of the resulting photographs are not of a sufficient standard to be reproduced.

NEWPORT/BRISTOL

On 15th October our previously postponed Golf Day (due to foot and mouth) took place at the Lansdowne Golf Club, Bath and we were happy to welcome two new members to this event. The weather was not particularly kind to us but we were able to complete the 18 holes followed by a hot meal and good fellowship all round.

October 26th was the highlight of the year when we left Newport for the mid-afternoon sailing from Fishguard to the Irish port of Rosslare and our long weekend in Waterford.

The following day we had an excursion taking in Ireland's Medieval capital Kilkenny, a cultural centre for over 1500 years. Kilkenny's attractions included St. Canice Cathedral, Rothe House and the Irish National Design Centre. We returned to our hotel for an evening meal and a night out at one of the local hostelrys in search of some traditional Irish music.



No trip to Waterford would be complete without a visit to the local crystal factory, so the next day we set out in search of early Christmas presents from some of the world's finest available glassware.

Everyone agreed that this was our best trip to date and the Guinness wasn't bad either!

Events planned for 2002 include lunch at Dewstow Golf Club, a theatre trip, two golf days, a dinner/dance and a weekend away.

KIER SOUTHERN

We were well represented at the annual Tempsford lunch and pleased to welcome Vic Lawrence and Tom Lynch who were both making their first visit to the group.

Once again we joined with the Rolling Stones Club at the Grange, Northwood for the annual Christmas Supper. Twenty-eight members and partners attended what proved to be a most successful evening.

A small party spent a weekend in early October at the Warner Hotel, Cricket St. Thomas, used in the TV series 'To the Manor Born' (see photograph). The spacious grounds contain a wildlife zoo, a railway and a new residential and entertainment complex completed by Kier Western in August 1999. Visits were made to Lyme Regis, Seaton and Beer and we hope to organise another weekend at a similar venue this October.



The Spring Lunch was held on Friday 5th April at the Old Chequers, Hemel Hempstead.

Life After Kier

Do you have an unusual hobby that you would like to share with other members?

Send your stories and photos to John Stamford.



Pictured is Boston Spa group member Jimmy Leslie's collection of joiners' tools. Jimmy has been collecting these for many years and several of his treasures have been unearthed at car boot sales. His wife Anne says that if he doesn't like the salesperson he won't buy no matter how much he wants the item!

Peter O'Shea

Regrettably, members of the Newport/Bristol group report that their colleague Peter O'Shea passed away on 28th December 2001.

Peter worked as a site agent for Wallis Western at Newport and since his retirement had been an enthusiastic supporter of the Fellowship Trust. All who knew him will miss his humour and fun loving ways.

Our thoughts are with his wife Malita and family at this sad time.

MEMORIES OF TED FROST BY ROBIN GIBSON

Patience and kindness are not the first qualities generally associated with the site agents but this is how I remember Ted Frost when I was introduced to him in 1958.

I was to be his site engineer and during the year I spent with Ted and his team the job proceeded steadily. Ted's inspections might be followed by some reprimands or corrections, but his requirements were always put across quietly and firmly.

Ted loved to hear the stories told by his foremen. He could be reduced to tears of laughter. Being portly he would wobble a bit here and there too. He put his ample girth down to doctor's advice. In his young days he had been a fanatical cyclist and swimmer but had been advised, he said, to give them up.

His thoughtfulness earned him the respect and loyalty of his entire team. I have always harboured a nostalgic affection for Ted and while sad at his passing, I am pleased that he lived to a good age and hope he was able to enjoy his retirement to the full.

Fond Memories

Jack Hughes of Beeston, Nottingham, sent a letter about his memories of Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station. We thought you might like to share some of these. He writes: "Ratcliffe Power Station lies about seven miles south west of Nottingham and can be easily seen from the M1. Many people do not like it, but to me it is a beautiful sight to see that tall chimney and eight cooling towers reaching up to the sky.

I arrived at Ratcliffe on 14th February 1964. We had just taken over from Taylor Woodrow who completed the site preparations. The boiler house and turbine house were just huge holes in the ground. As I looked down these excavations it seemed that water was pouring out of every nook and cranny, and was cascading down like mini waterfalls to the depths below. I just knew we would have a lot of fun with this one!

Two and a half years later as I drove out of the main gates I thought that I was leaving for the last time. But I was wrong. My family had settled in Nottingham and we never moved away. I see Ratcliffe nearly every day and can see the chimney from my house. I was also wrong about not passing through the gates again because I did, albeit 35 years later, this time as a visitor with 20 other members of PROBUS who were invited on a guided tour.

As I walked around with the rest of the group, I must admit that most of what our guide was saying was passing over me - my mind had travelled back to 1964. Just outside the boiler house was one of the three Danish Sawo concrete batching plants that had been shipped over and erected under the watchful eye of site plant manager Jack Exley. At the far end of the turbine hall was another one of the batchers. This one had a six-inch concrete pump which pumped concrete to the turbine hall from 8.00am until well into the night. Like all concrete pumps it was prone to blocking but Fred Stretton, the turbine house foreman, could usually sort it out. The third batcher was around the other side of the boiler house. This was used to deliver a special mix to the chimney. It was not uncommon for these three batching plants to turn out over 5000 cube a week. Simon Popelowski, (Poppy) as he was affectionately known ran the plants.

As we moved on to the office complex, I could see the faces and hear the voices of some of the many people involved there. The project managers Tony Kelleher, Joe Kirk and Ole Palmann, and contracts director Eric Pedersen (affectionately known as Odd Job as he always wore a bowler hat). Then there were the senior engineers Archie Williams, Dick Howarth, Sean O'Toole and section agents Alan Frettsome and Dick Fox. The clock shed with its ten clocks recorded the arrival and departure times of the 800 strong workforce. It reminded me of Len Strubble and his team of timekeepers, office manager George Bamford, and a young QS called Revie Morris, who would be beavering away trying to get some cash out of Allott & Lomax, the consultants.

As we moved on and stood beside the huge chimney I was reminded of the tele-truck backing into the chimney base to deliver its load of concrete. Alan Potter the agent would be discussing the pros and cons of the slide with engineer Dave Melon, general foreman Bill Kelly and foreman carpenter Mick Sullivan. Also working on the chimney was a 21 year-old joiner called Jimmy Leslie. These were just some of the many friends I made between 1964 and 1966. There were many more but I am afraid time has taken its toll, so please forgive me if I have missed anyone.

As we passed back out of the main gates I felt a twinge of guilt because I had not really been listening to our guide. Driving up the M1 on our way home I looked across at Ratcliffe Power Station and saw the smoke from her tall slender chimney and the steam from her cooling towers rising skywards. I could tell that our lady was on 'full clog'. Smiling to myself I thought we did that!"

Jack Hughes

Editor's Note: "Articles of this nature are welcome as the future of the Group is based on the experience of the past".

The Fourth Annual Kier Group Fellowship Luncheon

On Sunday 25th November 2001, the Kier Group Fellowship Trust held its fourth annual luncheon in the marquee at Tempsford Hall. How time flies!

The record number of 270 members attended from all over the country including Maidstone, Bromley, the North East, Loughton, Witham, Maple Cross, Wisbech, Rushden and Tempsford Hall.

THE MYSTERIES OF LIFE

- Why does the sun lighten our hair, but darken our skin?
- Why can't women put on mascara with their mouth closed?
- Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?
- Why is 'abbreviated' such a long word?
- Why is a boxing ring square?
- Why is it called lipstick if you can still move your lips?
- Why is it that doctors call what they do 'practice'?
- Why is it that rain drops but snow falls?
- Why is it that when driving and looking for an address, you turn down the volume on the radio?
- Why is lemon juice made with artificial flavour, and dish washing liquid made with real lemons?
- Why is the man who invests all your money called a broker?
- Why is the third hand on the watch called a second hand?
- Why is the time of day with the slowest traffic called rush hour?
- Why isn't there a special name for the tops of your feet?
- Why isn't there mouse-flavoured cat food?
- Can fat people go skinny-dipping?

OBITUARIES

C Collins	Blackwood, Gwent	10th August 2001
J Shields	Crosby, Liverpool	24th August 2001
W J Wood	Bromley, Kent	26th August 2001
R E A Peters	Rochester, Kent	31st August 2001
W J Billing	Wellingborough, Northants	September 2001
A Evans	Brent Knoll, Somerset	13th September 2001
B R Goodman	Bournemouth, Dorset	10th October 2001
T W Ryan	Gloucester	12th October 2001
E Apperley	Cheltenham, Gloucester	19th October 2001
R L Wells	Walthamstow, London	November 2001
J T Dunne	Northampton	November 2001
E N Frost	Kings Lynn, Norfolk	7th November 2001
M Jamieson	Matlock, Derbyshire	8th November 2001
E Clayden	Epping, Essex	10th November 2001
F J Robinson	Benfleet, Essex	13th November 2001
D H Beilby	Wickford, Essex	17th November 2001
B L Minisse	Exmouth, Devon	
C C Sawkins	West Mersea, Essex	27th November 2001
W Scarr	Durham City	28th November 2001
M Horner	Northallerton, North Yorkshire	4th December 2001
H L Greenslade	Stroud, Gloucester	11th December 2001
H B Forder	Mablethorpe, Lincolnshire	12th December 2001

STOP PRESS!

Kier Group Fellowship ties are now available from your regional representative at the very competitive price of only £5.

Reader's Letters

We are considering including a readers letters section. Any contributions would be appreciated on a subject of your choice. The Editor's decision will be final!

Who is Santa?

Can you guess who is behind the white beard and red costume bringing a smile to the faces of these children? A prize is on offer for anyone who recognises this Boston Spa group member who regularly gatecrashes playgroups, church fetes and old folks Christmas parties.



Diary Dates

The Annual Golf Day of the Tempsford Group will be held on Thursday 8th August at Bishops Stortford. Details from John Hebblethwaite 01480 810492.

Fifth Annual Kier Group Fellowship Trust luncheon to be held in a marquee at Tempsford Hall on Sunday 1st December 2002.