

Fellowship matters

A report from the Trust chairman John Stamford

In a world driven by targets and numbers, the Kier Group Fellowship is not immune. Our membership currently hovers just short of 1,000 members. As we are tantalisingly close to that big round number, should you know of any former Kier Group employee who would like to belong to our fellowship, perhaps you can pass on the details so that we can reach the 1,000th member this year.

Fellowship is not just about numbers. In practice it is about being able to do things together. The area events are not necessarily number driven because even a few former employees in one area can meet and pursue a particular interest together. A good example of fellowship in action is the annual golf day which started with just 12 players and by last year had grown to 29 players.

It was pleasing to welcome so many of you to the annual luncheon at Tempsford in November. Special mention must be made of the person who travelled the furthest. This annual prize has been won by a different

person each year and 2003 was no exception. Andrew Bloomfield, the former Caribbean director, travelled over 3,000 miles to be with us. This has to be a record which will be difficult to beat... unless you know otherwise? Our other annual prize, for the oldest member attending, went to a lady of 95!

The cabaret was provided by a large group of the Fairhaven Singers of Cambridge who provided a very professional, festive chorus which was most entertaining and enjoyed by all.

I hope that 2004 will prove an active and enjoyable fellowship year for all members.
John Stamford - email jsassoc@kbnet.co.uk



Annual luncheon at Tempsford in November.

Editor's note

I am very pleased with the response to 'people and places' and 'I remember when' which are combined in this issue. Please keep them coming, either to your local organiser or direct to me. In this issue we have included 'Area Organisers past and present'. Hopefully other area organisers will be in a position to continue this item in a similar fashion.

The 'exclusive' Kier Fellowship ties are still available from Brendan O'Boyle or Hilary Edmunds at Kier Southern. Telephone 01923 721277. A bargain at only £5.

Congratulations to the area organisers for their wide range of events and inspiration to others.

Roger Almond
Editor, Kierlink
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March
Cambridgeshire PE15 9DE

Area organisers - please note copy deadline for next issue is 31st August 2004.

Area organisers past & present

Bill McColl - Newport/Bristol area organiser

"I started employment with G E Wallis & Sons in 1972, based in Newport, Gwent. I spent over two years as a general foreman on the new Polytechnic of Wales contract, near Pontypridd before moving as site manager on a major housing development in the Pillgwenlly area of Newport. Other contracts followed covering hospital and school work before I took over as area contracts manager in 1982. Two years before retiring in 1995 I also had responsibility for several contracts in the South West region managed from the Bristol office.

During my time with the company I became actively involved in the Building Employers Confederation, South Wales region, serving on several committees. I was president of the Newport Gwent Local Association for two years before a double term as South Wales regional president.

Hobbies since retiring include golf, gardening, photography and being a member of the Whitchurch male voice choir. Whilst my hometown is Glasgow, I have lived in South Wales for some 37 years. I am married with two daughters and reside in the Whitchurch area of Cardiff."

Around the regions

MAIDSTONE & BROMLEY

A buffet lunch was held at the Rose & Crown, Wrotham in October, the venue being convenient for both Maidstone and Bromley. It was very well supported with 48 attending and there was a generous finger buffet and free bar.

Members contributed £3 per head and with the assistance of the local company contributing to the cost, the call upon our funds was not too excessive.

As well as an opportunity of meeting up with old friends, it provided me with an opportunity to gather suggestions for future events and lobby for future help.

The annual lunch at Tempsford was again very well supported with 38 attending and, in spite of the long coach journey, everyone claimed to have enjoyed the day.

The annual spring luncheon at Hop Farm, Paddock Wood continues to be a favourite function. This year's event, scheduled for 30th March, has so far attracted 56 but the final number is likely to be over 64.

Alan Munday

NEWPORT & BRISTOL

Twenty-eight members and guests attended Dewstow Golf and Country Club for the first event of 2004. Despite the snow, an excellent lunch got the year off to a fine start following a long winter break.

We have again been invited to the Kier Western dinner dance to be held in Cardiff on 3rd April. Two golf days are also planned with a day trip and a long weekend later in the year. For those members who have not been able to join us, your ideas would be most welcome and we would be delighted to see you.

David Orr



Newport and Bristol members toast The Fellowship Trust.

DEVON & CORNWALL

It is hoped to arrange a 'get together' in August when Steve Dyson is back from Cyprus. All members are invited to Kier Western's dinner/dance in Cardiff on 3rd April.

Shirley Riddle for Steve Tyson

LOUGHTON & WITHAM

The Spring luncheon will be held on 11th May at Sir James Hawkey Hall, Woodford. We would like to wish all members good health and a belated Happy New Year.

Ken Stoneman

BOSTON SPA

Membership is fairly static and now stands at 34 members. The attendance at the Sunday lunch in September was disappointing with only seven members. However 18 members have put their names down for the lunch to be held in March.

Revie Morris

WISBECH

The annual Christmas lunch, which took place at the White Lion Hotel, Wisbech, was the largest event held to date with over 50 members and partners in attendance.

A big 'thank you' to Andrew Pallant who has been our local organiser since the Fellowship began. Andrew has now decided to hang up his boots and hand over to me. I'm not totally new to it as, until my retirement last year, I was director responsible for The Fellowship Trust at the Wisbech area. Andrew is wished all the best in his new endeavours.

We are planning a trip to the

Seaside Special show at Cromer pier and approximately 30 members have shown an interest. We also hope to visit the Chelsea flower show.

Brian Painter

MAPLE CROSS

The late summer luncheon was held in September at St. Michael's Manor Hotel, St. Albans. Twenty-eight members and partners attended and we welcomed our new director Phil Durigan.

A supper was held in October at the Bedford Arms, Chenies when 16 members and partners joined with the 'Rolling Stones Club'. Twenty-six members and partners travelled to Tempsford for the annual lunch in November, and we were back again at the Bedford Arms in February for our New Year supper with the 'Rolling Stones Club'.

A spring lunch is planned at St. Michael's Manor Hotel on 26th March.

New Year greetings have been received from Bob Baker, Len Gayler, Eric Davies and from Italy, Nick Gerald.

Welcome new members Brian Plunkett, Brenda Martin, Hugie Thorpe and Gulam Yashin.

Don Robinson

CHELTENHAM

Thirty-four members and guests attended the annual Christmas party at Cotswold Hills Golf Club. Following the success of last year's Severn cruise, another trip is planned from Upton-on-Severn to Worcester Lock and back on 22nd June.

Len Gayler

RUSHDEN

The weather was fine for the Lord Mayor's Show in November which was attended by 32 members who agreed it was the best parade they had seen. The day finished with a firework display over the river.

In December a full coach went on a mystery tour to Chatsworth House Christmas fair, stopping off at Bakewell for lunch. Also in December, members enjoyed a

modern version of the Nutcracker ballet at Sadler's Wells Theatre. A week later, a London sightseeing trip which took in the Guards Chapel carol service and tour of Covent Garden was enjoyed by all. There, three intrepid members rode on the carousel and all enjoyed watching the ice-skating while sipping mulled wine to keep warm.

Thirty-three members spent the New Year in Aachen. The week's activities included a tour of the city, a seven-course dinner with champagne, a trip to Monchau, a bowling match and more dinners and dancing. A full coachload have already signed up for a planned trip to Ireland in April.

Frank Furlong



Rushden members enjoyed a meal at 'the Cheshire Cheese' following the Lord Mayor's show.

NORTH WEST

The Spring Luncheon at the Suites Hotel was attended by 22 members. A presentation of liquid refreshment was made to John Neil who has been Fellowship area organiser from its inception to date. Twenty-eight members attended both the Autumn Luncheon in September and Christmas Fayre Luncheon.

Our first event for 2004 will be our Annual Reunion Dinner where we are joined by current employees with over 25 years' continuous service and many friendships are renewed.

Norman England



John Neil is thanked for his service as North West area organiser.

Does this ring any bells?



"That's not my job"

This is a story about four people: *Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody.* *There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody When Nobody did what Anybody could have done.*

Confident predictions (at the time!)

"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication," *Western Union, 1876.*

"Heavier than air machines are impossible," *president of the Royal Society, 1895.*

"It doesn't matter what he does, he'll never amount to anything," *Albert Einstein's teacher, 1895.*

"Everything that can be invented has been invented," *US commissioner of patents, 1899.*

"I cannot imagine any situation that would cause this ship to founder," *the captain of the Titanic, 1906.*

"Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?" *Warner Brothers, 1927.*

"Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau," *Yale professor of economics on the eve of the Wall Street crash.*

"It will be years - not in my time - before a woman will become Prime Minister," *Margaret Thatcher, 1974.*

Obituaries

Dorothy Knighton	23rd August 2003
Thomas Tozer	30th August 2003
Mabel Woolgar	8th September 2003
Douglas Richardson	11th September 2003
Andrew Chilcott	17th September 2003
Edward Hooper	27th September 2003
Jorgen Thonning	6th October 2003
Stanley Raper	11th October 2003
Lilian Edwards	1st November 2003
Walter Gudde	4th November 2003
Margaret Derra	11th November 2003
Harold Gibbard	19th November 2003
Ernest Willis	20th November 2003
James McQueen	21st November 2003
Derek Wyeth	24th November 2003
Hilary Blick	25th November 2003
Victor Lawrence	25th November 2003
Donald Feaks	30th November 2003
Ann Bailey	1st December 2003
Lawrence Stancer	1st December 2003
Richard Oliver Blackwell	2nd December 2003
Constance Holding	14th December 2003
Rita Gudde	1st January 2004
Donald Wells	5th January 2004
Archibald Williams	5th January 2004
Peter Wilmott	11th January 2004
Kenneth Pearce	12th January 2004
John Wall	12th January 2004
Peter Zanchi	19th January 2004
Stanley MacLeish	24th January 2004
Thomas James	28th January 2004
Raymond Noakes	11th February 2004
Anna Currie	12th February 2004
Sheila White	12th February 2004
James Newcombe	1st March 2004
Ron Bould	13th March 2004
Grace Topley	to be confirmed

People and Places & I remember when...

Seeing the Kier Eastern name change in the local paper prompted Charlie Wood of Norwich to write about his time with Kier

"Fifty years ago, 1953, I was chauffeur to Olaf Kier for about a year. He was an astute businessman and a strong personality with a home in London and a large country estate at Barley, Hertfordshire. Kier's biggest project at that time was the Kariba Dam at Dar es Saalam, Africa. There were many Danish civil engineers here at that time like Ove Arup, who all used the Danish Club at 62 Knightsbridge. The late Mogens Kier succeeded Olaf and lived at Hinchley Wood, Surrey but later moved near to Tempsford. I wondered if any of his family followed him into the business? It was one of my first jobs as a chauffeur. When not driving I would take concrete and cubes to be tested in Victoria Street, deliver last minute tenders and develop various copies of drawings of projects. Working for J L Kier was one of the most enjoyable positions I held."

Frank Foreman from Leyburn, North Yorkshire shares his early memories

"I initially joined W&C French in 1942. In those days 90% of the company's work was connected with airfield construction and other war work including the construction of Mulberry Harbour units at Portsmouth. For my part, I started at Earls Colne on an airfield for the RAF/USAF and had a 'crash course' on the use of the level & theodolite and rudiments of site measurement. Twenty-five years later I was QS on, amongst other sites, the construction of spine roads for Harlow new town. A lot of the hardcore base to these roads had been broken-up sections of Earls Colne. It's a pretty safe bet that a lot of this concrete came from areas that I had measured back in 1942! Whilst at Earls Colne I was involved very briefly in the setting out of the runways at RAF Riverhall and in 1945, while serving in the RAF, I was stationed very briefly there. W&C French were doing the maintenance work and the site agent, who I knew, used to smuggle me out of the works entrance wearing a donkey jacket!"

Revie Morris' early memories are about getting to work

"Transport was provided to take me the 35 miles from Stoke to Rugeley generating station. When the 'luxury' coach arrived to pick me up at 5.30am, the first thing that struck me as I climbed aboard was the icicles hanging from the leaking roof. The seats had been inverted with the wooden sides up as the fabric was permanently saturated from melting ice. Another unusual feature was that the side moved away from the chassis revealing the road below. I was informed that this was to enable us to identify anyone knocked

down by the coach without the need for stopping! There was a second coach which I sometimes used if the routes were altered. This was an old service bus with the engine alongside the driver's cab. One night when travelling home in a blizzard the windscreen wipers packed up and we spent the last few miles with one hardy soul sitting on the engine wiping the windscreen. Eight months later I was called up to do my National Service. I was the only recruit who enjoyed the 'lie in' in the morning! When I came out of the forces I was employed on another power station – this time at Drakelow near Burton on Trent. This time the journey was on a Kier coach which also had slatted wooden seats and no heater. The winter of 1961/62 was particularly hard and travelling on the coach in these conditions was not very pleasant. We resorted to anything to keep warm. I recall one day the lads even lit a fire on the steps! And they were the good old days!"

From a much warmer Trinidad, Alan Aitken says:

"We normally return to the UK at least once a year – in the warmer time of year. We have been out here on and off since 1997 since it gives me the opportunity to continue working and still enjoy a bit of year round sunshine, not having bought a rocking chair as yet. We are in the process of building a house in Tobago which can only be described as an exercise in frustration since a more laid back (and costly) place would be difficult to find. We could write a book about it, as could many others I suspect. When it is eventually finished, we may have that sundowner!"

"Whatever I do these days, I do it very slowly. I live by myself and with the help of a girl Friday who comes in for three hours a week, I do my own home management (sounds better than house-work). I prepare my own meals and my



William (Billy) Hiles sends his best wishes to all from his home in Western Australia where he recently celebrated his 86th birthday.

daughter, who lives two miles away, keeps an eye on me. Until recently I was inspecting pavements and public rights of way for the Council, who acted very quickly on reported faults. A couple of years ago I was invited to give a talk to the Home Builders and Developers in the City Chamber about building smarter homes for seniors. The standard of building in small houses is improving but still leaves a lot to be desired. Even in luxury houses, roof insulation and skirting boards are listed as extras. The hardest thing for me is getting used to the idea that Australia is a foreign country where they speak English, but don't think British!"