

KierLink

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Issue 12

April 2006

Fellowship matters

A report from the Trust chairman John Stamford

Our last annual luncheon seems but a distant memory, however it was one of the best yet and it was a great pleasure for me to welcome a number of members attending for the first time.

Our main event this year will be staged in the summer – a Fellowship Reunion will be held in a marquee in the grounds of Tempsford Hall on Sunday 2 July. This should be of special interest to those members who live a long distance from Tempsford and have not wanted to travel at the end of November. We are still in the early stages of planning the event but we can promise it will be something to look forward to along the lines of a summer garden party. We have booked a band and are sure that, after the meal and a few glasses of wine, some of you will want to try out your dance steps from yesteryear!

I am also pleased to report good news on the investment front. The onwards march of the FTSE has benefited our investments so this will give us a little more flexibility in managing our affairs.

Finally, a number of areas have appointed new area organisers recently. We welcome those newly appointed and thank those retiring for their hard work. I hope that you will continue to support your area organisers – our aim is still to have many people doing a little for the Fellowship rather than one person having to do a lot! I hope to see you on 2 July.

John Stamford

Editor's note

This edition includes the programmes for KierLink members currently with Rushden, Maple Cross and Tempsford. Organisers have kindly agreed, if space permits, to extend invitations to any Fellowship Trust members not just those on their mailing lists.

Readers' letters are always welcome together with personal memories. In addition, if there are any particular observations or suggestions for inclusion in future editions, please let me know, or contact your area organisers.

Roger Almond, Editor, KierLink, Cottage Garden, 2 Orchard Road South, March, Cambridgeshire PE15 9DE

Copy deadline for the next issue – 31 August 2006.

A warm welcome to our new members

- Desmon Licquorish: Corby, Northants
- David Mouel: Limassol, Cyprus
- Geoffrey Burn: Huntingdon, Cambs
- Colin Riley: Chingford, Essex
- John Taylor: Wormegay, Kings Lynn
- John Beeching: Tonbridge, Kent
- Clive Cavill: St. Albans, Herts
- Jean Stamford: St. Neots, Cambs
- Joseph Taylor: Cheltenham, Glos
- Pearl Smeeton: Buckhurst Hill, Essex
- Pauline Pickard: St. Neots, Cambs
- Rita Foster: Geddington, Northants
- Lesley Falkner: Wellingborough, Northants
- Dennis Walker: Spennymoor, Co Durham
- John Simpson: Oulton, Leeds
- Barry Winter: Kings Lynn, Norfolk
- Margaret Friend: Maidstone, Kent
- Maurice Lowe: Wisbech, Cambs
- Christine Perkins: Yalding, Kent

Diary dates

Sunday 2 July	Summer Garden Party, Tempsford Hall
Thursday 10 August	Annual Golf Day, Crondon Park golf course, Stock, Essex (near B1007)

Rushden – Brian Hill Tel: 01933 352326

Saturday 27 May	London – trooping the colour rehearsal
Sunday 25 June	Day trip with grandchildren to seaside
Sunday 23 July	Gardens – RHS Wisley
Sunday 20 August	Slimbridge
Friday 29 September – Monday 2 October	Weekend break to the Italian Riviera (£289 p/p)
Saturday 7 October	Annual ferret race night at Higham WMC
Saturday 11 November	London Lord Mayor's Show
Saturday 18 November	Christmas shopping

Tempsford – John Skull Tel: 01480 474802, email: j.skull@btopenworld.com

Thursday 4 May	'Girls Night Out', Milton Keynes theatre (tickets £16)
Tuesday 9 May	Lunch at The Eaton Oak, St. Neots (pay as you go)
Thursday 18 May	'Seven Brides for Seven Brothers', Milton Keynes theatre (tickets £17)
Friday 26 – Monday 29 May	Amsterdam Delights Tour (£185 each, children £99). Price includes return coach, return Euro tunnel fare, three nights in four star Grand Hotel, Amstelveen
Saturday 3 June	Kew Gardens and the Palace (£22 each)
Tuesday 13 June	Lunch at The Danish Camp, Willington (payg)
Saturday 8 July	Hampton Court Flower Show (£28 each)
Tuesday 11 July	Lunch at The Wagon & Horses, Eaton Socon (payg)
Tuesday 8 August	Lunch at The Anchor Hotel, Tempsford (payg)
Tuesday 12 September	Lunch at The Crown, Eaton Socon (payg)
Saturday 14 October	Day trip to Citie Europe, Calais, France (£22 each)
Saturday 25 November	BBC Good Food Show, Birmingham NEC – coach trip

Maple Cross – Terry Delany Tel: 01582 841323

June	Mystery tour (tbc)
Thursday 10 August	Summer luncheon, Fareham
Sunday 20 August	Eight day coach tour, Swiss Lakes & Mountains
Tuesday 19 September	KS luncheon and site visit, Maple Cross
October	Autumn luncheon (tbc)
Friday 24 November	Four day break (Turkey & Tinsel), Bournemouth

Boston Spa: Revie Morris

The Boston Spa wing of the Fellowship Trust has since the last issue increased by three, to stand at a total of 39 members. 20 of those members, plus partners, attended a Sunday lunch on 4 September at the Hungry Fox at Beal. Jack Hughes was inspired to pen an ode to the occasion:



The Kier Group Fellowship Trustoldians 2005

*We met, we dined, and we had a good time.
Then we even risked a nice glass of wine.
One was enough, not the usual several, Well now, one
has to watch one's sugar level!*

*The chat was not about the years gone by,
Of cooling towers and chimneys up to the sky,
Or the endless concrete by the cube we poured, Into
the thousands of piles we had bored.*

*Those endless miles of motorways laid,
And all those sidewalks we had paved.
We all agreed they had been done with class.
But not half as good as our last bypass.*

*The 'crack' though good, wasn't pipelines laid,
Or how much money our contracts had made.
I'm very sorry to say that was far too tame, We were
more excited with our new Zimmer frame.*

*The walls we built to keep the seas at bay,
Those floodlights that turned the nights to day,
Oh how we toiled to get the beach levels right,
It's now our cholesterol levels we can't get right.*

*Still all in all we are quite fit
And all like to go on the odd coach trip,
But well we know we are in a 'spot'
If they have not allowed for a 'comfort stop'!*

*So there it is, but it's not all bad
But nevertheless just a wee bit sad.
Still having the 'crack' was the name of the game, If I
ever come back I'll do it again.*

Construction in the sun

Steve Tyson, former director of Kier Western

As I have retired and now live in Cyprus, a few months ago I wrote an article about 'living in the sun', and thought you might now be interested in reading about construction out here.

Whilst on large office blocks, with basement car parking and suchlike the usual piled and reinforced concrete walls are designed, house foundations are usually a 600/700mm thick RC raft.

The frames of the building again are usually RC, but structural steelwork is now slowly being used. DPC/cavities are not very common, with the outer walls a single skin of clay blocks, 200mm thick, usually with an applied finish.

Roof tiles fitted straight to the RC roof are mainly for decorative purposes as felt is applied direct to the concrete roof structure for waterproofing. I once asked why the buildings in Cyprus leaked and was given the answer: "They stop leaking when the rain stops!"

Heating of water is by solar panels and there are normally provisions made for central heating and air conditioning in most houses. Heating is definitely required from December until February, although there is no heating in schools!

The pace of construction is very slow, not unlike the UK 20-30 years ago! It takes an average 9-12 months to build a three bedroom house, but I've heard of cases taking over two years. This was mainly due to the fact that the labour is moved to another property when the prospective owner of another property comes on holiday to check on progress on their house!

Health & safety is the poor relation out here, except on major projects where the usual safety signs are displayed. A house or 3/4 storey block of flats will not have any scaffold erected until the external finishes are applied, and then it is usually a flimsy light weight old scaffold with a smattering of boards! Handrails... what are they?!

The toilet, if supplied, is a thunder box used by both male and female operatives, with no other welfare facilities provided. The Kier safety department would have a field day!

All in all, they still have a long way to go even to get on the bottom rung of the Kier safety ladder, but I will always describe Cyprus as "dusty, scruffy, WONDERFUL!"

Newport/Bristol: David Orr



Members undertook a five day trip to the Isle of Man in September, taking the ferry from South Wales. The hotel in Douglas was ideally placed to visit the historic mining village of Laxey, famous for 'Lady Isabella', the largest working waterwheel of its kind in the world. Later the party took the mountain railway to the summit of Snaefell to enjoy the fantastic scenic views.

Next was a visit to Castleton on the south of the island. Once the capital, this ancient town is clustered around the splendidly preserved Castle Rushen.

Other visits included the Edwardian resort of Port Erin, St Johns; the historic home of the world's oldest parliament where the Manx Parliament still holds an open-air session each year.

Tempsford Hall: John Skull

Pictured below, Fellowship Annual Lunch 2005. The lunchtime sessions at a selection of the local watering holes are due to start at the beginning of April, and by the time of going to press some members will have been to see Mary Poppins at the Prince Edward Theatre in London, which took place in early March.

A host of other events have been arranged in conjunction with Kier Sports & Social Club, including further theatre visits, Kew Gardens and The Palace, and the BBC Good Food Show at the Birmingham NEC, more details on page 2.



Maple Cross: Terry Delaney



A party of members were guests of Kier Southern at the staff dinner held at the Grand Harbour Hotel, Southampton on 22 October. The evening was a great success, and members were kept well fed and watered, and given the chance to catch up with old colleagues. Thank you to the directors and organising committee for a kind welcome and lovely evening.

On 24 October a number of members enjoyed a five day coach excursion to Boppard on the Rhine in Germany. Our package included an evening of German Bowls in the 700 year old beer keller, a visit to Rudesheim and the Siegfried Music Museum, and a trip to Lorely, a place of legend and fables with spectacular views overlooking the river. We also cruised the Rhine by day and night with dancing and music, and visited a winegrower and his family to sample and buy his delightful Rieslings. It was a very merry return to our hotel... The weather was kind, and everybody agreed it was a memorable trip.

Our first function of 2006 found us at a new venue, the Hilton Hotel Watford, where 20 members and guests tucked into a three course carvery luncheon. Future events booked for this year include further luncheons and a 9 day coach tour to Swiss lakes and mountains.

We are deeply saddened to report the deaths of Mr Derrick Tomlin and Mr Edgar Lane, aged 95.

Derrick (managing surveyor) joined William Moss in 1942 and completed a total of 42 years' service with the company.

Edgar (general foreman) joined William Moss in 1937 and completed a total of 38 years' service with the company.

Loughton & Witham:

Doug Hutching

Members are looking forward to their annual lunch to be held at the Sir James Hawkey Hall on 20 April 2006.

Cheltenham: Len Gayler

Following the success of our visit to Highclere Castle near Newbury in June last year, we decided to follow the formula and arrange a coach trip in May to Blenheim Palace, near Oxford. In addition to the grandeur of the palace there is also to be a Home & Gardens exhibition.

The 25 year dinner, having been absent for the last 10 years, is now fully back in gear, and a most enjoyable event was held just before Christmas 2005. The Christmas lunch for December 2006, by popular appeal, has been booked again at the Cotswold Hills Golf Club.

North West: Norman England

The autumn luncheon was held at the Suites Hotel, Knowsley, and was attended by 28 members – thoroughly enjoyed by old and new.



A festive carvery was the theme of our Christmas event held at a new venue – the Village Hotel, Whiston, when 28 members attended, including two new members.

The annual reunion dinner was held in February at the Village Hotel, where we were joined by current employees with over 25 years' continuous service. 38 members attended, and current employee Derek Johnston was congratulated on completing 40 years' service. It was ascertained that our membership contains several "40 yearers" including Doug Forsyth (47 years), Bob Baker (46 years, part of which was spent at Moss London), Barry Hollowood (45 years), Frank Lloyd (44 years) and Dave Ehlan (43 years). They were all congratulated by David Jenkins, Kier North West director, who gave a resume of the current work load and achievements of the company as well as future outlook.

It was also pleasing to welcome Graham Knowles, now retired, back in the area after service as director with Kier Western.

Digital Camera – Norman saw this poem in his local paper which he felt reflects his own experience!

*I was very pleased at Christmas
When I opened my Christmas box
It was a digital camera,
I usually get a pair of sox.*

*There were more features on the camera
Than I have ever seen,
Including a voice recording for an hour
And a 1.8 LCD screen.*

*I must admit all those extras
Were a bit too much for me,
With its internal memory
Compatible with Windows XP.*

*On Boxing Day I was out for hours,
Taking pictures all over town,
I took one near Wigan Pier,
Of a chimney they were knocking down.*

*I had them developed at Asda, But when I looked
at them I found,
Two dozen photos of my right eye,
I'd held the camera the wrong way round.*

Rushden: Frank Furlong

October saw members losing and making money on ferret racing – a very successful event raising a lot of money for Gateway.

In November members visited London for the Lord Mayor's Parade, a lovely day with great weather and a firework display to finish off. A shopping trip to Nottingham later in the month proved popular but exhausting...

On 27 November the annual dinner at Tempsford proved extremely successful and enjoyable.

In December we filled a coach, attending the Thursford Christmas Extravaganza, had a very nice Christmas lunch en route, and the show was extremely impressive.

As a New Year celebration we organised a trip to the Arnos Manor Hotel in Bristol, which provided excellent food, plenty of fun, and we even had our own troupe of entertainers! Trips to the seaside kept all attending well stocked with fish and chips.



Maidstone & Bromley:

Bob Palmese

Wallis in the dock: Wallis has worked in and around Chatham dock yard for many years so for some this was a trip down memory lane. The day was both wet and decidedly chilly so warm clothes were a must.



As there were 34 of us we were split into two groups with the two guides being dressed in costume relevant to the times of Nelson. They took us on a journey into the past which brought to life the harsh conditions experienced by the workforce. Much of this was akin to slave labour as wages were often not on the menu. Although the guides were entertaining, the sight of a dissident worker swinging from the gallows took us for a few moments into a very different world. This tour was only an overview of the dockyard as there are 80 acres to explore and five major attractions to see.

The Ropery, with its ¼ mile long building was on its own worth a visit. The guide explained how raw material was made into yarn and then spun into amazing lengths of rope. The Museum traced the dockyard's origins from Tudor times right up to the Falklands war. The Wooden Walls attraction is an entertaining overview of an apprentice on his first scary day in the dockyard. Some of the more athletic among us explored the confines of The Ocelot – a submarine (in dry dock).

With so much to see some members took the opportunity to upgrade their tickets which allowed them a free re-visit. Although the weather could have been kinder, there was something for everybody on this trip and the effort by our guides was well appreciated.

Wisbech: Brian Painter, Sonia Webb

Forty one of Wisbech's 60 members attended the Christmas luncheon at Elme Hall Hotel, Wisbech. Mavis Russell won the Christmas hamper which was presented to her by retired director and now area organiser Brian Painter.

On 16 January members and their families joined the staff of Kier Eastern to watch the swan feeding at the Wildfowl and Wetland trust at Welney, near Ely. Eastern are currently building a new footbridge and visitor centre for the Trust, and this event was held as a 'thank you' from the client to Kier. The swans make an annual migration from Russia, so this was a sight to behold. The evening was a great success and enjoyed by all ages!

Recollections of the big freeze and Bill & Bert's steak & kidney pie

Gordon Holt recalls the coldest winter in the construction industry. "It was 1963/64 when I was posted to Diddington reservoir contract at Grafham Water near Huntingdon. W&C French were constructing the reservoir and pumping station for Ouse Water Authority followed by the water treatment works and a sailing and fishing club, which was later opened by the Duke of Edinburgh.

Jimmy Wignal was contracts director; Bob Hare contracts manager; Jack Thompson agent on the treatment works; Reg Noaks site supervisor; Bert Johnson general foreman; Bill Phillips senior quantity surveyor and John Gosling assistant QS. The staff all stayed on site during the week.

In November 1963 the cold spell set in with minus zero temperatures. The depth of frost in the ground brought the earthworks to a halt – the D8 blades being unable to dig the ground which was like solid rock. These conditions lasted until Easter 1964. Site staff spent this time on minor works and planning, but the job still finished on time.

During the period of the freeze, one particularly cold Monday Bill Phillips arrived on site with a large home-made steak & kidney pie which he and Bert Johnson were looking forward to tucking into later. After work they had a drink in Bert's van and Bill went across to his own van to collect the warmed up pie, but on his return he slipped on the ice and the pie finished upside down on the snow covered roof of Bert's Landrover. They consoled themselves by eating out at the local pub, but by the next morning the pie was frozen solid and there it remained until the thaw at Easter!"

*On the first day of Christmas, my true love said to me
"I'm glad we bought fresh turkey and a proper
Christmas tree."*

*On the second day of Christmas, much laughter could
be heard
as we tucked into our turkey, a most delicious bird.*

*On the third day we entertained the people from next
door,
the turkey tasted just as good as it had the day before.*

*On the fifth day of Christmas, outside the snowflakes
flurried,
but we were nice and warm inside for we had our
turkey curried.*

*On the sixth day I must admit, the Christmas spirit died.
The children fought and bickered and we ate turkey
rissoles, fried.*

*On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love he did
wince
When he sat down at the table and was offered turkey
mince.*

*Day eight, and nerves were getting frayed, the dog had
run for shelter,
I served up turkey pancakes, with a glass of Alka Seltzer.*

*On the ninth day our cat left home, by lunchtime dad
was blotto.
He said he had to have a drink to face the turkey risotto.*

*By the tenth day, the booze had gone (except for our
home-made brew)
and if that wasn't bad enough, we suffered turkey stew.*

*On the eleventh day of Christmas, the Christmas tree
was moulting,
the mince pies were hard as rock and the turkey was
revolting.*

*On the twelfth day, my true love had a smile upon his
lips.*

*The guests had gone, the turkey too and we dined on
fish & chips.*

Memory lane...

Bailey Bridge at Barking (issue 10)

Thanks to Eunice Marshall and Fred Jesson's granddaughter (left to right) 1st and 2nd identified as Stan Rowley and Fred Jesson.



Jim Darbyshire (Baghdad, MIDMAC 1982-1983) emailed the company recently to see if anyone could help him trace Chris Barclay, an old friend who he worked with in Iraq in the 1980s and later in Cairo. If anyone is still in touch with Chris, he'd like them to pass the message on that some old friends are trying to get in touch. Bob Claridge (Cairo), John Kiernan (Cairo), Ken Stewart and his daughter Jackie (Baghdad). Email: jim.darbyshire@parsons.com

Obituaries

- David Homer
10 September 2005
- James Westland
12 September 2005
- Kitty Sheppard
23 September 2005
- James Freeman
28 September 2005
- Margaret Lindo
7 October 2005
- Frederick Mack
7 October 2005
- William Nuttall
18 October 2005
- Jacqueline Wild
27 October 2005
- John Manning
30 October 2005
- Ronald Brown
4 November 2005
- Ian Carney
4 November 2005
- Derrick Jackson
13 November 2005
- Roger Gray
23 November 2005
- Dennis Bettles
7 December 2005
- Derrick Tomlin
7 December 2005
- Denis Mason
11 December 2005
- Ronald Elliott
15 December 2005
- Reginald Steadman
3 January 2006
- Mary Weil
3 January 2006
- Charles McLeod
9 January 2006
- Mr W E Shirley
23 January 2006
- Edgar Lane
8 February 2006
- Philip Stretton
11 February 2006
- William Fairhurst
22 February 2006

What's new? – nothing changes!

"It's unwise to pay too much, but it's unwise to pay too little. When you pay too much you lose a little money, that is all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything, because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing you bought it to do. The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot. It can't be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it's well to add something for the risk you run. And if you do that, you will have enough to pay for something better."

John Ruskin (1819-1900)