

KierLink

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Issue 13

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Fellowship matters

A report from the Trust chairman John Stamford

If ever I needed any reassurance about the work of the Kier Group Fellowship Trust, two recent events have more than done that.

Firstly – the garden party on 2 July which was held in the grounds of Tempsford Hall. The weather was near perfect, the marquee impressive, the food and entertainment first class but above all it was delightful to see so many members enjoying themselves, many who had travelled a long distance to be there.

The second occasion was the annual golf day on 9 August at Crondon Park, Stock in rural Essex. This was another well-attended event on an excellent course and a perfect example of how the

Fellowship Trust brings people together.

Now in its ninth year, the Fellowship Trust has found successors for the area organisers in four regions, but volunteers are now required for two other areas. The role can give an added dimension to retirement and all members are encouraged to support to the area organisers wherever possible and to share the workload.

I believe that in the Fellowship Trust we have something special – not only did we work as a team, but we can continue that association in retirement.

John Stamford

Editor's note

Our area organisers continue to provide an interesting and varied programme for their members. Support from members in attending events and enjoying visits actively encourages increasing our numbers to avoid 'missing out'.

KierLink is your magazine and readers' letters describing past experiences on site, good or bad, are always welcome.

Please contact your area organiser or send direct to me:

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Copy deadline for the next issue – 28 February 2007.

A warm welcome to our new members

- Kenneth Lowry: *Welney, Wisbech*
- Kenneth Day: *Tadley, Basingstoke*
- John Costello: *Potters Bar, Herts*
- John Stafford: *New Milton, Hants*
- Gwendoline White: *Coopersale, Essex*
- Roger French: *Harlow, Essex*
- John Hills: *Maldon, Essex*
- Stephen Hoy: *Holmfirth, West Yorkshire*
- Fred Trevillion: *Braintree, Essex*
- Christine McCarthy: *Longwell Green, Bristol*
- Stephen Williams: *Chester*
- Patrica Olsen: *Thornton, Liverpool*
- David Jarvis: *Whittlesey, Cambs*
- Trevor Davies: *France*
- James Fail: *North Baddesley, Hants*
- Stephen Godfrey: *Dumbleton, Worcs*
- Trevor Beales: *Wisbech, Cambs*

Tempsford Garden Party



Over 200 members and partners attended the first Kier Group Fellowship Trust Summer Garden Party, which was held in the picturesque rural setting of Tempsford Hall on 2 July.

The exceptionally hot weather that we were experiencing at the time enabled everyone to wander around the grounds and make use of the outdoor seating areas and welcome shade from the renowned cedar tree.

Guests, many travelling long distances, started arriving around mid-day, ready for the sit down buffet meal which was served in a splendid marquee. The meal was followed by 'easy listening' music from The Terry Stewart Trio and, following the customary speeches, many members made full use of the dance floor.

A grand raffle was also held with a variety of impressive prizes, all generously donated by Kier companies.





Driving in the sun

Former Kier Western director, Steve Tyson, completes his trilogy for KierLink with a short article about driving in Cyprus.

“As you know I’m now living in Cyprus which, since joining the EU in 2004, has earned the reputation as being one of the worst driving nations in Europe.

One of the national sports seems to be ‘red traffic light creeping’. Drivers see how far they can get across the road while the traffic light is still red and if it’s clear, they go! I have seen police ‘creep the lights’ but I also have it on good authority that the word STOP doesn’t translate easily into Greek!

Pavements appear to be for parking on – they are even reinforced to take the weight of cars. If there isn’t enough space between two parked cars, they park sideways with the front end sticking out into the road. Some cars are left for days or weeks like this.

Overtaking over a solid white line, particularly if on a blind bend, is normal, along with driving the wrong way down one-way streets or on a dual carriageway – especially by older drivers who have probably never taken a test. There’s an appropriate saying here – “came down from the mountains on a donkey, and went home in a Mercedes!”

Accident rates are high as you might expect. We’ve read of an old lady sitting in the shade outside her house being mowed down by a passing motorist. The local newspaper reports are mainly of young motorbike riders not wearing helmets. A new law was passed in June five years ago but not brought into force until the autumn of that year as it was felt too hot to wear a helmet in June! Children as young as ten ride small quad bikes and motorbikes (presumably without insurance) but the police seem oblivious to it. The local police do not readily issue tickets in Pathos as it could be their cousin or brother in the wrong!

Despite this I still regard this place as wonderful but if you come to Cyprus, make sure you bring another pair of eyes – you need them in the back of your head!

Not enough time in the day

By Maidstone & Bromley area organiser Bob Palmese

Retirement now has opportunities for diversity never experienced by our predecessors. When I elected to retire at sixty, I was both excited at the prospect of freedom from responsibility, but apprehensive of how to fill the time, which I thought now stretched out before me like a vast empty vista. How wrong could I be?

My life long enthusiasm for motorcycling, no longer restricted by the restraints of time and economy, can now be fully enjoyed. While working for Wallis other colleagues caught the bug, and fellow retiree Dave Jillians and I now ride out together most Wednesdays. We explore our local counties of Sussex and Kent and on a recent trip we even located the venue for our next fellowship autumn buffet lunch.

Most bikers have favourite watering holes, and some of mine go back to the sixties, however during the weekdays the bikers’ haunts are taken over by a new breed of leather clad warriors. When we first started to ride out, we expected to find ourselves surrounded by young men smiling sympathetically at the old boys on their shiny modern toys. To our surprise, very often we find that we are the youngest riders there!

Modern motorcycles although very powerful and potentially dangerous are not the greasy, oily noisy machines of yesteryear. The riders we encounter on our trips are usually retired professionals or well-off entrepreneurs escaping their duties for a few hours. The intended quick cup of tea invariably results in lengthy conversations covering the merits of British bikes compared to our modern foreign counterparts or whether Barry Sheene would have shown Valentino Rossi a clean pair of heels given a level playing field.

Both Dave and I have other interests. He is Kent born and bred and loves his field sports, and I, being a townie cringe at the thought of shooting anything but a cardboard target. However, I’m still enjoying squash twice a week with Terry Wilson, another retiree from Wallis, and most importantly, I cannot believe three years have passed already. I think I’ll need to retire from retirement!

For the technically minded: Dave rides a Honda CBF1000 c/w ABS. Bob rides a BMW 1200ST c/w ABS.

Around the regions

Boston Spa: Revie Morris

Membership now stands at 40 but I have two further victims in my sights. Sunday lunch on 12 March at The Owl at Hambleton was attended by 12 members and guests. The low turn out was unfortunately due to illness and hospital visits, which affected at least another eight members. Another lunch is planned for the autumn and 26 acceptances have been received so far.

The following riddle was sent in by Alan Ellis. The answer can be found on the back page.

What is greater than God, more evil than the devil, the poor have it, the rich need it and if you eat it, you'll die?

Devon & Cornwall: Steve Tyson



Sixteen members attended the summer lunch meeting in July. To encourage more members from Cornwall to attend, a local hostelry in the county (The Weary Friar at Pillaton) was chosen as the venue. However, the Cornish, as canny as ever, were aware that the 'folks from across the river' were coming to invade the peace and tranquillity of the area and arranged for the signposts to Pillaton village to be removed for the day resulting in some people getting hopelessly lost and having to ask for directions! Everyone made it in the end and enjoyed a splendid lunch.

Tempsford: John Skull

Since the last issue, local members have enjoyed several lunch dates at local hostelries. Trips to Milton Keynes theatre have included Girls Night Out and Seven Brides for Seven Brothers. A few members joined with the Kier Sports & Social Club on a trip to Kew Gardens and the Palace. This was a great opportunity to see the palace after the recent completion of a major refurbishment.

All who attended the summer garden party at Tempsford thought it was a great alternative to the annual luncheon held in November. It was a beautiful day and many new members attended although some were sorry to have missed out due to holidays. A coach trip to

Hampton Court for this year's flower show was held in July. The show rates amongst the best in the country within the imposed glorious setting of Hampton Court Palace. The flower beds forming part of the palace grounds competed favourably with the displays in the arena, despite water restrictions in the county.

Several members took part in the annual golf day and a very good day on a challenging course was enjoyed. In addition to the monthly lunches, some members have booked to go on a trip to Citie Europe Calais in October and the BBC Good Food Show at the NEC Birmingham in November. Other events are in the pipeline but can only take place with the support of the members.

Wisbech: Brian Painter, Sonia Webb

Fifteen members attended the garden party at Tempsford and in August 32 members went to see the matinee performance of the Summer Seaside Special Show at The Pavilion Theatre on Cromer Pier. Brian Painter and Reg Melloy also took part in the annual golf day in August. Preparations are under way for the Christmas luncheon which will be held at Elme Hall Hotel, Wisbech week commencing 11 December 2006.

Loughton & Witham:

Doug Hutchin, Ken Stoneman

Our annual luncheon at Sir James Hawkey Hall, Woodford in April was attended by 120 members and their partners. As usual an enjoyable time was had by all and plans are already afoot for next year's event. Those who attended the garden party at Tempsford had an enjoyable day despite the very hot weather. A pre-Christmas lunch has been arranged for Wednesday 30 November at the Keene Hall, Galleywood near Chelmsford. So far we have had acceptances from 67 members and their partners.

We are pleased to welcome John Simson and John Spray who are helping the area organisers. With their assistance, we intend to organise more events in the future, news of which will be forwarded to members in due course.

Cheltenham: Len Gayler

In May, 30 members and friends were taken by coach to Blenheim Palace near Oxford where fine weather contributed to an excellent day. Besides the charms of the palace and surroundings, a lovely garden show provided further interest. Our Christmas lunch will be held on 15 December once again at the Cotswold Hills Golf Club which provides us with good parking facilities and excellent food and service. The Moss 25 year service dinner appears to have returned as an annual event and arrangements are in hand for 2006.

Maple Cross: Terry Delany

Members and their partners joined the 'Rolling Stones Club' for an evening meal at the Bobsleigh Hotel, Bovington at the end of March. Thirty one members and partners attended the Spring luncheon at St Michael's Manor Hotel, St Albans in April and the long service luncheon, hosted by Kier Southern, at the same venue attracted 30 members. The garden party at Tempsford in July was also well attended. A stroll around the parks and gardens at Canary Wharf followed by a private tour of Tower Bridge was another joint event with the 'Rolling Stones Club' in August and also a morning visit to Windsor Castle followed by a river trip. Also in August, a number of members travelled to Fareham to join our south coast colleagues for a summer luncheon at Lysses House hotel. A warm welcome was given to Graham Willoughby, Graham Baker and Tom Lynch who were visiting for the first time. Future events include an eight-day coach tour to the Swiss lakes & mountains and a site visit and buffet lunch at Chorleywood.



Jim Connor.

Congratulations to Jim Connor who, having raised thousands of pounds for local charities over many years by competing in marathons, took to the sky this year and completed a 12,000ft tandem sky dive on 16 July, raising another £600 for charity.

North West: Norman England

A spring luncheon was held at our usual venue of the Village Hotel and was well attended with everyone enjoying the varied menu.

A luncheon is being arranged at historical Hiskin Hall in September where memorabilia, collectables and object d'art can be inspected or a stroll taken around the grounds. A murder mystery evening has also been arranged at the same venue in October and in December, a festive carvery will be held at the Village Hotel for our Christmas celebrations.

Rushden: Frank Furlong

The weather was sunny for our mystery trip in April which took us to Pickering for a team train ride and Whitby, where we enjoyed local fish and chips. In May we saw the Trooping the Colour rehearsal for the Queen's 80th birthday followed by a picnic in the park. It was too hot to walk around so we opted for a boat trip down the Thames.



Our family seaside trip in June was at Great Yarmouth where the children had another perfect day for the beach. Good weather also added to the superb day at the Tempsford garden party in July and the trip to RHS Gardens Wisley and Windsor which also took place in July – the only complaint being not enough hours in the day.

We are proud to have produced the winner at the annual golf day in August – congratulations to Terry Holland, and we're all looking forward to our next trip which is to Slimbridge Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre.



The following is an extract from a letter sent in by Jack Thompson of Enfield.

“The article in Kier Link on Diddington Reservoir from Gordon Holt caught my eye. I was on that contract from November 1962 until July 1966 when the Duke of Edinburgh officially opened the scheme, although by then it had been in operation for many months. Initially I was agent on the dam contract but when we were awarded the treatment works, I moved to that job and was replaced on the dam by John Harrington.

We worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week on the dam and finished the contract six months early. The scheme is now called Grafham Water because Diddington Village lies on the East side of the A1 while the reservoir is a mile or two on the west side of the A1. The area was initially called Diddington because a stream called Diddington Brook flowed through the valley. The area of the reservoir was 1600 acres, larger than the Norfolk Broads and the largest man-made area of water in the UK. We also built the sailing club and in August 1965, I gave permission for a small flying boat to land on the reservoir for demonstration purposes.

I went back to the site late last year and I could hardly recognise the place after 40 years. Grafham Water today is a tourist attraction with a 10 mile footpath and cycle path around the reservoir and 700 boats.”

Ageing... according to George Carlin

The only time in our lives when we look forward to getting older is when we're kids. If you're less than ten years old, you're so excited about ageing that you think in fractions – “I'm four and a half – going on five!” (You never hear “I'm thirty-six and a half – going on 37!”) When you get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead. “I'm gonna be 16!” (even though you may still be 13). And then the greatest day of your life... you BECOME 21!

But then... you turn 30! Ooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk! He turned! We had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're just sour. You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, but then you're PUSHING 40! Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you REACH 50!

But wait... you MAKE IT to 60. You didn't think you would! So you BECOME 21, TURN 30, PUSH 40, REACH 50 and MAKE IT to 60. You've built up so much speed now that you HIT 70! After that it's a day-by-day thing. You hit Wednesday!

You get into your 80's and every day is a complete cycle: you hit lunch; you turn 4.30; you reach bedtime! And it doesn't end there... Into the 90's, you start going backwards! “I was just 92!”

Then an even stranger thing happens. If you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. “I'm a hundred and a half!”

May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!

A comparison of the boss and the leader

THE BOSS

Drives his men

Depends on authority

Inspires fear

Says “I”

Says “Get there on time!”

Fixes the blame for the breakdown

Knows how it is done

Makes work a drudgery

Says “Go!”

THE LEADER

Coaches his men

Depends on goodwill

Inspires enthusiasm

Says “we”

Get's there on time!

Fixes the breakdown

Shows how it is done

Makes it a game

Says “Let's Go!”

Items of interest from the allocation of labour sheets

1. Drill holes in plumber up chimney!
2. Cutting out holes in ducks
3. Two hours super-vision!
4. Cleaning out ducks
5. Working on manhole over the river

Interpretations:

1. Drill holes in chimney for Plumber
2. Cut out holes in ducts
3. Two hours supervision
4. Cleaning out ducts
5. Work to manhole other side of river

Taken from W & C French News Sheet Volume IV, No. 4, April/May 1960

The Fellowship Trust annual golf day was held on Thursday 10 August 2006, sponsored by Bob Bagley and his wife Frances at their local course, Crondon Park Golf Club, Stock, Essex.



Twenty two members arrived in time for bacon rolls and coffee, while Pip Pitts and John Spray completed the organisation of teams and order of play in their usual efficient way.

The weather, although overcast with an occasional sprinkling of rain, was very kind for most of the day. The challenging course was fairly long and the participants all completed but with a depleted energy level. The bar provided the necessary recovery in readiness for the evening meal.

A good four-course dinner was served in a beautifully refurbished 'milking parlour' which used to be part of a working farm. The proceedings were rounded off with a short speech of thanks from the chairman, followed by John Hebblethwaite and Brian Painter carrying out the presentation of the prizes.

A great day was enjoyed by all with everyone a winner.



Taken from W&C French News Sheet volume IV, no 4 – April/May 1960

All the extracts given below are from genuine letters sent to the pensions office. Although crude, they are written in good faith by the authors.

1. I cannot get sick pay. I have six children. Can you tell me why this is?
2. This is my eighth child. What are you going to do about it?
3. Mrs R has no clothes and has not had any for a year. The Clergy have been visiting her.
4. In reply to your letter, I have already co-habited with your office, so far without result.
5. I am forwarding my marriage certificate, and two children, one of which is a mistake – as you see.
6. Sir, I am glad to say that my husband, reported missing, is now dead.
7. Unless I get my husband's money, I shall be forced to lead an immortal life.
8. I am writing these lines for Mrs G who cannot herself write. She expects to be confined next week and can do with it.
9. I am sending you my marriage certificate and six children. I had seven and one died, which was baptised on a half sheet of paper by the Rev. Thomas.
10. Please find out if my husband is dead, as the man I am now living with won't eat or do anything until he is sure.
11. In answer to your letter, I have given birth to a little boy weighing ten pounds. Is this satisfactory?
12. You have changed my little girl into a little boy. Will this make any difference?
13. Please send my money at once as I have fallen into errors with my landlord.
14. I have no children as my husband is a bus driver and works all day and night.
15. In accordance with your instruction, I have given birth to twins in the enclosed envelope.
16. I want money as quick as you can send it. I have been in bed with doctor all the week and he does not seem to be doing me any good.
17. Milk is wanted for my baby as the father is unable to supply it.
18. Re your enquiry, the teeth in the top are all right, but the ones in my bottom are hurting horribly.

Obituaries

Lesley Williams	18 February 2006
Rodney Parrington	17 March 2006
William Cheal	9 April 2006
Lois Brown	14 April 2006
Brenda Bliss	15 April 2006
Thomas Wignall	20 April 2006
Beryl Goode	5 May 2006
Norman Blowers	12 May 2006
John Worstencroft-Parr	14 May 2006
Kenneth Bradbury	29 May 2006
Jane James	31 May 2006
John Moss	7 June 2006
Paul Ballard	7 June 2006
Philip Redman	9 June 2006
Colin Campbell	20 June 2006
Robert Smith	20 June 2006
Sidney de-Laune	25 June 2006
Frederick Stuart	26 June 2006
Irene Connor	27 June 2006
David Temple	30 June 2006
Ellen Harne	4 July 2006
Ray Henson	11 July 2006
Veronica Constable	11 July 2006
Mr E H Tyler	13 July 2006
Geoffrey Pipe	13 July 2006
Glenys Pilkington	14 July 2006
Agnes Fletcher	25 July 2006
Hugo Urbanek	2 August 2006
Jeanne Altendorff	7 August 2006
Doris Shields	21 August 2006
Richard Turner	5 September 2006

QUIZ ANSWER

Answer to Alan Ellis' riddle

nothing