

## Fellowship matters – report from our chairman Dick Side

I am pleased to be able to report that the membership of the Fellowship continues to grow and now stands at over 1,140. The number of events being staged across the country also continues to grow with the most notable increase being in the Loughton and Witham areas which have a high concentration of members due to the historic locations of the W&C French offices at Buckhurst Hill and Romford. These two areas, which operate on a combined basis due to their relatively close proximity and history, have been rejuvenated by their 'second generation' organisers, Geoff Brown and John Simson. This is now our most active area in terms of the numbers of attendees at functions over the last year. Geoff and John enjoy close support from a committee of members formed to help organise their numerous events. They also rely on their local Kier London and Kier Eastern offices which provide excellent practical and financial assistance supported by the local directors.

The need for area organisers to liaise closely with their local designated directors has become more important as the credit crunch and other economic woes that surround us take their toll on the Trust's investment income.

It is most reassuring in these troubled times to know that Paul Sheffield, the newly appointed Kier Group chief executive, has pledged the company's continuing support of the Fellowship Trust and that he has decided to remain on the Trustee Board for the time being.

The success of the Fellowship Trust relies on the enthusiasm and hard work of areas organisers and the support they get from fellow members and their local Kier office designated director. An updated list of these key people is to be found in this copy of KierLink.

If you are not a regular attendee or have not yet attended any Fellowship events, why not give it a try – you may be pleasantly surprised.

## Smiles

A woman brings 12-year-old Johnny home and tells his mother that he was playing doctors and nurses with Mary, her eight-year-old daughter. Johnny's mother says 'Let's not be too harsh on them – they are bound to be curious about sex at that age.' 'Curious about sex?' replies Mary's mother, 'He has taken her appendix out!'

Some gems!

- When you are 104 years old there is no peer pressure
- The nice thing about being senile is you can hide your own Easter eggs
- How to prevent sagging. Eat until the wrinkles fill out
- It is scary when you make the same noises as your coffeemaker
- Half the stuff in your shopping trolley says, 'For fast relief'
- When preparing your will request that you are cremated and the ashes are scattered in Tesco. Then you will be sure your relatives will visit twice a week
- Remember – you do not stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing.

## Editor's note

Thanks to the hard work of a large number of regional organisers the range of events continues to grow. Please give them your support together with suggestions for yet more events!

The volume of copy for possible inclusion in KierLink is increasing and my apologies if your particular effort is not included but please keep up the good work.

Remember that it is your magazine and if you have ideas for future editions please advise either your area organiser or direct them to me.

Last date for copy for the next issue is 31 August 2010. Please send to:

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Cottage Garden  
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Cambridgeshire PE15 9DE

## World's Biggest Coffee Morning

Retirees and employees from Kier Eastern's Wisbech office presented Macmillan Cancer Support with a cheque for £312.25 after raising the sum at the 'World's Biggest Coffee Morning'.

The nationwide event, which took place on Friday 25 September, raises money for people affected by cancer and members of the Wisbech area Kier Fellowship Trust along with Kier Eastern staff gathered to enjoy a hot beverage and mid-morning snacks in support of this worthy cause.

Kier Eastern PA Sonia Webb commented: "We are delighted to be able to offer something back to an organisation that does so much to improve the lives of others."

## Welcome to our new members

NAME	TOWN	AREA	WORKED FOR
Ray Gaston	Kirkella	Kier Northern	French Kier, Kier Building Maintenance
Paul Gilbert	Colne	Tempsford	Kier Engineering Services
Margaret Wright	St Neots	Tempsford	Kier Ltd
William Skinner	Witham	Witham	Kier Eastern
Derek Bryant	Redbridge	Kier London	Kier International, Kier London
Robert Molton	Kettering	Rushden	Kier Technical Services
Roger Forbes	Iverheath	Kier Southern	Kier Southern, Kier Brazier, Henry Jones
John Seaton	Sheffield	Tempsford	JL Kier, Kier, French Kier, Kier International
Michael Edwards	Shefford	Tempsford	Kier Build, Kier Health
Peter Broad	Harlow	Loughton	Kier London
Tina Theodorou	Grafham	Tempsford	Kier Regional, Kier Group Services
Gordon Beecrey	Longford	Cheltenham	Moss Construction
Alan Cope	Dartford	Loughton	Kier London
Muriel Bird	Eatonford	Tempsford	Kier Fleet
Hugh Douglas	Hortonkirby	Kier South East	Kier South East
Madeline Knight	Newwanstead	Kier London	Kier London

## Area organisers and designated directors

	REGIONAL AREA OFFICE	ORGANISER	DESIGNATED DIRECTOR	COMPANY
1	Boston Spa	Redvers Morris	Tyd Gray	Kier Northern
2	Cheltenham	Hugh Sweet	John Mackman	Kier Moss
3	Liverpool/Manchester	Norman England	David Jenkins	Kier North West
4	Loughton	Geoff Brown	Keith Bishop	Kier London
5	Witham	John Simson	Nick Bache	Kier Eastern
6	Maidstone	Anne Ransley	Mike Dathan	Kier South East
7	Maple Cross	Terry Delany	Norman Elliott	Kier London
8	Havant/Southampton	Graham Willoughby	Martin Orr	Kier Southern
9	Newport/Bristol	Gill Hardwick	Martyn Osbourne	Kier Western
10	Plymouth	Shirley Riddle	Peter Young	Kier Western
11	Rushden	Frank Furlong	Greig Marshall	Kier Marriott
12	Wisbech	Andrew Pallant	Paul Greenly	Kier Eastern
Others	Tempsford	John Skull		Kier Group
Others	Group events	John Hebblethwaite		

In the past issue of KierLink Bob Wayment wrote an excellent article about his and his wife Joan's interests in travel and art. Reading Bob's article again spurred me on to do similar – I find it interesting to see how one's interests and hobbies can combine. In my case, and to an extent my wife Pat's, hobbies include travel, walking, wildlife and photography. These interests can in combination make a very interesting cocktail of activities. For us foreign travel and photography started when our daughters were small and we could afford to travel further afield for our holidays, while walking was something I took up quite early in life, if memory serves me correctly at about the age of 2!



Interests and hobbies are things that you enjoy and do in your spare time. Well of course when you become a Kier Group pensioner time is your 'oyster' to do with as you wish 24/7, pension permitting of course. So since retirement my interest in wildlife and photography has expanded considerably, and so to has my photographic equipment, at some cost I may add. However, this has all been with Pat's approval, well a happy husband is a content one isn't he?

Our foreign travels to date have taken us to various countries in Europe and further a field to America, Canada, Alaska, Norway and Iceland. These foreign destinations have of course given good walking and photographic opportunities.

It also helps with out interest that we live in the village of Grafham, in Cambridgeshire. Some of you will remember that W&C French built the Grafham reservoir for the Great Ouse Water Authority (now know as Anglian Water) during 1963-65. At

that time it was referred to as The Diddlington Reservoir contract (named after an adjacent village, although further away from Grafham, any ideas why?)

To quote from old W&C French documents, 'In July 1965 a group of office and depot bound ladies and gentlemen formed an invasion party of over 60 people to visit the site, receiving a warm welcome from Bob Hare and his staff, who conducted the visitors around the reservoir site'. The reservoir is approximately 10m round, or according to Ron Whitlock, 9.610523m to be precise. There is cycle/footpath access all round the reservoir, which takes you through a variety of landscapes. These range from the concrete dam at the eastern end, to the nature reserve at the west end, all making for enjoyable walking and photographic opportunities. It is interesting to note that it took a full 15 months to fill the reservoir, with water being pumped from the River Ouse some miles away. Thus Grafham Water is now a haven for wildlife throughout the year. Indeed, some rare species of both bird and water fowl are reported on the water at different times. This year has seen at least four Great Northern Divers and a pair of Velvet Scoter who spend the winter here. I have included some of my wildlife photographs taken over the years, mostly of birds and water fowls, some in this country and some abroad.

The Brown Bear photograph was taken in Whistler, Canada while out walking; the Gannet photograph was



taken from the 14th floor balcony on a cruise travelling home from Iceland. The Glossy Ibis, another rare bird for this country, was taken at Paxton Pits Nature Reserve, in Cambridgeshire, and the Nightjar was taken at the RSPB Lodge in Sandy Bedfordshire (where I work as a part time volunteer).



Finally, from the bedroom window, well you don't always have to travel to far do you, a male Bullfinch taking the last of the pyracantha berries, lovely!



My photographic equipment started off with a simple East German Pakitica SLR film camera. Now, like most amateur photographers I use digital SLR cameras. My first was an excellent Canon EOS 10d which I have used for many years, but have recently updated to a Canon EOS 1D mk 1V, the very latest SLR camera for Canon. It cost of course considerably more than my original Praktica camera, but Pat insisted on buying it!

I hope this article has been of interest and may encourage some of you to get out there, walking with your cameras, and enjoying what British wildlife and that of other countries has to offer.

## **Boston Spa: Revie Morris**

Membership numbers have not yet altered and remain at 47. We have held two lunches since the last edition was issued. On 11 October we held a Sunday lunch at the Owl Hotel in Hambleton, which was attended by 22 members and guests.

Our Christmas Lunch on 13 December at the same venue was better supported with 32 members enjoying the Christmas Fayre provided.

I am currently organising another lunch for the 21 March at the same venue.

## **Tempsford Hall: John Skull**

Current area membership stands at 234.

The 2009 Golf Day was held at Wellingborough Golf Club on Wednesday 19 August. It was a glorious sunny day in a magnificent setting. The Golf Club's main building is a grade 1 listed building and, with associated buildings, gardens and its location, is a small stately home. Our area was represented by 13 playing members, out of a total of 36, and two non-players. The event was sponsored by Rushden and co-ordinated by John Hebblethwaite.

The regular monthly lunches continued and in September we visited The Green Man at Stanford. This was a new venue to us and was enjoyed by those who attended, enough to put it on the list for the New Year. The location is on a route to many other places but well worth stopping to sample a very good menu.

October and November saw us visiting old favourites The Cock in Broom and the Kings Arms in Sandy. The December lunch was held at The Anchor in Little Paxton and was attended by 24 of our members and partners some of whom had come from as far as Welwyn and Stamford. The food, drink and company made a good elongated lunch time in a village setting.

Members will have received a letter regarding the 2010 Golf Day and Summer Garden Party. The activities for 2010 have also been sent out to all members.

## **Wisbech: Sonia Webb & Andrew Pallant**

Ivor Pollington's DVD 'Years Gone By' has become a resounding success with 'outsiders' from Tempsford clamouring for a copy. He is now compiling volume II. So much for those who thought that all the Fen boys were good at was cutting cabbages!

The autumn quarter has been fairly quiet with a trip to Thursford and a curry night – and no, we do not curry our cabbages! The year ended on a high with our annual Christmas dinner held at the Crown Lodge, Outwell. The festive spirit ignited when, in the immortal words of the late Dick Livingston, Paul Greenly said: "The first drink is on me". Once again our thanks are given for the excellent support given by Kier Eastern.

Plans are in hand and dates are being made for various culinary and cultural excursions which, it is hoped, will give pleasure to our pensioners.

## **Loughton: Geoff Brown**

**Annual Golf Day:** On the 19 August a number of members attended a very well organised golf day situated in the magnificent setting of Wellingborough Golf Club.

**Clarence House and Cabinet War Rooms:** On 13 August 38 members attended an extremely interesting tour of Clarence House and the Cabinet War Rooms – many of the rooms are as they were during the war years.

**Imperial War Museum:** On 9 September members travelled to Duxford to be greeted by David Lee, former deputy director of Duxford, who was our tour guide for two hours and showed us around the various museums.

**Theatre Royal:** On 7 October members travelled to the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, for this year's thespian masterpiece, *Oliver!* The stage sets were extremely authentic and took everyone back to old London.

**Blenheim Palace:** On 20 November members visited Blenheim Palace (birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill) for a most interesting tour of the house and grounds. We were also fortunate enough to be able to browse round a Living Crafts for Christmas exhibitions.

**Christmas Lunch:** On 26 November we had our Christmas Lunch attended by about 60 members.

**Thursford Christmas Show:** On 9 December members travelled to Thursford for the matinee performance of their Spectacular Christmas Show, stopping on route at Swaffham for lunch. There was also time to enjoy the Fantasy Land exhibition with a multitude of animated Christmas figures.

We have 14 events arranged for 2010.

## **Cheltenham: Hugh Sweet**

On 18 November a party of 18 spent the evening in the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham, watching a performance of the *Last of the Summer Wine*. This was an enjoyable evening of nostalgic memories of the original characters Compo, Foggy and Clegg, whom the actors portrayed very well.

Our Christmas Lunch was held on 11 December at the Cotswold Hills Golf Club, Cheltenham. 42 members and spouses attended what was, as always, a very happy occasion. The food was excellent, and we were most grateful to Kier Moss for the wine and pre-munch drinks.

## **Rushden: Brian Hill & Frank Furlong**

As usual the Rushden area has been busy and since our last report we have had a mystery trip entitled "Apples and Oysters". 48 members visited Kent with Sunday lunch in Faversham, Oysters in Whitstable and tea in Herne Bay. Early October saw a full coach load visit Eastbourne for a concert in aid of the Ghurkha Welfare Trust – we even had time to visit a very windy Beach Head and return with all members.

Later in the year we visited The Lord Mayor's Show in London, went Christmas shopping in Birmingham, and a full group of 50 had Sunday lunch in Sandringham and enjoyed the Christmas Spectacular at Thursford in deepest Norfolk.

On the Sunday before Christmas, 41 members made the annual pilgrimage to The Guards Chapel in London for the Carol Service.

New Year 2010 was spent in Aachen. 34 members travelled to Germany to see in the New Year; plenty of good food, drink, snow and friendship ensured the four day break went with a swing.

New Year's Eve was celebrated twice with a seven-course meal and dancing, while all being dressed in DJ finery and party dresses.

New Year's Day evening was our fancy dress and ten pin bowling night with the theme being 'Duos'; we had Pinky and Perky, Snow White and the Prince, Bat Man and Wonder Woman, Sister Mary and the Bishop, Peter Pan and Looby Loo, Adam and Eve, Fred and Ginger, Robin Hood and Maid Marion – all enjoyed themselves.

We started 2010 with our annual visit to the Royal Albert Hall for the Mountbatten Festival of Music featured the Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines.

We are now preparing for our week-long visit to Sorrento and the Amalfi coast – 28 members have booked and are awaiting the sunshine.

Other events organised include mystery trips with Sunday lunch, visits to gardens and places of interest.

New Year 2011 will see us visit Michelen in Belgium – we are now taking bookings.

Sadly we have recently lost some of our members – Keith Cross, Eric Dickens and our oldest member Fred Hayo just short of 96 – a true stalwart of Robert Marriott Limited and until fairly recently a true supporter of the Fellowship.

## **Maidstone: Anne Ransley**

Currently we have a coach party to see Jersey Boys at the Prince Edward Theatre matinee in London on 23 March 2010.

We are taking a day trip to France on 20 April 2010 meeting up at Allington, Maidstone at 7.00am and crossing Le Shuttle at 9.20am and returning at 19.20pm local time. We are heading for St Omer where we will stop for lunch – the town is extremely pretty and has plenty to see.

A local place of interest is La Coupole which is a World War II rocket base and if any one is interested in this they will find comprehensive details on the web. Finally we intend to call into Pidou, which is a cash and carry outlet, to purchase wines, cheeses and groceries before returning home.

## **Maple Cross: Terry Delany**

**Kier Southern Maple Cross Long Service Luncheon:** Several Fellowship members joined Kier Southern employees for their annual Long Services Luncheon at Aldenham Golf and Country Club. Pre-lunch drinks were followed by an excellent three-course lunch. A special welcome was given to Mr Ernest Woods who had travelled down from Lincolnshire. Apologies had been received from Bob Baker, Eric Davies and Bob Farmer who all sent their best wishes to all their old colleagues. Terry Delany thanked the company for their kind invitations for the day, and said how nice it was to meet up with old work friends to talk over the good times we all spent together in our working lives.

**Kier Southern Havant Long Services Luncheon:** On 6 November members joined Kier Southern employees for their Long Service Luncheon at the Lysses House Hotel in Fareham where pre-lunch drinks and a three-course meal was enjoyed by all. A warm welcome was given to new member Paul Jenkins and Gary Mackie.

**Christmas Luncheon:** 38 members enjoyed a Christmas Fayre Luncheon at the Aldenham Golf and Country Club. Apologies had been received from Maurice Bailey, Ernest Woods, June James, Sheila Brown, Eric Davies and Sid Mullinger. Terry Delany thanked the golf club for the excellent meal, and also informed the members that the changes made to the companies area locations would not effect the Fellowship membership. He also thanked the members for their support throughout the last year.

**Valentines Luncheon:** A Valentines Day Luncheon was held at Freddie's Restaurant in St Albans, and 31 members enjoyed pre-lunch drinks and a superb three-course meal with fine wine. Apologies were received from Dick Side, Maurice Bailey, Eric Colbran, Beryl Davis, Norman Elliot and Derek Mulquin. The ladies were all presented with gifts.

### **Future events:**

Thursday 22 April

- St George's Day Luncheon, St Michel's Manor

Friday 11 June

- Summer Luncheon, Lysses Hotel

Monday 12 June

- Four-day break, Warners Hotels, Cricket St Thomas

Sunday 11 July

- Garden Party, Tempsford Hall

Sunday 8 August

- Seven-day break, Scotland

Thursday 9 September

- Fellowship Golf Day, Bishop Stratford

Friday 15 October

- Kier Long Service Luncheon, Aldenham

Friday 10 December

- Christmas Luncheon, Aldenham

## North West: Norman England

Another Halloween themed lunch took place at the ever popular Fairways Restaurant at Houghwood Golf Club and judging by the photographs some had a headache the day after.

The Christmas Fayre Lunch this year was held at the Village Hotel and Leisure Centre in Whiston and was enjoyed by all. Father Christmas (it is I) entertained on the guitar.



Our Annual Reunion Dinner was held at the end of February where we were joined by current employees with 25 years service. Divisional director David Jenkins and managing director Nigel Brook, who gave a summary of Kier North West's progress during the year, attended. Also present was Fellowship chairman Dick Side who gave a summary of the Trust and also requested any literature, booklets etc regarding William Moss & Sons Ltd.



A further Spring Luncheon will be held at the end of March at The Fairways Restaurant at Houghwood Golf Club.

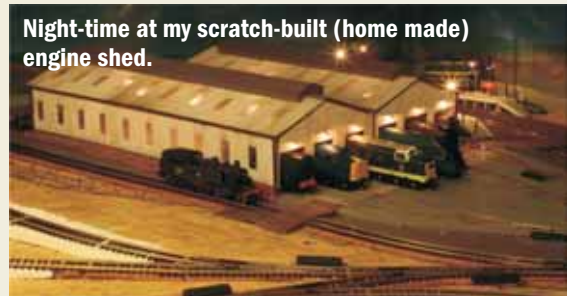
# Which way in

As my retirement date loomed, colleagues asked what I would do with all my spare time. Most of us look forward to retirement and long for the time to do all those things we couldn't do during our working lives but I have to say that my answer to the question was, "I have no idea"!

Yes, I was looking forward to retirement and yes, I had several outstanding DIY projects, a small garden to maintain and an invitation to visit the USA. I also had a collection of old colour transparencies to digitise and save to DVD and a collection of vinyl LPs awaiting similar treatment. I was to continue my work for the French Kier Benevolent Trust and involvement with the Kier Fellowship Trust so I reckoned I would fill my time usefully. And this is how I continue to spend my time – or some of it. In the autumn of 2008, my eye was caught by an advertisement for a train set and I began to wonder if it might be a worthwhile expense, or perhaps an expensive folly.

It is fifty years since I took more than a passing interest in model railways; I have always enjoyed looking at exhibition layouts and marvelled at the intricacy of the features but it had not previously occurred to me that creating a layout of my own was something I could enjoy doing for myself in retirement. Model railway layouts come in all sizes – some will fit into a briefcase whilst others look cramped in a large garden so, if I were to take this step, which would I choose? Where would I build it? Would it remain "up" permanently or would it have to be stowed away (as was the case all those years ago)? I wavered; the little boy in me wanted to do it but the grown man in me thought it might become an unfinished project and thus a liability. A major attraction was that these days, digital control makes it easy to run multiple trains, even on the same line and in opposite directions! And there is the sound option where locomotives emit realistic sounds in time with the actions – I read on the

Night-time at my scratch-built (home made) engine shed.



internet, an opinion that, "if a model locomotive doesn't have sound, it might as well not be painted". Hmm – I wonder...

The thought of having to pack away a layout that has taken ages to set up really did not appeal; neither did surrendering a bedroom to a permanent layout. My garage was (and is) used for storage and the garden was too difficult to weatherproof so the only viable place was the loft. As I had moved house fairly recently, the loft had not become cluttered; it had also been partly boarded and already had a fitted access ladder. And so it was that my loft hatch came to have a notice "To the Trains". I have enclosed a space of 15'6" x 11'3" (you will have to convert to metric yourself), insulated the rafters and given everything a coat of white emulsion. I have laid baseboards round the perimeter of the enclosed space to a width of about 4 feet and filled them with nearly 90 metres of track (it is sold in metric lengths). This made access to the corners of the enclosure rather difficult and I have cut-outs in the baseboards so I will be able to remove parts of the scenery and pop up from underneath if a problem arises!

The track plan was prepared on my computer using a proprietary piece of software. Many layouts replicate a particular scene from real life and run end to end but for me, it was essential to have continuous running – and a single oval would not suffice, no matter how many

# retirement?

sidings were added. My layout has two, double ovals, linked top and bottom so I can run several different routes including figures of eight. I also have quite a lot of sidings so that shunting and marshalling of wagons can take place.

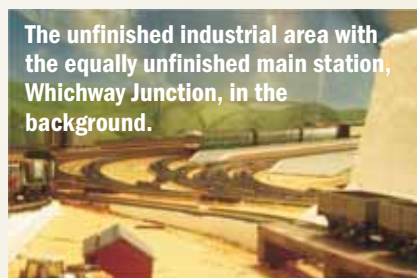
The layout is intended to be fun so, whilst I want it to look realistic and it must run reliably, I do not want to take it too seriously. I wanted some fun place-names and I call the layout 'Whichway Junction'. That is also the name of the mainline station, since there is a choice of routes. Most of the other names relate to North Yorkshire: The River Eck runs through the layout and enters the sea at Whatby; the industrial scene from Middlesbrough is Claggy Feet Iron Works whilst the nearby Cleveage Hills feature Raspberry Topping and Cook's Mount. Others just seem appropriate: the place where I have to crawl under the lines is called Withering Heights and there is a terminus called Hatch End (just near the loft entrance). I have an area for farming and village life which is called The Yonders (Upper and Lower) and the back scene is of 'The Back of Beyond' – thanks to my secretary for that suggestion. The scene is set in about 1966 which gives me the excuse to run both steam and diesel locomotives and use vehicles and implements now considered 'classic'. A certain amount of artistic licence has crept in as some may notice.

My son James, who studied fine art, took up the challenge of painting the back scenes – and it is ongoing. Much time was spent trying to get the perspective right and, of course, the scale had to look right too. There are mountains and moors, seaside sunshine and fields. There will be a street scene and an industrial one. All of them are painted on the walls in oils and James (I hope) will paint the little figures in acrylics.

My layout is 00 gauge – 1:76 or as it is popularly (but oddly) described

4mm = 1 foot. This means that a figure is less than 1" high and therefore requires good eyesight and a steady hand to paint well enough to stand close inspection. My own initial painting efforts have been less than great. There is a set of 120 people to be painted and I expect there will be more. There is scenery to be built and painted; cameo scenes to be designed and built and a stack of kits to be assembled and painted and miniature working lights to be installed. So far I have taught myself to solder (I hope it passes the test of time), learned that neither Rome nor the station ticket office was built in a day; learned that PVA wood adhesive is great for most gluing tasks and Evostick works for the rest (superglue frightens me!) and I have carried out a lot of research on the internet.

When buying rolling stock I have found it is important that, not only is the right age represented but also the right railway region and livery. Apparently, it just would not do to have a Great Western Dean Single pulling a rake of Southern Region coaches on the East Coast Main Line and you can't have a steam engine that was scrapped in



**The unfinished industrial area with the equally unfinished main station, Whichway Junction, in the background.**

1956 pulling coaches that were not made until 1966! I have never had a good memory but it has surprised me how much I have forgotten about the 1960s; what were the main railway cargos? What sort of street-lights did we have? What were the buses like? How did the stations and platforms look? Did we have reflective safety jackets? Did we have multi-storey car-parks and what did shop fronts look like? The internet has made this research so much easier.

**A Diesel Multiple Unit, local train leaves Claggy Feet Halt whilst other workers board the trolley bus at the end of their shift.**



The ready-made models themselves are extremely detailed and often fragile. Every box is marked 'not suitable for children under 14 years old'. Whilst the detail is lovely to see, it does seem a pity that the hobby has become so sophisticated that the products are no longer suitable for children. Some manufacturers do make simpler ranges without such fine detail and it is sometimes possible to save money without sacrificing the look, by buying from the children's range. However, the detail is very tempting and it is a delight to watch the lights on the loco change from white to red (or vice versa) as you move the control from forwards to backwards; you can blow the whistle and hear the brakes come on; it is great to be able to switch on the internal lights in the multiple unit trains and to hear the sound as a steam train rushes past or a powerful diesel sets off – and the sound emanates from each locomotive, not a nearby hi-fi system.

There is much still to do to Whichway Junction. I have had a great year developing it thus far and I love it when others take an interest. I hope you like the pictures – very little of the layout is photogenic yet so perhaps there will be more in the future. A worthwhile expense – yes, an expensive folly – yes, an unfinished project – probably, a liability – definitely not and the sound-fitted locos – wonderful!

**Harold Thompson**

**A passenger train waits while a very dirty 9F locomotive pulls heavy goods wagons through Whichway Junction.**



# RETIREMENT AND THE FREEDOM IT BRINGS

Upon leaving the services (what a relief for our potential enemies) I went into agricultural engineering and worked for international and ford agencies for some years until a chance came to become a mobile fitter with W&C French in 1966 – visiting sites and working on railway possessions as and where required. Having spent a few weeks in the plant workshop in Harlow, I was released upon the tender mercies of the Wisbech area contracts and quickly learned that there was a vast difference of attitude between paying customers and site foreman! The normal greeting for paying customers was: “How much will it cost?” against the site foreman’s greeting of: “What’s wrong with it and how long will it take?”. I really needed a crystal ball and a soothing reply as I had usually not yet got out of the van! On nearly all occasions’ many hours of wasted time in travelling and obtaining the correct spares would have been spared if they had applied some patience in answering a few simple questions on the initial phone call, I must say that there was a few enlightened ones, but not many.

I quickly realised that the civil engineering industry had within its ranks some very talented people who in their spare time followed interests that were far removed from the conditions and sheer hard labour of their normal working day. There were artists (some very good ones), musicians, political writers, makers of furniture and scale model makers, and above all was a talent for practical jokes! Today of course with the PC culture they would get the DCM (don’t come Monday!)

When my company’s sell by date came along and I left the company in March 1994 I still had seven years to do before my state pension date, so I decided to become self employed and began growing ornamental trees on a wholesale basis. This was a very quick and steep learning curve but fortunately I had some good tuition in crafting, budding and raising trees. Luckily at this time the horticultural business was good and I quickly built up a good customer base – along with this I was delivering tenders for Kier Eastern on a regular basis to all areas, mostly to MOD sites and inner city addresses. This I enjoyed greatly as it was nearly always against the clock and usually a challenge, but that’s another story.

Upon fully retiring in 2006, I was able to begin following and enjoying all the interests and hobbies that I had been unable to in the past. For fifty years I have been interested in photography and with the introduction of digital imaging and computer usage in recent years this had resulted in a whole new dimension and led me to produce an amateur DVD of the history and people of those that have worked and still work from the Wisbech office. This tied in with other interests in local history, music (brass band), West End theatre and some other interests when time permits. It’s a joy to be able to play at all the thing that I was unable to afford or be permitted to do as a child, although I draw the line at climbing trees and swimming in rivers, oh happy days.

*Ivor Pollington*

## Obituaries

Ivy Morton	29 August 2009
Frank Ford	4 September 2009
Anthony Miller	4 September 2009
Peter Quince	8 September 2009
Russell Brighton	9 September 2009
Ron Lawrence	12 September 2009
John Gower	18 September 2009
George Crane	27 September 2009
Anthony Askew	1 October 2009
Hilda Jones	6 October 2009
Brian Warburton	15 October 2009
Florence Haines	22 October 2009
Adrian Potter	13 November 2009
Richard Hornsby	24 November 2009
Harold Stevens	4 December 2009
Ada Hudson	7 December 2009
Anthony Davies	15 December 2009
Rita Austin	19 December 2009
Kenneth Harding	23 December 2009
Harvey Collins	27 December 2009
Joan Conlan	7 January 2010
Connell Gallagher	8 January 2010
Derrick Worthington	30 January 2010
Peter Lynch	3 February 2010
Graham Cummings	9 February 2010
George Shephard	10 February 2010
Albert Webb	11 February 2010

### Reality stranger than fiction

Commenting on a complaint from Mr. Arthur Purdey about a large gas bill, a spokesman for British Gas said: “We agree that it was rather high for the time of year. It’s possible Mr. Purdey has been charged for gas used during the explosion that destroyed his house.”  
*The Daily Telegraph*

Irish police are being handicapped in a search for a stolen van because they cannot issue a description. It’s a Special Branch vehicle and they don’t want the public to know what it looks like.  
*The Guardian*

A young girl who was blown out to sea on a set of inflatable teeth was rescued by a man on an inflatable lobster. A coast guard spokesman commented: “This sort of thing is all too common”.  
*The Times*

At the height of the gale, the harbourmaster radioed a coast guard and asked him to estimate the wind speed. He replied he was sorry but he didn’t have a gauge. However, if it was any help, the wind had just blown his Land Rover off the cliff.  
*Aberdeen Evening Express*

Mrs Irene Graham of Boscombe, delighted the audience with her reminiscence of the German prisoner of war who was sent each week to do her garden. He was repatriated at the end of 1945, she recalled: “He’d always seemed a nice friendly chap, but when the crocuses came up in the middle of our lawn in February, they spelt out Heil Hitler.”  
*Bournemouth Evening Echo*