

# KierLink

The magazine for the Kier Fellowship Trust | Issue 42 | Autumn/Winter 2021



THE GLAMOROUS SIDE OF  
BEING AN INTERNATIONAL  
ESTIMATOR EPISODES 2 AND 3  
PAGES 6-7 AND 25-27

TRIP TO ISLE OF MAN ON  
15-19 SEPTEMBER 2021  
PAGES 21-22

LOCKDOWN GARAGE  
MAKEOVER  
PAGES 23-25



**"You better had Santa or it's  
'Nil Par' from me" says Rudi**



Neil Meixner

# Chairman's matters and Administrator's report

It looks as though things are stabilising in Kier and the future looks a lot brighter than it has for a few years. Please see Andrew Davies article for further information.

Life did return to near normal in mid-2021. Hopefully with the aid of booster jabs and some reasonable precautions we'll all remain safe over the coming winter.

Thank goodness we are starting to be able to meet up again! It is great to see that lots of our area organisers have started to dip their toes in the water with lunches, meetings and golf events underway across the country.



Brendan O'Boyle

You can find information on the Fellowship and local events at:

[www.fellowship.kier.co.uk](http://www.fellowship.kier.co.uk)

You can add notice of event, reports, blogs and photographs by sending them to Andrea McDaid at:

[andrea.mcdaid@yahoo.com](mailto:andrea.mcdaid@yahoo.com)

This enlarged edition of KierLink is full of great articles. We are always seeking interesting items for inclusion in future editions. If you have anything interesting to share with fellow members, please contact any of the editorial team namely, Andrea McDaid, Neil Meixner or Brendan O'Boyle by using in the first instance the email address at the foot of this article. We will be pleased to assist you.

We currently have 1,352 members compared with 1,363 this time last year. We have had new members join us in 10 of our 12 areas, so we are delighted to say that interest remains high in the Fellowship.

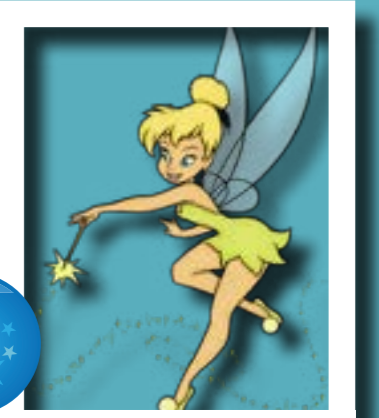
If you know of new retirees or leavers, why not see if they'd like to join the Fellowship. The application form is available at:

<http://www.fellowship.kier.co.uk/joining-us/>

Please make sure that if you change your address, you give your new address to your area organiser and Brendan O'Boyle so that our records can be updated. It is helpful to have any new telephone number and email addresses as well so that you can continue to receive invitations to events and copies of the KierLink.

If you require help or information with any matters relating to the Kier Group Fellowship Trust, please contact Brendan O'Boyle by email as shown below:

[brendan.o'boyle.ext@kier.co.uk](mailto:brendan.o'boyle.ext@kier.co.uk)



Andrea McDaid (Tinkerbell)

## Editor's note

What a pleasure to welcome you back AND be able to tell you that this issue is going to be an amazing read!

It's been a challenging time for everyone over the months but, as people, we are very resilient. Somehow we manage to adapt, soldier on – make the best of situations that are thrown at us.

I'm still working at Tesco as a Trolley-Dolly (the actual position name is 'customer assistant' which sounds more glamorous). As a team, we work very hard to produce a great service – not just in shopping for Click and Collect – but also any help customers need finding products in the store. If team members bump into each other down the same aisle, we'll banter and laugh while working which is good fun (there's not much time for that but every little helps hehe!)

I know you're wondering: 'Why on earth has Andrea placed this picture?' I'm sending you fairy dust for a wonderful Christmas, New Year, good health and, as always, looking forward to reading what you've been up to next year!

Best wishes, Andrea

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Copy deadline for issue 43 2022:

# Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



## To be advised by Administrator

Email [andrea.mcdaid@yahoo.com](mailto:andrea.mcdaid@yahoo.com)

# Message from the Chief Executive

**Hello, and welcome to the Autumn 2021 edition of KierLink. It has been a busy couple of years since I was appointed and as a Group. We have been continuing to navigate our own operational turnaround, as well as a global pandemic and so I wanted to take this opportunity to update you on our progress as well as summarising our full-year results, which we announced in September.**

Taking our results first, they have materially improved and show a strong operational performance, which demonstrates the completion of our operational and financial strategic actions that I announced in April 2019.

The Group's cash generation has improved, and the balance sheet has been strengthened. We made an adjusted operating profit of £100m, which is up from £41m last year and our margins have increased from 1.2% to 3%, showing the quality of our earnings. We have reported a revenue of £3.3bn, a slight 4% decrease on last year. This reflects our ongoing exit of some non-core low margin and loss-making contracts, as well as the completion of our motorway upgrade projects and the ongoing impact of Covid-19.

As a result of our successful sale of Kier Living and the equity raise, we delivered a net cash position of £3m up from £310m of net debt in 2020.

This work has not been done in isolation and the completion of our strategic actions is down to the fantastic team of 10,500 Kier employees who have delivered for our clients and communities. Over the past few weeks, I have been fortunate enough to visit a number of our sites and offices across the country alongside the rest of the executive committee. It has been a great opportunity to meet with our colleagues, thank them for their hard work through challenging times, give them an opportunity to ask us their questions and to outline our medium-term strategy which they are critical to in the next phase of our strategy.

The important thing to note here is that our overall strategy has not changed. We will continue to focus on

our core markets: Highways, Utilities, Infrastructure, Construction and Property but we now have three new strategic actions:

- *To achieve an annual revenue of c.£4bn-£4.5bn*
- *Achieve an adjusted operating margin of c. 3.5%*
- *Achieve a sustainable net cash position.*

Our purpose of sustainably delivering infrastructure which is vital to the UK underpins this. Continuing to be a strategic supplier to government, focusing on regulated, blue-chip markets, and contracting through long-term frameworks, is what we will continue to do. We can be proud that the work we do is behind so much of what keeps this nation moving and our pipeline for future work remains strong, particularly given the government's commitment to investing in infrastructure.

We know that through our new strategic priorities of disciplined growth, consistent delivery and generating cash, we will be well positioned to win a share of the right kind of work with appropriate margins and risk profiles.

Our culture of 'Performance Excellence' continues to underpin everything we do as we strive for continuous improvement. Since its launch, I continue to see the benefit of this culture for our people, projects, clients, and communities; and in this past year alone, we have generated over £233m in social value.

While we have come a long way – there is still a great deal to be done. All our colleagues have worked incredibly hard to get us to the position we are in now and I am confident in our vision for the future of the Group.

*As always,  
thank you  
for your ever-  
continuing  
support.*



**Andrew Davies**

## A warm welcome to the following new members

NAME	CITY/TOWN	AREA	WORKED FOR	YEARS OF SERVICE
John Bates	Bristol, Avon	Bristol	Kier Western	34
Derek Bell	Annan, Dumfriesshire	Tempsford	Kier Construction	29
Paul Cassells	Bury, Lancashire	Liverpool/Manchester	Kier Utilities	19
Jason Flueter	Kettering, Northants	Rushden	Kier Construction	22
Hugh Gostelow	Whitstable, Kent	Maidstone	Kier South East	13
Jane Gulliver	St. Neots, Cambridgeshire	Tempsford	Kier Group	42
Graham Harwood	Liverpool, Lancashire	Liverpool/Manchester	Kier Northern	43
Frank Heleniak	Normanton, West Yorkshire	Leeds	Kier Northern	41
Ronald Holverson	Lincoln, Lincolnshire	Waterbeach	IOSAW	15
Jeremy Hunter	Salford, Lancashire	Liverpool/Manchester	Kier IT	19
Catherine Jackson	Davenham, Cheshire	Liverpool/Manchester	Kier Northern	11
Jonathan James	Southampton, Hampshire	Solent	Kier Southern	28
Alan Lamb	Eastleigh, Hampshire	Solent	Kier Southern	3
Stephen Malone	Bursledon, Southampton	Solent	Kier Southern	47
Joe Murphy	Buntingford, Hertfordshire	Maple Cross	Kier Southern	17
Martin Nolan	Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire	Liverpool/Manchester	KME	3
Mark Shoesmith	Horsham, West Sussex	Solent	Kier Construction	12
David Timms	Fareham, Hampshire	Solent	Kier Southern	20
Nick Timms	Unknown	Eastern	Still employed	7 months
Ian Townsend	Lichfield, Staffordshire	Central	Kier Construction	15
Tim Upward	Salisbury, Wiltshire	Solent	Kier Southern	38
Eamonn Walsh	Brighton, East Sussex	Solent	Kier Southern	23

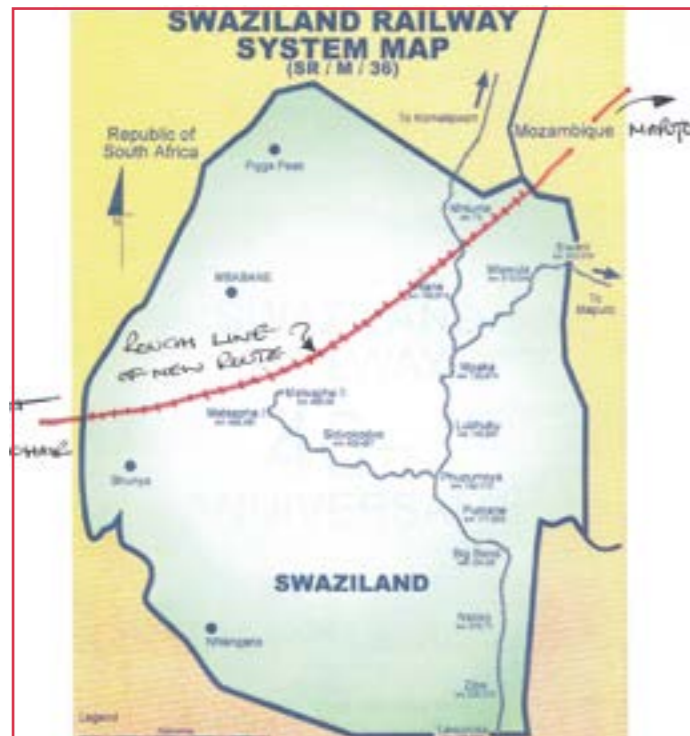
# THE GLAMOROUS SIDE OF BEING AN INTERNATIONAL ESTIMATOR BY JOHN MOUATT

## EPISODE 2: ESWATINI (IN BRIEF)

A year or so after my Yemen visit, I had another very interesting trip. I very much doubt that only one or two of the readers of KierLink have ever visited the country called Eswatini. This is the new name for Swaziland, but I doubt whether many people visited there, either! However, I will still refer to Swaziland as that was its name when I visited.

Kier International (KI) had prequalified for a railway project with a company called Grant Eagre Rail Projects (GERP). I think that is the spelling, but if anyone can correct me – please do!

The job was a new single track rail line with side passing tracks running from a town called Lohair in South Africa (SA), approximately 100kms west of the Swaziland border. Then going east to the Swazi border, looping round to the NE of Swaziland and onto the border near Mhlume to connect up to Mozambique rail system, then onto to the port of Maputo.



Map with rough rail route plotted on

The purpose of the line was the fast export of materials and goods from SA to a port in the Pacific Ocean. KI would be lead partner and responsible for all the logistics, muck shifting and all the structure. This was a substantial element: culverts, bridges, over-bridges and marshalling yards and the service roads alongside the main track. GERP were to be responsible for the supply and installation of all the railway elements of the job. The very rough plot of the route is on the map, approximately 130kms long.

KI put in a prequalification document for the project about 12 months before we got the invitation to tender, so it was a bit of shock when it suddenly landed on the estimating director's desk. As I had just completed a tender and was wrapping up the documentation, the bid documents quickly landed on my desk!

After a quick discussion with GERP it was agreed that we would bid, and I hastily went up to Nottingham to agree the bidding process with GERP. KI would be responsible for all the civils work and GERP for all the railway/track work elements of the job. In the tender and site visit invitation information it clearly stated, amongst other directions, that:

**1**

**THE TENDERER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING HIS OWN SITE TRANSPORTATION FOR THIS VISIT AND THIS MUST BE A FOUR-WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLE BECAUSE THE TERRAIN OF THE PROPOSED RAIL TRAVERSES VERY ROUGH FARMLAND, LOW-VELD AND CROSSES MANY DEEP IRRIGATION CHANNELS, AND IN MOST PARTS IS ON ROUGH AND RUTTED SUGAR PLANTATION HAUL ROADS.**



Typical heavy duty freight diesel train, narrow gauge 1067mm

**2**

**THE CLIENT STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT THE TENDERING CONTRACTORS ALLOCATE AT LEAST TWO QUALIFIED PERSONS TO ATTEND THIS VISIT BECAUSE THE ROUTE IS LONG, THERE WILL BE MANY STOPS ALONG THE WAY AND IT WILL BE CONCLUDED IN ONE LONG DAY, FINISHING IN THE EVENING. THE PARTICIPANTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO TAKE ANY PHOTOGRAPHS ALONG THE ROUTE AT THE KEY POINTS OF THE PROPOSED ROUTE AS WELL AS MAKE THEIR OWN NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS ALONG THE WAY.**

As usual, the tender period was short, only four weeks, so I and my GERP counterpart agreed we would travel the following week to Swaziland for the site visit and contractor's meeting with the client and his engineer. We agreed that the visit really was a two-man job because of logistics and the amount of work to be done during the site visit. All sorted, or so I thought!



Map of Eswatini

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** If you would like to read the full story about Eswatini you can find it on the KFT website under Publications: John Mouatt's Experiences in Full, or click here: <http://www.fellowship.kier.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/John-Mouatt-Episode-2-Spreads.pdf>

# Obituaries

Our thoughts are with the loved ones of those who have passed away.

Denis Robert Baggs	29/09/2021
AC Baker	07/12/2020
GO Barratt	11/06/2021
J Bayliss	16/04/2021
JC Boniface	29/05/2021
Valerie Margaret Borham	24/08/2021
Peter Brittain	11/08/2021
N Brophy	08/03/2021
M Browne	14/04/2021
SK Bryan	17/11/2020
SV Brydon	02/02/2021
MR Burgess	23/02/2021
Geoff Burridge	16/10/2021
(Surname) Cane	19/02/2021
Christine Janet Cater	05/09/2021
DR Chapman	24/02/2021
JM Childs	08/03/2021
PE Colledge	30/12/2020
TE Collings	26/11/2020
VA Cooksley	23/12/2020
RC Connelly	13/01/2021
NEF Cording	10/06/2021
George Alan Cryer	20/07/2021
PN Culverwell	11/05/2021
R Currie	12/03/2021
E Davison	24/05/2021
P Davitt	18/05/2021
MME Dooley	22/02/2021
D Doran	25/04/2021
Norman Ede	11 June 2012
R Eggleton	04/04/2021
DL Falconer	07/12/2020
SR Farmer	08/06/2021

KM Foster	10/05/2021
HA Green	10/06/2021
NJ Greene	23/03/2021
ME Hall	16/03/2021
FWC Harrison	03/05/2021
Denis John Hayes	01/07/2021
Anthony George Haynes	30/12/2020
VI Heath	15/06/2021
M Howard	02/03/2021
Douglas John Hutchin	15/08/2021
JA Hutley	14/04/2021
E James	24/02/2021
D Johnston	12/03/2021
MC Jones	04/06/2021
R Kenyon	07/12/2020
AI Kidger	08/03/2021
CJ Lay	24/02/2021
PL Livingston	18/02/2021
JT Luckman	10/02/2021
PJ Mason	20/11/2020
Brian Marchant	17/09/2021
MR McDonald	20/04/2020
J Mcleod	20/11/2020
DV Mengham	24/02/2021
BS Notta	04/01/2021
TCM Oakley	14/01/2021
James Albert Stanley Parker	25/08/2021
Lambert Malcolm Parks	18/09/2021
David Arnold Parsons	12/09/2021
Joyce Evelyn Partleton	19/08/2021
A Pilkington	29/03/2021
R Rance	19/03/2021
Anthony James Rayner	14/08/2021

J Reynolds	26/11/2020
WJ Richards	12/03/2021
WG Robertson	01/12/2020
G Robinson	28/05/2021
PJ Robinson	10/02/2021
S Roderick	18/03/2021
EP Sacree	25/03/2021
JD Scannell	26/03/2021
E Shephard	10/03/2021
Alan Slaven	17/09/2021
HS Smith	23/03/2021
Geoffrey Gordan Smith	24/06/2021
MM Smith	24/02/2021
E Snowdon	11/03/2021
JRA Steward	26/11/2020
L Swan	04/02/2021
J Taylor	01/01/2021
J Taylor	11/05/2021
G Thorne	08/06/2021
CW Turner	25/01/2021
PR Trickett	20/05/2021
Jean Mary Wallis	11/09/2021
JO Ward	02/02/2021
George Ware	05/07/2021
AHG Watson	14/12/2020
BR Watson	16/04/2021
Aloizy (Alec) Weltrowski	04/08/2021
TAT Wilson	18/12/2020
K Winterburn	24/03/2021
J Wood	25/03/2021
PD Woods	11/03/2021

## *Memories and reflections of Jim Marriott who died on 24 July aged 93 years, by Tony Norman*

*Jim was a grandson of the founder of the company Robert Marriott, one of three who joined the firm. At that time his father Major Alan Marriott ran the company, where Jim stayed for all of his working life. As was expected he trained as a bricklayer and progressed to a contracts manager.*

*He first became established as a site manager working on the large housing project for the Americans at Lakenheath and later on as a contracts manager he developed his own particular technique, known as a Bingo System, for controlling housing projects. One of his last contracts was the major alteration to the Britannia Airways Workshops at Luton Airport.*

*Jim was a gentle, very courteous man who played rugby at a high level and was a very useful cricketer playing for the firm over many years.*



# Around the regions

## Central

After having to cancel a succession of events through 2021 as the Country re-entered lockdown we finally

managed to have our first event of the year in September.

Eighteen members gathered at The Fox Inn, Great Barrington on the River Windrush. This followed a walk through the National Trust's Sherborne Park Estate.

The next event will be our annual pre-Christmas lunch, which is to be held this year at The Lilley Brook Golf Club, Cheltenham, on 13 December.

It is hoped that next year we will be able to get back to normal and arrange our usual gatherings for lunch and re-arrange some of the outings that had to be put on hold for last year and the year before.

Sheila Heath



## Loughton & Witham

### Area Golf Day: Abridge Golf Club on 13 July 2021

On a lovely day, 12 golfers enjoyed our society day at Abridge Golf Club. There had been a lot of rain the previous few days and accordingly the buggies had to stay on the buggy paths.

Unfortunately, many of our buggy golfers hit the golf ball on the opposite side of the course and all reckoned they had walked twice as far as being in the buggy! There were some tired bodies in the clubhouse.

The overall winner was Paul Goddard on countback from John Simson. Derek Adams was nearest the pin and Paul Goddard longest drive. The



Paul receives the winner's trophy from John

front nine was won by John Simson and the back nine was won by Malcolm Burton.

All agreed the steak and ale pie, chips and peas were excellent. As always, the chat and a pint made it an enjoyable day.

John Spray



Nearest to the pin: Derek Adams

Longest drive: Paul Goddard



Back nine: Malcolm Burton

Front nine: John Simson

### Pork Roast Lunch on 22 September 2021



Forty members enjoyed a sunny day at Blakes Golf Club for our pork roast lunch. Many had not met since before Covid. It was a great reunion.

The food was good and one could enjoy the sun whilst looking over the golf course.

All too soon the afternoon was over and we all headed home after an excellent day.

John Spray



## Maple Cross

Following our extended lockdown due to Covid-19, Maple Cross area decided to organise 'a welcome back lunch' at Biggles Restaurant and a visit to Denham Aerodrome on Thursday 30 September 2021. It was decided to go back to Biggles as it was the last place that we had been able to have our Valentine's Day lunch back in 2020.

We had an excellent response to the invite with 38 people due to attend. However all best laid plans can be tripped up. No one expected a (self-inflicted) fuel crisis the week of our lunch and that, along with a few illnesses, resulted with a turnout of 32. A very good menu resulted in all members having a great lunch, a few drinks while discussing the long lockdowns and good health/wellbeing of all our colleagues.



We have our Christmas luncheon booked at Shendish Manor Hotel & Golf Club for Thursday 9 December 2021. Next year we are keen to get back to normality and will expect to run a programme of events throughout the year.

Norman Elliott



## Rushden

Since our last report in KierLink issue 41, life has been very quiet due to the Covid epidemic. However, as restrictions were gradually relaxed it was decided to rearrange our Christmas 2020 lunch for Thursday 21 June 2021. Forty-one members met at The Pizzeria Venezia in Rushden and enjoyed a wonderful lunch with plenty of good fellowship.

In view of the success of the lunch we arranged a mystery trip hoping for a favourable response. We had a full coach of 48 persons experiencing the delights of Norfolk and Suffolk stopping off at Lowestoft and Aldeburgh. This took place on Sunday 25 July 2021 and was a great success.

At a third attempt and much paperwork, our five-day break to The Isle of Man took place in early September and was much appreciated by 41 members (see separate report on pages 21-22). Here are some pictures of our visit:



Peel Cathedral



A cup of Manx coffee!



The Laxey Wheel



Mountain railway to the top of Snaefell



Mountain railway to the top of Snaefell



On Douglas seafront

We now have a programme of events continuing into April 2022.

Unfortunately, since the first lockdown, we have lost several supporters and many more who have had major health problems – we wish them well.

Membership in our area has reduced to 156 but several are non-active and rely on KierLink to keep up to date.

## Programme of events into April 2022

Date	Event	Availability
Friday 19 November to Monday 22 November 2021	Potters Leisure Resort Christmas Extravaganza	Full booked
Thursday 25 November 2021	Annual Christmas Lunch at Ceasars Venezia, Rushden	Spaces
Sunday 5 December 2021	Guards Chapel Carol Service, London	Spaces
Thursday 30 December to Sunday 2 January 2022	New Year Break at The Crown Plaza, Harrogate, four days, three nights	Full booked
Saturday 5 March 2022	Mountbatten Festival of Music at The Royal Albert Hall, London: Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines	Spaces
Sunday 3 to Thursday 7 April 2022	Scottish House Party at The Winnock Hotel, Loch Lomond	Full booked

If interested in any of the above events, please contact Brian Hill on 01933 355888 or email [sandrahill@live.co.uk](mailto:sandrahill@live.co.uk)

Brian Hill

# RAILWAY MODELLING – Scarborough North Bay Railway

by Harold Thompson

In the last issue I said I had started a 009-gauge layout representing the above-named miniature railway that has been a tourist attraction since 1931. With so much available time during lockdown, progress has been very good, and the layout is complete. Not only that, but it has been photographed for Railway Modeller magazine and I have written an article to be published in the January issue, available from 9 December 2021.

All structures are scratch-built, and none were exactly easy to do as I needed them to look like photographs of the real items. The most challenging were the roof of the Sea Life Centre; the hut for the water chute (which needed to be removable as it sits across a baseboard joint and also hides the motor and electrics); and the Sky Trail (which is a sort of climbing frame standing over the railway). The tunnel also exercised the brain cells as it is on a sharp curve and the portals are a sort of pear-drop shape. My solution was to use redundant lengths of metal rail to make a skeletal frame which I then covered in strips of card and plaster bandage before adding paint and scatter etc.

The water chute also uses redundant rail for the track and actually works. Under the hut is a low-revolution electric motor which hauls the gondola back up its track from the lake – an operation that takes about 30 seconds. When I



Overall Peasholm view

want it to run down to the lake again, I can slide the motor out of mesh with the gearwheel controlling the gondola which then runs by gravity to the lake. Unfortunately, I can't replicate the splash, but the gondola is stopped by a combination of 'reeds' planted in the lake and the cotton thread to which the gondola is attached. When I slide the motor back into mesh with the gear wheel, the gondola commences its climb and is stopped by a magnetic reed switch between the rails in the hut, which cuts the electric circuit.



Overall beach view



Peasholm station and engine shed

The open-air theatre claims to be the largest open-air theatre in Europe, with 6,000 seating capacity – as you can tell, I have been able to include only a fraction of that number. Producing the pedaloes and water walkers



The sky trail and water chute

took some thought. I planned to scratch build the boats but could not source any occupants that would look right, and sculpting suitable figures was beyond me. In the end I bought two ready-made boats with occupants

and copied them for the empty ones, using scraps of plastic card to build up the shapes. The lady who took the attached photographs complained that the ladies in the boats were wearing the same-coloured bikinis (which I am told would never happen) so I had to 're-dress' one of them.

The Water Walkers are hollow Christmas tree decorations that can be opened in order to insert small items. I was able to find some small model children to fit and I cut off the hanging loops from the decorations.

I am pleased with the way in which the crazy golf course has turned out. I made the golf balls out of

Milliput putty – a two-part product that air-dries. Making the balls small enough whilst maintaining the spherical shape was more





**Crazy golf and beach**

difficult that one might imagine. I tried using DAS air-drying clay, but I couldn't get the balls small enough. It was, however, used for creating the stone courses on one of the footbridges and facings on some other structures.

In the previous article I mentioned that I needed one more locomotive – a Gresley A3 pacific class in LNER or apple green. Manufacturer Dapol had a new one scheduled for delivery in spring 2021 but it has still not materialised. I was also keeping an eye on the second-hand market and spied one on eBay in July this year. It was exactly what I wanted as it was in the same range as the dark green one I already had, so I knew it would suit and it appeared to be almost unused. The starting price was good, so I placed a higher bid and kept an eye on it – the expiry date was a Sunday about a week ahead. I was highest bidder until the Friday when I was outbid so I increased my bid to what I considered to be my maximum offer and I remained highest bidder until a few minutes before expiry when someone outbid me again. Trying to be very cunning I waited until 30 seconds before expiry and put in a higher bid (now beginning to look expensive relative to the price of the expected new one). It takes a little while for the system to catch up, so I was elated when the time expired and I had won. When I checked the bidding history again, I found that my competitor had submitted a higher bid but was out of time by just a few seconds. And what a good model it is! Dapol's new item is still not available and there is no news as to when it will be.

Like many railway modellers, I planned this layout to be portable so that it could be taken to exhibitions. As such, it needed a headboard to draw

attention to it. Mine appears in some of the photos. It is made of a two-sided name-board sandwiched between two sheets of clear polycarbonate. On either side of the name-board there are photographs of the prototype so that visitors can compare the model with reality. The location photographs were not ready when the layout photos were taken. The headboard is demountable and sits over the fixed back-scene.



**On-board Beach Station approach from Scalby Mills**

## Solent

### Solent BBQ



September saw the reinstatement of the Solent region annual BBQ. Twenty-six members enjoyed meeting old colleagues after a long lay-off, the late summer weather, lunch and surroundings.



As normal the BBQ was held at Royal Victoria Country Park in Southampton on the shores of the Solent. The Park consists of 200 acres of mature woodland and grassy parkland as well as a small beach.



From 1863 until 1966 the site was home to the Royal Victoria Hospital. All that now remains of the hospital is the chapel.

*Ian Burrell*



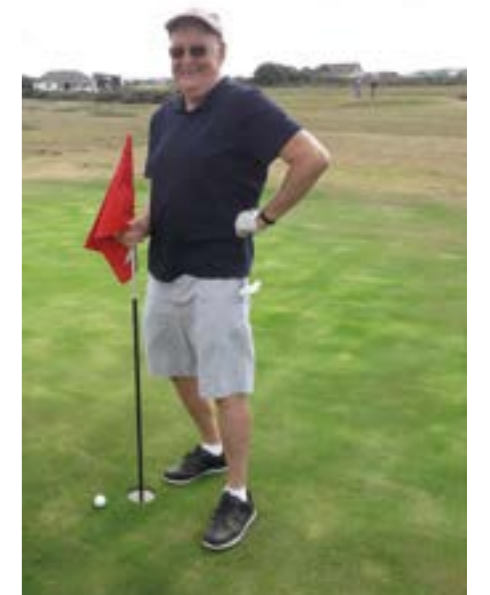
### Golf Day



**I-r: Derek Ward, Linda Anderson, Graham Baker, Phil Knechtel, Peter Wallbank**

The weather was excellent for our yearly get together on the par three course on Hayling Island. The course is located next to the sea with only the beach between us and the course. There were five who undertook the gruelling course. As usual there were some scattered shots and lost balls in the gorse bushes. Phil Knechtel managed to find more balls than he started with as he zig-zagged his way around the course. The winner of this year's tremendous efforts was Derek

Ward doing a creditable 41 strokes out of a possible 27 (par3 x 9).



**The winner Derek Ward**

After the game, arrangements were made for lunch. Changes had to be made this year from the Inn on The Beach, which we normally attend, to the Ferryboat Inn nearby. The pub/restaurant this year was suffering from staff shortages due to the pandemic and they were unable to offer anything except fish and chips, which seems to be happening to many places in the catering business. The Ferryboat Inn which is located on the Sinah Beach has commanding views over to Portsmouth where the ferry links Hayling Island with Eastney, Portsmouth. This popular pub has an extensive menu and a large outside viewing area, so everyone was well catered for. This may become our preferred place for the future!

Whilst playing, and as advised by Peter Wallbank, a seaplane flew nearby. Apparently, this Catalina Flying Boat G-PBYA is one of



The seaplane

just 10 of the aircraft now flying worldwide and the rare sight will have impressed the crowd that had gathered to see her land at Daedalus in Lee-on-the-Solent at midday. The historic aircraft arrived from her home at The Imperial War Museum at Duxford, with Fareham based (local to our area) pilot Jeff Boyling behind the controls. There is a team of seven other joint owners of the aircraft acting as air and ground crews.

Pilot Jeff took just 13 minutes to fly a triangular route from West Wittering, the Isle of Wight and Gosport recreating the historic 1931 Schneider Trophy Race.

Graham Baker

### Bluebell Woods

If you'd gone down to the woods this day, you'd sure had a big surprise; if you'd gone down to the woods this day, the Fellowship were stretching their thighs!



Having been told that day release from HMP Covid had been granted, we took the opportunity for a stroll around the bluebell woods surrounding Hinton Ampner. Ten members got together in socially distanced groups for the four-mile walk with a number adjourning for drinks or lunch at the pub next door. Anyone remember doing that? The weather even smiled on us. So, the first small steps out for the Solent region, with a programme of events in the pipeline (virus willing).

John Clayton Longbarrow



Solent members enjoyed a stroll around the bluebell woods

## Southern

### Gilbert White's House on 6 October

A lovely autumn day in mid October saw a number of Fellowship members gather at the charming village of Selborne for a gentle stroll around the beautiful Hampshire countryside. The circular route brought us back to the house of the 18th century naturalist.

The house was bought by the Oates family after the death of Gilbert White and was divided into three sections. The first part documented the works of the famous naturalist, whose books were an early influence on Charles Darwin. The second featured the exploits of William Oates, a 19th century explorer. The last detailed the exploits of William's son Lawrence (Titus) Oates with many artefacts from Scott's ill-fated expedition to the South Pole. Outside were five acres of both formal and natural gardens to explore.



Then of course lunch beckoned and a trip to the local hostelry was in order.

John Clayton Longbarrow

## Tempsford

We made a tentative return to events on 8 July 2021 – a lunch at Pavenham Golf Club, when a group of eight enjoyed gorgeous food and lively chat, with the doors flung open to enjoy the fresh air. Thankfully, we had lovely weather and we were afterwards able to bask in the summer sunshine.



On 10 August, Ron Whitlock and Jane led us on a delightful walk near Wilstead followed by lunch at the refurbished Greyhound Inn in Haynes. There were seven walkers (one of whom joined us half way after walking five miles from home) and 14 for lunch. We were able to eat outside owing once again to lovely weather, following which our additional walker walked back home.



There was another hugely successful visit on 23 September to Cambridge Botanic Gardens where Stephen Jarvis had arranged a guided tour followed by a superb lunch a short walk away at Brown's Brasserie.





at one of our favourite venues, The Anchor in Great Barford, where the small dining room provides good facilities for a private event. Twenty-one members and partners enjoyed great food and plenty of chat after an informative presentation about the life saving work of the charity.

Plans for our November lunch have changed as the Three Tuns in Biddenham is having problems currently and we will instead be eating at the Red Lion, Stevington, perhaps with a short, pre-lunch walk. Then, we are planning our

Attendees were divided into two groups for the tour, so the photographs do not include everyone. Several of our group of 18 returned to the gardens after lunch for a further (unguided) look – noting that the original entrance ticket was valid for the whole day. Once again, we were lucky with the weather. The gardens were created for the university in 1831 by John Stevens Henlow who was Charles Darwin's mentor and our excellent guide introduced us to the fascinating features of some of the thousands of tree species the gardens contain. The date of our visit seemed to be between seasons, and we look forward to visiting again for a more colourful experience, but the guides are able to make any visit enjoyable.

Our most recent event was an illustrated talk on behalf of the East Anglian Air Ambulance, and a buffet lunch



Christmas lunch at Pavenham Golf Club which is booked for Tuesday 14 December. Monthly lunches are then planned for February and March. We hope to enjoy more visits to places of interest in 2022-23.

**Our committee has continued to meet during the pandemic via Zoom when we have avoided paying for a licence by pre-arranging three, 40-minute meetings, separated by five minutes. When we will resume physical meetings – who knows!**

Harold Thompson



# Trip to Isle of Man

15-19 SEPTEMBER 2021 BY BARBARA FELL

At 5.45am on a misty September morning, a party of bleary-eyed passengers left Rushden for a long-awaited trip to the Isle of Man. Our driver, John, welcomed us aboard and it was lovely to be with people again and have a semblance of normality. About three hours later the fog lifted, and we were blessed with glorious sunshine and blue skies.

As we made good time, we stopped at Morecambe to pay homage to Eric, and had plenty of time for a lovely walk in the sun before returning to the coach to make our way to Heysham for the ferry. What a surprise we had when we arrived there! Security informed Brian that a small number of pieces of luggage would be selected at random and owners would be called off the bus while the cases were inspected. No clues as to what (if anything) they were expecting to find from a group of OAPs!

After a really smooth crossing, we arrived at our destination – the extremely comfortable Empress Hotel – and were all more than ready for bed after an enjoyable dinner.

Thursday was a beautiful day with brilliant sunshine and after breakfast we caught a steam train to take us to Port Erin – a journey of about one hour. Most of the hotels here were of Victorian design. The station had been converted to an extremely well-used coffee shop with the walls covered in sepia photographs and old timetables under glass on the table tops. Our party spent a long time converting 28/3d and 31/1d which were fare prices to decimal currency and working out what a proportion of a week's wage that would have been.

On leaving Port Erin, we travelled to The Calf of Man – a small islet off the tip of the island. There we were lucky enough to be able to watch a group of seals playing in the sea. Time to return to our hotel for a rest before dinner and another day to look forward to tomorrow.

On Friday the weather was not very kind to us, and our first call was to Peel where some people found time to visit St. Germans Cathedral. It was quite modern compared to other cathedrals in the UK. It was built in 1879 as a parish church and name changed to cathedral as recently as 1980 by an act of the Isle of Man Parliament. Our journey this day took us on a great deal of the famous TT course, and we all marvelled at how skilful the motorcyclists must be to negotiate the roads at the speeds they reach.

Our lunch stop was at a shopping outlet called Tynwald Mills which afforded some travellers the opportunity to start their Christmas shopping. On leaving here we passed Tynwald Mills which is a four-tiered grass-covered hill which is the traditional ancient meeting place of the Manx Parliamentary assembly.

We then set off for Ramsay which was very wet and windy, and we did not see the town at its best. After leaving there

John somehow managed to take the wrong road. We went onto the island's A14 road and if any of you think you have experienced problems on the Northamptonshire stretch of the A14, they are nothing compared to what we had! The road was little more than a track in places, and we travelled over a couple of cattle grids. Eventually, a friendly driver coming from the opposite direction warned us that there were some hairpin bends ahead and he thought we may have some difficulty in negotiating them. Fortunately, he said that not very far ahead was a fairly wide view point, and with some very skilled driving John was able to carry out a three-point turn.

We eventually found the correct road only to come across an illuminated sign saying, 'Fog – use headlights', and one of the bends was called Gooseneck corner. I think we were all more than pleased to reach our hotel again. It was a great experience though!

Saturday was to be our last day on the island and thankfully, once again, the weather was kind to us. We went to Laxey and caught the mountain railway to the top of Snaefell which is the highest point on the Island. It became quite chilly as we approached the summit but was still really bright. Brian commented that in all of the times he had been up there, he had never seen it so clear. It was of particular interest to me as my surname is FELL – we were going up SnaeFELL. We were told by a commentary on the train that the braking system had been designed by John Barraclough FELL.

At one point we wondered if we would actually get down as it was so busy and when the particular train which we were booked on arrived, people were told that they had to allow our party on first. An argument ensued as some people had been waiting a long time to descend. The driver shut the door with the comment:

*"Until you sort it out, I am taking no-one."*

Fortunately, common sense prevailed and we all came down safely. A very pleasant and relaxing hour was then spent in Laxey looking at information about iron ore mining in the area before we returned to Douglas.

Two of our fellow travellers, Margaret and Keith Ferry, were celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary on this day and we were able to share the occasion with them.

All too soon it was Sunday and we had another early start to make the journey home. This time we were travelling on the catamaran, which was extremely spacious and comfortable, and only took half the time of the ferry crossing. Our driver had to really use his driving skills as he had to reverse the coach onto the catamaran from quite a distance. By this time I think we were all in awe of how he coped with it!

We arrived back at Heysham, and Brian announced that we would be finishing our trip by going to the Albert Dock in Liverpool for our lunch stop. What a lively, vibrant place that was! We had no difficulty in finding restaurants to suit everyone's tastes and time for a leisurely walking exploring the area.

We arrived back in Rushden about 7.00pm – tired but with lots of happy memories of a great trip!

Many thanks to Brian Hill for his organising skills and making everything so easy for us.

# Garage makeover

BY CHRIS SHURLOCK

**It's December 2019, so let's start planning 2020 MG car events: March, lockdown, MGOc Winchester Weekend; April, MGOc Southern Ireland Trip; May, Boston MGOc Jersey Weekender, and so the list went on. All booked, and deposits paid where necessary. But hang on, what was the lockdown event, not one we had booked, or done before, and as it turns out not one we would want to do again.**

In all my 75 years I do not remember such a thing happening before. But, queuing at Waitrose in the 'elderly' queue to do our food shopping one Saturday morning did remind me a little of having ration books when I was a young boy. So, what was left for me to do in lockdown, leaving just Pat and myself together for some considerable time?



The obvious thing was to list all the home/garden jobs that I have been putting off for many years, and there were plenty of them. After all, MG car eventing always took preference in the past. I am lucky enough to have a double garage to park the MGF and MGTF in, along with all the other 'stuff' that finds its way in to a garage.



A garage makeover was one job high on the list that I had wanted to do for many years – a good starting point. So, what exactly had I wanted to do to the garage. Having cleared it of all its debris gathered over the years the number one job was to paint the brick and block walls which always gave dark background appearance. A long and laborious job followed this decision, painting the walls with a cream emulsion. In clearing the garage, I found lots of tins of leftover wall emulsions. We are not ones for bold colours in the house, so when I mixed all the emulsions together it gave a resulting colour very much like magnolia, just the job for the garage, and almost enough to do the full job. I did have to top up with new magnolia to finish off, but the final colour match was very good.

The floor was the next job to be tackled having been covered in old carpet as they were renewed in the house. The carpet was comfortable but had become dirty and oil stained over the years. That had to go, but what should I replace them with?

We all know how dusty concrete floors are – even after you have just brushed them you can still do it again. Floor paint was one option, but still a bit cold under foot. Trawling Google, it came up with uPVC interlocking garage floor tiles – these would do away with the dusting problem. Plenty to choose from on eBay and in a number of colours too. I decided on 500mm square 7mm thick grey tiles by The Garage Floor Tile Company. These contrasted well with the walls and would match the colour of the new storage units that I had in mind – more on these later.



Having removed all of the carpets I swept and hoovered the floor thoroughly to remove as much dust as possible prior to laying the floor tiles. The concrete surface was in good order, so no remedial work needed. One thing you have to do is plan the layout of the floor tiles carefully to suit the garage layout. Because of the design of our house, one half



of the garage is under the upper floor bedrooms, so the garage has a central brick column supporting the corner of the house above. For obvious reasons this had to remain. The column became the central setting out point for the tiles in both directions. This gave equal cuts to the edge tiles against the perimeter walls all round.

Starting at the column I set the tiles out, the interlocking edges makes them rather like laying a large jigsaw puzzle. A rubber headed mallet was used to bang the interlocking tile edges together. Being 7mm thick I used a hand saw to cut the edge tiles, leaving a very small gap for possible expansion movement. Special bevel edged tiles were supplied for the garage door openings, finishing the edges off nicely. A long job and hard on the knees to fit them all as the garage is approximately 5m square, something over 100 tiles to lay, but a satisfying job when completed.

The old storage cupboards, benching and make-shift shelves were also removed to make way for new. It is worth noting at this point that during the lockdown period the local recycling centre was closed, so storage of the old carpet, cupboards etc, was a bit of a problem. I mentioned new storage units earlier, again Google came to my aid. There were a number of metal garage storage systems available, and after looking online I settled on Sealey Metal Storage units.

.....  
*This exercise was a bit like planning a new kitchen: what base units, wall units, tall units and worktop do you want?*  
 .....

The colour of the units I settled on were light and dark grey contrasting nicely with the uPVC floor tiles. Unlike kitchen units though, the Sealey units all came pre-assembled. What a display they all made on the driveway before going into the garage! All unpacked I now just had to install them, fit the connecting backs and hang the top wall units. Sealey recommend installation to be a two-man job – not easy to get somebody else to help during lockdown – so I set to on my own with just a sack barrow to help move the units into the garage. It did prove to be a bit of a struggle on my own at times, but I got there in the end.

I must say the quality of the Sealey Metal Storage units is second to none. Drawers run very smoothly, doors open and close nicely, and they look very professional too once fully installed.



The final job was to upgrade the lighting and power points. I know electricians should really be left to qualified electricians, but upgrading lighting bulbs and extending power sockets etc, is not too demanding a job for a sensible amateur to do.

Then, I re-hung all the MG Event rally plaques built up over the years – over 100 in total. I also took the opportunity to hang them in a more sensible fashion. I have also built up a number of metal garage signs, so these too had to find a place back on the walls.

.....  
*I am still looking for more though – does anybody else have this fetish I wonder?*  
 .....

Do you remember the Esso advert from the past, 'put a tiger in your tank'? Well, there is a metal wall sign for it so I had to have one.

The last job of all was a sanitising station consisting of a blue paper roll holder, Swarfega shelf and other hand cleaning essentials. All in all, a very satisfying lockdown job completed. The MGF and MGTF now sit nicely in the garage, and I can now find tools much more quickly than before – a great benefit.



**So, how much did this little project cost I hear you ask? As Pat sometimes reads this magazine, I will keep that information to myself, but let's just say it has been a job well worth the expense.**



# THE GLAMOROUS SIDE OF BEING AN INTERNATIONAL ESTIMATOR BY JOHN MOUATT

## EPISODE 3: IRAQ & ABU GHRIAB

To paraphrase a well know saying:

**“SOME ARE BORN TO ESTIMATION AND SOME HAVE ESTIMATION THRUST UPON THEM.”**

I do not actually think that anyone goes into construction with the aim of becoming an ‘estimator’, but I do know many of my contemporaries who had it ‘thrust’ upon them – for very various reasons/ circumstances. What usually occurs is a project manager is in between projects and gets ‘placed’ in the estimating department for a while, then moves out again when another project comes along!

Some do actually then go on to make it a career choice and stay, and KI were very fortunate to have a pool of very experienced estimators who had chosen to make it their career and therefore had a pool of very experienced international estimators.

I on the other hand went into estimation after a very unsatisfactory experience working in the UAE with Simplex Piling working for an ignoramus of a boss. I decided to leave & return to the UK, and was then ‘thrust’ into the KI estimating department. I have to say now, working for KI was one of the highlights and most memorable experiences in my engineering life!

Preparing estimates and tenders for projects in the international market is far more difficult and demanding, in my opinion, than doing it in a domestic market. This is simply because there are so many more variables and of course risks, including currency exchange fluctuations which is always a concern.

However, estimating for any project, no matter what the project is, has to be a very structured process and this was certainly the case in KI. What usually happened was you finish a tender, have a couple of days to file all the stuff you have assembled and very quickly the boss, in my case Doug Collier, would call you into his office and say: “John, I have a very interesting tender for you to look at.”

Whereupon he would give you a foot high pile of documents and say:

**“WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE A LOOK AT THESE AND LET’S REVIEW IN A COUPLE OF DAYS TO DECIDE WHETHER TO BID, OR NOT.”**

A couple of days later you would meet with him and the director(s) looking after the particular country or region, brief them on the project, scope, risks, bid timing etc, and at the end of the review, they would make a bid/no bid decision. The KI director responsible for Iraq at that time was Ole Palmann.

The project in this case was the Abu Ghraib Expressway in Baghdad, Iraq. It was decided to bid and this was how my longest estimating experience for a single project started. The project was a 23km link into Baghdad of the Jordan-Iraq Expressway at the Baghdad end. It was a three-lane each way highway with dual service roads on either side. It has a great number of structures, some very large and complicated, long elevated sections at the Baghdad end, and a considerable amount of embankment works, a huge underpass and trough section and many box-section culverts. Our Iraqi partners had an indication that the project value was in the region of £120-150m at that stage.

Estimating for a project can vary from four-12 weeks depending on the project size and complexity. The initial tender period for Abu Ghraib was six weeks, but I was involved in the overall estimating process for around 15 months. During that period I estimated and re-tendered for the project four or five times because the client kept changing the scope, duration and conditions to get within the budget which had been sanctioned for the project.

**SO, MY LONGEST ESTIMATING EXPERIENCE FOR A SINGLE PROJECT BEGAN!**



Plan of the Abu Ghraib expressway contract



One of the many complex pile caps on the project



Man trucks lined up ready for action



Piling rigs driving pre-cast piles manufactured on site



Pictures of models of one of the structures on the project



“Masgouf fish” cooked by an open fire- our award celebratory meal out by the Tigris!



One of the very long drainage culverts under the motorway

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** If you would like to read the full story about Iraq & Abu Ghraib you can find it on the KFT website under Publications: John Mouatt’s Experiences in Full, or click here: <http://www.fellowship.kier.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/John-Mouatt-Episode-3-Spreads.pdf>

# National Golf Day

## West Essex GC: 08/09/21

Seen here are the 12 past and present Kier employees who enjoyed an excellent days golf at West Essex Golf Club on a bright and sunny day. The course was in great condition and a good time was had by all! Prizes were presented as follows:

- Nearest the Pin, Derek Adams
- NP in 2, Dennis Charlton
- Front 9, Neil Meixner
- Back 9, Dominic Bacon
- Overall winner was Mike Palmer with a creditable 33 points!

Next year at around the same time we will hopefully be back at St. Neots GC. More information to follow!

The next National Golf Day will be on 1 September 2022 at St. Neots Golf Club.

*Neil Meixner*



*The end of the year brings no greater delight than the opportunity to express to you season's greetings and good wishes. May your holidays and New Year be filled with joy.*