KIER

KierLink

The magazine for the Kier Fellowship | Issue 50 | Autumn/Winter 2026

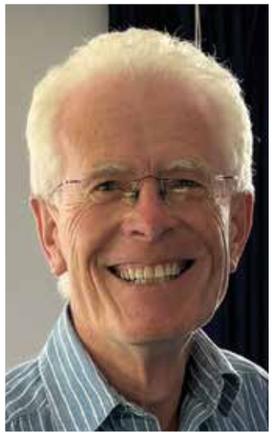


Thank you to Graham
pages 8 to 9

My working life – part I
pages 30 to 35

A tribute to Richard
pages 36 to 38

Pictured above: Leeds region members after lunch at the Bridge Hotel and Spa in Walshford



Neil Meixner



Brendan O'Boyle

Chairman's matters and Administrator's report

We are looking to recruit new members to the board of the Kier Fellowship as we need to rejuvenate and refresh the approach to Kier, particularly for the roles of Chairperson and Administrator — the very people who are writing this article.

It is essential that we obtain the services of some people who have more recent connections with Kier as we have been retired for some time and inevitably know fewer people at the helm of the reinvigorated business.

Following recent discussions with senior Kier colleagues, we have been exploring how the Fellowship's role should evolve alongside Kier's changing structure and demographic. This has included discussion about the need to understand where future retirees are based, how best to maintain contact with leavers/retirees, and how the Fellowship can remain visible plus useful to both Kier/former employees.

Good progress has been made in strengthening links with Kier. Among the current areas being followed up are:

- Listening circles around the country where members can meet/discuss Kier with Stuart Togwell
- A proposed meeting to discuss how the Fellowship can continue to contribute to:
  1. Kier's wider people agenda
  2. Support for site visits
  3. Better alignment between area organisers and Kier regional contacts
  4. Improved visibility through Kier communication channels
  5. Opportunities for members to assist with mentoring, professional development and retirement planning
- We believe these are important ways in which the Fellowship can continue to provide value while also helping people make a smoother transition into retirement.

Access to systems and communications remains an important matter. We have asked Kier to consider whether members can have appropriate access to 'Your Kier' and how the Fellowship can be promoted more consistently to employees approaching retirement.

So, to those who have recently retired, we ask you to consider first whether you could help. If not with the roles of Chairperson or Administrator, then as a Fellowship board member, regional helper or area organiser. Secondly, if you know any recent retirees who would 'fit the bill', please do encourage them to get in touch. We still need an area organiser for the Liverpool/Manchester area and helpers in all other areas are always welcome. Contact details, as always, are included below.

Site visits and local events remain an important part of Fellowship life. Kier colleagues have recognised the value of regular local site visits and advance schedules so that members can be offered the opportunity to attend where practical.

The team has put together another great issue of KierLink, which we are sure you will enjoy. If you would like to contribute to future copies of KierLink, please contact one of us or send copy to Andrea McDaid at the address below. We are especially keen to receive articles about local events, memorable holidays, celebrations, work experiences, mentoring, retirement reflections or anything else that may be of interest to members.

Membership of the Fellowship has been falling over the last two years and now stands at 1,347 members. With this in mind the Trustees, together with Kier, have amended the membership criteria so that existing employees approaching retirement can join the Fellowship if they wish in preparation for retirement.

We make no apology for reiterating that we need to encourage a new crop of retirees and leavers, so if you know of any, why not see if they would like to join the Fellowship? The application form is available on the website, or you can get one by contacting Brendan O'Boyle as below.

Please also make sure that you notify us of any change of address, either to your area organiser or Brendan O'Boyle, so that our records can be updated.

A considerable number of the previous edition of the KierLink were returned to us as 'gone away' which meant members missed out on an excellent magazine. It is also helpful to have any new telephone number and email as well, to ensure that you continue to receive invitations to events and email copies of the KierLink magazine.

Contact emails:

- brendan.o'boyle.ext@kier.co.uk
- andrea.mcdaid@outlook.com

Neil and Brendan

Contents

Chairman's matters and Administrator's report ..... 2 to 3
Editor's report 4
Obituaries 5
Message from Chief Executive Stuart Togwell ..... 6 to 7
Thank you to Graham ..... 8 to 9
Walking the Thames Path: Part I ..... 10 to 13
Around the regions ..... 14 to 29
My working life: Part I ..... 30 to 35
A tribute to Richard ..... 36 to 38
A great day on the course 38
The Copey Cup ..... 39 to 40
New members 41
Kier watch ..... 41 to 43
Brain health 44

Editor's report

It has been a very hot summer which I hope you have all managed to cope with. Air conditioning unit fitters will probably be busy in the coming months in preparation for next year's heatwaves!

Our nephew, Stephen, came down to stay for two and a half weeks in July. I planned an itinerary of events that he has not tried before, apart from the regular football, board games, jigsaw puzzles etc. Stephen likes quizzes and has become a fan of The 1% Club at aged 10! The events were:

Table tennis, home
Mum bought a slimline table, net, bats and balls which was set up next to the house thinking there was less chance of losing the balls as it is enclosed. We tried a few times but were pretty rubbish and did lose a couple of balls.

Cadet Go-karting, Letchworth



© Tripadvisor: Teamworks cadet karting

Stephen has been to fairgrounds but has never been on the dodgems. Having never steered a vehicle before he was remarkably good, loved it and did not come last! It was exciting to watch and we felt very proud of him. I think he would like to do this event again.

Bowling, Stevenage
My sister, Stephen and a couple that are great friends had an enjoyable evening. The girls won – just as well I was not there as I would have let them down – I cannot bowl for toffee!

PuttPutt miniature golf, Bedford
My sister, Stephen, a friend and I attended this hidden gem. The venue is darkly lit to add to the challenge of putting. It also offered plenty of other game activities together with a noodle and drinks bar. I would have paid for longer had I known. It was great fun!

Box End Aqua Park, Kempston



© Box End aqua park

Hubby, Stephen and I had the best time. One hour of launching yourselves over spongy assault courses, falling in the lake constantly (especially me as my balance is poor), getting pushed in by my two cheeky boys. It was exhausting but my favourite activity.

The festive season will soon be upon us. I hope you enjoy spending time with family and friends. A very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Best wishes, Andrea

Copy deadline for issue 51 2027:

Monday 12 April

Obituaries

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

Alan Baker	05/05/2026
Anthony Bayes	04/06/2026
Gary Berris	20/08/2026
David Bowgen	23/04/2026
David Bowles	21/03/2026
Leonard Brown	26/03/2026
Brian Budd	14/08/2026
Gerald Collins	30/06/2026
Richard Coward	01/06/2026
Mavis Cunningham	20/06/2026
Christine Davies	09/08/2026
Marjorie Davies	14/05/2026
Keith Davies	03/07/2026
Terence Dunn	12/08/2026
Alan Ellis	01/03/2026
Ivy Empson	08/05/2026
James Fail	13/05/2026
Christopher Ford	25/05/2026
Peggy Gant	27/04/2026
Linda Gilboy	17/07/2026
Sandra Goode	10/05/2026
Anthony Greenland	01/04/2026
J Grimshaw	07/05/2026
John Hagan	08/03/2026
J Henderson	26/07/2026
Irene Henshall	13/07/2026
Alastair Heppenstall	19/05/2026
Robert Iromonger	25/05/2026
Jean Johnson	25/06/2026
Peter Johnston	15/07/2026
Stephen Laws	11/03/2026
Carol Lillicrap	13/06/2026

Andrew Mallors	11/03/2026
James Marshall	17/08/2026
Marion Medhurst	30/06/2026
Valerie Miller	20/05/2026
Roger Naish	02/05/2026
Robert Noller	17/07/2026
Michael O'Reilly	22/05/2026
Patrick Parker	10/08/2026
Helen Petrie	19/07/2026
David Rainford	21/05/2026
Elaine Reid	19/03/2026
Eileen Robinson	16/05/2026
Henry Rothenberger	25/03/2026
Marlene Ryan	24/03/2026
Tuan Sally	12/06/2026
David Shelbourn	21/05/2026
Raymond Smithers	27/04/2026
Victor Stammers	11/03/2026
Susan Statham	05/03/2026
Harry Steele	23/05/2026
William Taylor	27/05/2026
Enid Trafford	01/05/2026
Harry Tyson	28/03/2026
Henrietta Valentine	06/03/2026
Bryan Vollans	26/04/2026
Richard Walton	12/08/2026
Ronald Warner	23/04/2026
Myra West	22/07/2026
Barbara Weston	24/05/2026
Patricia Wilson	31/03/2026
David Wise	21/07/2026



Message from Chief Executive **Stuart Togwell**

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the latest edition of KierLink.

When I last wrote to you, I talked about the momentum I could see across Kier and the opportunities ahead of us. Since then, we have announced our full-year results and set out the next stage of our strategy. I wanted to use this opportunity to share a little more about both with you all.

We delivered another strong performance in FY26. Revenue increased by 7.5% to £4.4bn, adjusted operating profit increased by 6.7% to £169.8m and our order book grew to a record £11.9bn.

Importantly, we also achieved an average net cash position across the year for the first time in more than a decade, ending the year with £232m of net cash.

These are strong results, and for me they are really about the position they put Kier in for the future.

During my first year as CEO, we have looked carefully at where we can create the greatest long-term value.

Our strategy is now centred around three clear priorities: **Growth, Resilience and Performance.**

Growth marks a change from turnaround to growth in areas that will grow due to Government/regulated body spend in water, energy, defence and health. Resilience is about continuing to strengthen our balance sheet by keeping the cash we generate rather than investing in a depressed property market. Performance means making sure that, while we grow, we continue to improve the quality and consistency of the returns we generate. And, in doing so, being in a position to not have to refinance a bond and in the future have choices on how we use our excess cash.

What gives me real confidence is that these ambitions are backed by the strength of the business today. Kier has positions on around 120 public and private sector frameworks worth approximately £200bn, giving us access to significant future opportunities.

We have strengthened and simplified the business, with our Infrastructure and Construction powerhouses. This sharper focus also means we are no longer allocating capital to Property, allowing us to direct our investment and resources towards the areas where we see the strongest opportunities for Kier's future growth.

We are concentrating our expertise, resources and investment in our chosen sectors. We have our core sectors, and our growth sectors, which are water, defence, energy and healthcare.

And while the strategy looks forward, there is a great deal about Kier that does not change.

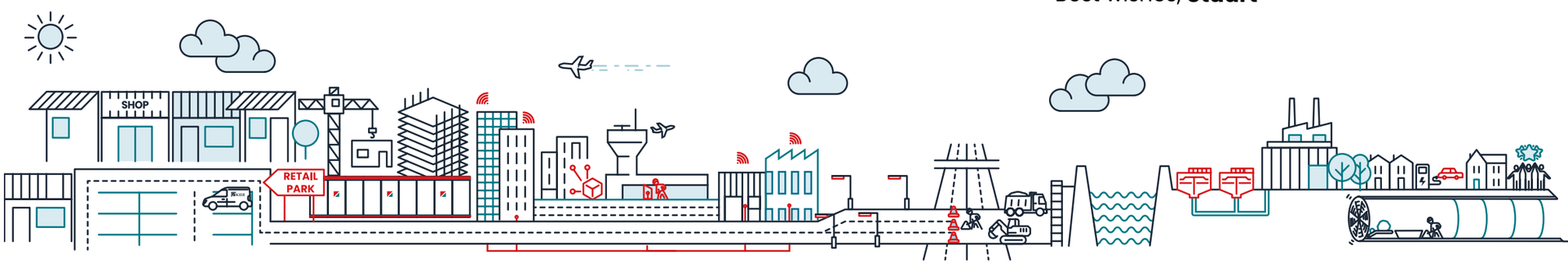
Our engineering DNA remains core to who we are. So does our regional model, combining national scale and capability with people who understand their local customers and communities. I know many Fellowship members will recognise both of those characteristics from their own time at Kier.

The same is true of our people. Our FY26 employee engagement score reached 82%, while customer satisfaction also improved. For me, those measures matter because the strength of Kier has always come from the people behind the projects and the relationships they build.

Many of you helped build the foundations of the Kier we have today, and I know there remains enormous affection for the company within the Fellowship. I am grateful for that continued interest and support.

We enter FY27 with strong foundations, good momentum and significant opportunities ahead of us. There is much more to do, but I am genuinely excited about where we can take Kier from here, and I look forward to keeping you updated on our progress.

Best wishes, **Stuart**



Thank you... to Graham

by Peter Wallbank

In June 2026, Graham Willoughby announced his intention to step down from being area organiser for the Solent region after 16 years in that position.

In February 2010, Graham received a telephone call from Dick Side, who was the founder of the Fellowship, asking him to set up a Solent area. Dick was very persuasive and when he said: "All you have to do is organise a lunch every year" then Graham was on board.

As Graham was my local MD it was not long before he appeared at my door. "Dick wants us to set up a Solent area of the Fellowship and as you have the experience of organising the long service lunches then I think you are the best person to help me." So, from those small beginnings our journey began in creating Solent to become what it is now.

Between us we persuaded a few colleagues to form a committee. Graham suggsted we organise more than just an annual lunch. At our first meeting we were all tasked with organising an event to share the workload. Our events have been many and varied over the years including lunches, BBQs, visits to National Trust and English Heritage properties, breweries, Salisbury Cathedral, brickworks, Hilliers Arboretum, Portsmouth Naval Base, golf etc, and, of course, Graham's legendary walks. Most months we had two events planned.

Memories made...

How were we going to communicate with members? Sending letters is time consuming. Graham suggested we go electronic although in 2010 far fewer people had email addresses. With a lot of hard work, we collected all of the information we needed to build up a database of members' details and communication preferences. Our database now includes 107 members. Mission accomplished!

Graham asked me to be treasurer. He set up our own bank account so that we could easily reimburse members for event expenses and more importantly receive our annual Fellowship funds via Brendon. Another success.

Graham is very much a people person and he insisted we send out a formal invite to our annual lunch by post. He also personally signed the Christmas cards we sent to every member.

A few years after our formation we received an award for the 'most improved area' at the Kier summer garden party held in the grounds of Tempsford Hall.

None of this would have happened without the vision, enthusiasm and energy of Graham plus the support of his wife Phil over the years. We all owe Graham a huge debt of gratitude. So, on behalf of the committee, past/present, and all of our members, we say a big 'thank you' for everything he has done over the years.



2016: First footing walk: members outside a pub at Owlesbury



2017: South Downs winter walk



2017: Hampshire countryside walk



2018: A special Wight walk



2019: Historic canal walk



2020: More than just a walk



2023: Fellowship 25th Anniversary



2024: Winchester Cathedral



2025: Battlefield of Cheriton Walk near Winchester



2026: Peter, left, presenting Graham (right) with a little token of our thanks

Walking the Thames Path: source to barrier - part I

By Jeff Taylor



Thames Head: the start

Embarking on a long-distance walk is always an adventure and the Thames Path offers one of England's most iconic routes. Spanning 196 miles from the source near Kemble to the Thames Barrier in London, this journey blends tranquil countryside, bustling towns and the vibrant heart of the city. Over 15 days, I experienced the changing landscapes, met fellow travellers and collected memories (and 'passport stamps') along the way.

Day 1: Kemble Station to Thames Head to Cricklade (14.5 miles)



The small depression is the 'route' of the Thames

The adventure began with a misty morning and smooth travel connections to Kemble railway station. The two mile walk to the Thames Head plaque, the start of the walk, was bathed in sunshine. I sat for a few minutes to contemplate the journey ahead.



The start of water in the Thames

After the first mile, where there was just a small depression in the ground, the river emerged from a small stream on the left. Early encounters included helping a girl retrieve her dog's tennis ball and chatting with locals checking water quality. The path wound between gravel lakes, adding mileage. There were also a few obstructions of fallen trees across the path which I navigated with care.

Ashton Keynes offered a community shop for coffee as the pub, where a stamp was available, was closed. I sat outside on their bench, eating the sandwich I had brought from home.



A pie to finish the day

Cricklade marked the day's end with recommendations for local pies and a lucky escape from a hailstorm, which finished just before I arrived. The walk was pleasant, if unspectacular, but a satisfying start.

Day 2: Cricklade to Lechlade (11.4 miles)



The Low Bridge

After a restful night, I set out under hazy sun, soon met by rain that barely dampened spirits. The route crossed under the A419 bridge requiring a crouch for taller walkers. I passed an older couple also walking the Thames, reminiscent of fellow pilgrims on the Camino Frances.



A rare seat at the highest navigable point

The Red Lion in Castle Eaton was closed but I collected a virtual stamp for my passport. Near Lechlade, I reached the highest navigable point on the Thames and enjoyed a rare seat for a lunch break.



St. John the Baptist Church

St. John the Baptist Church provided a physical stamp and a donation opportunity. The day ended with minor blisters and anticipation for a longer walk tomorrow.

Day 3: Lechlade to Newbridge (16.5 miles)

A comfortable bed and early start set the tone. A bramble caused a minor ear injury but the walk continued. I met the familiar couple again,



The meandering river: it ends up where the blue arrow is!

confirming they had not in fact walked the Camino. The river meandered, adding distance, and I exchanged route tips with a couple walking upstream from the Thames Barrier.



Newbridge

The wind picked up making for challenging conditions. A stop at The Trout at Tadpole Bridge provided refreshment and a stamp. Despite guidebook warnings of a deserted section, I saw more people than expected, including meditating boaters and busy lock keepers. I reached Newbridge, my stop for the night, grateful for a cosy room and time to plan ahead.

Day 4: Newbridge to Oxford (14 miles)



Looking back at Newbridge

A glorious sunrise and hearty breakfast started the day. The path grew busier approaching Oxford with schoolchildren and dog walkers. At the Ferryman pub, I met a local walker with stories of floods.



Eynsham Lock

A strategic rest at Eynsham Lock allowed for a snack and conversation with hikers heading to the source. We discussed the state of the path we had both travelled up to that point.

The final miles into Oxford were crowded but manageable. My accommodation was ready early and I discussed

Thames Path continued



Kier site for the railway bridge

local construction delays of a Kier contract with the owner. After errands and a stroll outside the Kier site, I reflected on 55 miles walked and over 114,000 steps to date.

Day 5: Oxford to Abingdon (10 miles)

A peaceful city walk began with a stamp in my passport at the Paper Boat Cafe. The paved path was a welcome change and interactions with locals were friendly.



Sandford Lock

A mid-walk break at Sandford Lock allowed for writing my blog and checking emails while eating my pain au raisin. Near Abingdon, the path became 'spongy' but passable.



Abingdon

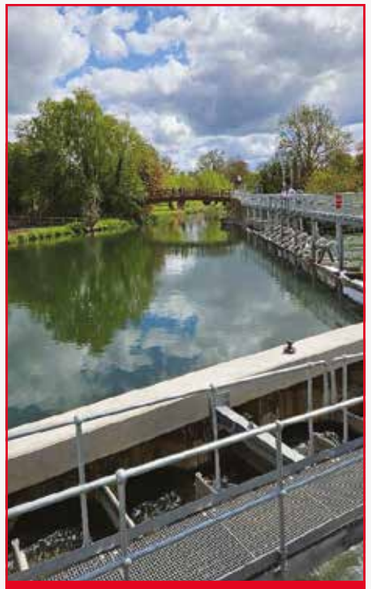
The afternoon was spent exploring sunny Abingdon and enjoying a meal at the Crown & Thistle. The day ended with some impromptu sewing of my 'spare trousers' where the hem had come down.

Day 6: Abingdon to Wallingford (14.1 miles)



The Barley Mow

A sunny morning and easy, flat walk meant I made good time. The Barley Mow at Clifton Hampden provided an early stamp and refreshments. Bridges and locks along the way gave photo opportunities, and repairs at Benson Lock were noted.



Benson Lock

Wallingford, my stop for the night, was reached on schedule and, after a quick town tour, I settled down in the bar for dinner. After reviewing the menu, I was told there was a problem with the kitchen and the choice now was fish & chips which was actually very good.



Wallingford

I returned to my room with reflections on the route today and what was ahead tomorrow.

Day 7: Wallingford to Pangbourne plus Tilehurst (15.7 miles)



A sunny morning with Rowers

A routine of breakfast, walking and check-in continued. The sunny day brought out rowers and families. There was a particularly hilly section today away from the river which concluded with a toll bridge (free to walkers).



The toll bridge

Having previously walked parts of this section, I decided to extend the day to Tilehurst, catching a train back to Pangbourne. A ticket mix-up provided comic relief plus the loss of £2.45 – I bought the ticket for the wrong direction realising just in time. The Elephant Hotel in Pangbourne offered a delicious evening meal and a comfortable night's rest.

Day 8: Tilehurst to Henley (14.5 miles)



Egyptian Geese, Reading

A late start and slow breakfast led to a rush to catch the train from Pangbourne back to Tilehurst. The path passed familiar landmarks including a Tesco I had helped build. Encounters with a policeman and birdwatching added interest. Sonning Lock's cafe was closed but a pub provided sustenance.



Sonning Bridge

I crossed Sonning Bridge where I had worked many years before – the brickwork pointing still seemed in good shape. A major diversion at Shiplake due to a bridge closure added two miles and navigation challenges due to a lack of signage.



Henley

Henley Rowing Museum was closed so no stamp, but I reached the station early and headed home by train & taxi, beating the local bus by 30 minutes. I unpacked and had the washing on before the bus arrived. It was nice to be home for a day's rest tomorrow.

Part II of Walking the Thames Path will be continued in our Spring/ Summer issue 51 next year.

Around the regions

Central

It started with just a chance mention at our January planning lunch of how much two of our members were enjoying a new hobby.



Our 16 members

Immediate enthusiasm for trying lawn bowling led us to arrange a taster session in July organised at Tewkesbury Bowling Club with 16 members and four volunteer coaches from the club.



Members on the lawn

Two and a half hours of fun on the green was thirsty work, so we then adjourned to a local restaurant for a late lunch and a few drinks. It was pleasing to hear that several were inspired to subsequently take up the sport.



Refreshments afterwards

Our thanks to Richard Collin, who has a friend who is a retired history teacher, and now an official city guide in Bath.



Bath guided tour

We had a very informative and enjoyable guided walk around the centre of Bath plus an explanation of the history which has led to it becoming a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It was later listed as one of the ‘Great Spa Towns of Europe’. Having such a knowledgeable guide adds so much to a city visit and it was thoroughly enjoyed by all.



Bath guided tour

Two of our popular visits from earlier years were revisited to give those that were unable to attend previously a chance to enjoy them, such was the interest amongst our members. A trip to the A417 Missing Link just south of Cheltenham gave the opportunity to see Kier’s £450m highway project nearing completion. This challenging scheme has generated much interest locally and created a lot of positive publicity for the company.

In Newbury, a growing group of members now meet quarterly for a lunch and friendly catch up. Dates are on the website calendar.

We are soon to revisit the Gloucester incinerator waste to energy facility with its significant focus on green energy generation and emission controls.

Our year will finish with our pre-Christmas lunch at the Lilleybrook Golf Club, Cheltenham, on 9 December. Always our most popular and best supported event as it is a great opportunity to catch up with old friends.

Robin Butler

Devon/Cornwall

On Wednesday 26 August members met again at The Marsh Mill Beefeater for the last time as the restaurant is now closed.

Unfortunately, the service was not up to the usual standard but members enjoyed the banter as normal. We were in a private room so were bothering no-one with our tales of bygone days with Kier and for many of us with the Plymouth building giant Dudley Coles!

We have agreed that our next event will be our Christmas lunch, once again at Boringdon Golf Club, and the date will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Shirley Riddle



Members at the August lunch

Leeds

We had 31 attendees at our lunch on 24 May which, as we all now know, is held at the Bridge Hotel and Spa, Walshford. Due to our increased numbers, instead of going through to the restaurant for our main course, we were able to help ourselves to the carvery selection in the room. This was viewed as a huge bonus, so we will need to keep our numbers up.



The room layout

Steve Ball and Adam Fewtrell joined us who are current employees of Kier with more than 25 years' service. We hope they and fellow eligible colleagues can join us at future events. As always, there was such a lovely atmosphere.



Our raffle prizes

As at our previous lunches we held a raffle. Members are asked if they would kindly donate any unwanted gifts or bring a bottle and they never disappoint. Anne Leslie oversees selling the tickets and she



After our lunch

did an amazing job of keeping this and us under control. Anne announced that we would have the opportunity to choose which charity money raised from the raffles since May 2024 would be going to. It was a close call but a local children's hospice, Martin House, based in Boston Spa, in the same village as Kier's offices used to be, was the chosen charity. Due to the generosity of members, Anne was able to send £222.50 to Martin House so a big 'thank you' to everyone for your kindness in bringing in items for the raffle and for buying tickets.

Dan Doherty very kindly offered members another opportunity to visit Leeds Town Hall. There was interest in attending but sadly the date did not suit anyone, so we await a fresh date or two. Such a visit may also afford the opportunity for a catch-up over a drink after the visit for those interested.

Dan retired from the Northern division of Kier in July after more than six years' service. Under Dan's leadership, the region strengthened its position across Yorkshire and the Northeast. Dan's successor is Steve Lynn, who has spent most of his career at Kier and we look forward to him joining us at one of our lunches in the future.

We offer our congratulations to Steve and best wishes for the future to Dan. However,

Dan has not completely cut his ties with Kier as he is now a fully-fledged member of the Fellowship and is continuing to work two days a week for Kier on developing the young talent and the behavioural safety programme as well.

Our active membership has increased slightly to 54.

Members continue to be asked for their contributions for KierLink and are not disappointing as you will see from our articles.

In the last edition of KierLink. Andrea threw open a challenge to Sarah, Fiona and me to do a 3D puzzle. We are more than happy to take on the challenge and promise we will have an update and photographs for edition 51.

Finally, I would like to offer my sincere apologies to Mrs Ellis. Her late husband's name appeared correctly in the 'Obituary' section of the KierLink issue 49 but was addressed incorrectly as 'Andy' Ellis in my annual report on page 19. Thank you, John Shillito, for alerting me to this unfortunate mistake.

Memories

As Andrea will well remember, I was the editor of the Kier in-house magazine called 'Coast to Coast' for the Northern region, covering Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool.

I was looking for something in the house recently and came across a handful of them which brought back memories of my time at Kier.

While having a brief look through them, I came across an article in the December 2014 edition called 'Chris Lax's Valencia footballing adventure.' I contacted Chris and asked him if he would mind if I mentioned it in the next edition of KierLink.



Adam circled in red with his Dad Chris back row, second from the right

I also asked Chris if he still coached. Chris was fine about the article appearing but said his days as a coach were sadly over now.



The last match

Chris coached his son Adam who was approached by another team, Kellingley Welfare, who were one of the top junior sides in the area. Chris went there as a 'keeper coach'. He said that the coaching team decided to end things at the end of the Under 16s season before: "Girls, parties and drinks kicked in for the lads!"



Recent photo of Chris, daughter Abigail and son Adam

Chris also mentioned that a lot of the Kellingley team went on to the Pontefract Collieries Football Scholarship Programme for their education and football. As for Adam, he is now working as the sport and exercise therapist at Pontefract Collieries. Chris is one immensely proud dad!

Messing about on the river

Rod Hamlin recently contacted me to thank the Kier Fellowship members for his birthday card and best wishes. He said: “As this one is my 80th, I enjoyed spending two special trips with my family: one in Italy and the other on the Norfolk Broads.”



Rod

Frank’s corner

Space and our planet:



Frank

- A cloud weighs around a million tons: Even though they look like fluffy cotton candy floating effortlessly, a typical cumulus cloud has a volume of about one cubic kilometer and weighs as much as 100 before-school-rush buses. They only float because the air underneath them is even denser
- The average color of the universe is ‘Cosmic Latte’: In 2002, astronomers looked at the light coming from over 200,000 galaxies and averaged it all out. The result? A light beige color which they officially named cosmic latte.

Human biology:

- You can stretch your DNA to the sun and back dozens of times: If you took all the DNA molecules out of all the cells in your body and uncoiled them, the strand would stretch roughly 10 billion miles. That is long enough to reach past the edge of our solar system and back
- We are mostly empty space: If you removed all the empty space from the atoms that make up every single human being on Earth, the entire human race could fit inside a single sugar cube.

Everyday anomalies:

- Leftover pasta is actually healthier for you than fresh pasta: When cooked pasta cools down, its chemical structure changes into something called resistant starch. Your body treats it more like fibre, causing a much lower blood sugar spike and fueling the good bacteria in your gut – even if you reheat it!

I just want to celebrate

Pete and Carole Robinson celebrated their silver wedding anniversary on 8 June. They did it in style by travelling to Mauritius – the Indian Ocean island of turquoise lagoons, white-sand beaches, lush mountain scenery and warm island hospitality.



Gorgeous view from Pete and Carole’s hotel



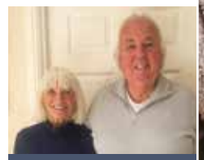
Carole & Pete with Amanda and Mark, a couple they met on their holiday

Mauritius offered the perfect blend of rest and adventure but most of all it gave them time to look back on the life they have built, time to laugh over old stories, and time to dream about the years still ahead. After a quarter of a century together, Pete and Carole’s anniversary trip was not simply a holiday: it was a celebration of a partnership, endurance and love, set against one of the most beautiful backdrops in the world.



A fun birthday card sent to Carole and Pete from Carole’s sister

David and Diane Hicks celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on 21 August.

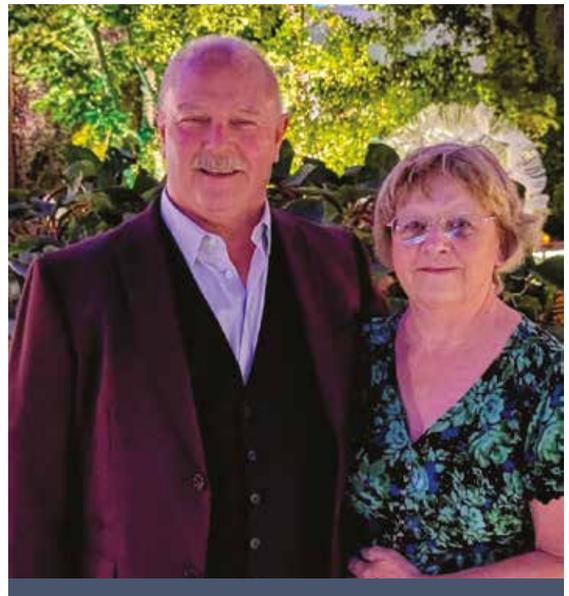


Above: Diane and David Hicks



Above: their gorgeous dog, Barney, joining in the celebrations

Frank and Eileen Heleniak celebrate their 51st wedding anniversary on the 22 November.



Frank and Eileen

Last, but certainly not least: no bells or confetti needed, just a pen, two witnesses and a whole lot of love.

Sheila, currently ‘Miss Adey’ and Neil McLeay are finally, after 30 years of engagement, taking the ‘plunge’ and

getting married on 18 November 2026 at their local registry office. Sheila and Neil have opted to keep the ceremony small with just the two of them, their two sons as witnesses which will be followed by a lunch at a later date. This is what Neil had to say:



Sheila and Neil

"Sheila and I first met while we were both working at Kier's offices in Boston Spa in the early 1990s. Sheila was the wages clerk that I, as a site-based quantity surveyor, had to phone every Monday from site to report the hours worked by our directly employed workforce, as well as advising which 'cost-code' to charge the cost to.

One thing led to another, particularly after two pre-Christmas 'mad Fridays' – three years' apart! The rest is history as they say! We thought our budding romance was a big secret but it turned out it was not, as is often the case with most office romances, even pre-social media. Funnily enough, there were a few such romances back in the day at Boston Spa. I know of three from those days that are still going strong.

We got engaged in 1996 after I proposed to Sheila over the aeroplane tannoy on our flight back home from a holiday in Florida and had planned to get married in the near future. However, life, a big mortgage, two adopted sons, and a bit of: "If it is not broken, why fix it," got in the way and here we are 30 years later actually about to tie the knot.

While the actual wedding ceremony will be a small quiet event, the party with family and friends we are planning for 21 November is unlikely to be so unassuming. It will be held at the Bridge Hotel and Spa, where our Fellowship lunches are held."

On behalf of all your Fellowship friends and members, we wish all couples many more years of happiness.

To conclude the Leeds regional section, I would like to draw your attention to 'My working life' by Alan Burgess of which Part II will be featuring in KierLink issue 51.

I first met Alan in May 2024, when I took over from Anne Leslie as area organiser. We got chatting over lunch and I mentioned that I was looking to promote our membership in KierLink.



Alan Burgess

I suggested that, as Alan had had a varied career and has a busy life since retirement, his recollection of his working life, hobbies and pastimes would make a great article. Alan has now put together for us a detailed account of his journey. Part I can been seen on pages 30 to 35.

Alan would be an ideal mentor for our younger generation. Alan?

Glenda Hamilton

Loughton/Witham

Area golf day



Best back nine: Harrison Thurley

This year Kier London and Kier Eastern held their annual regional golf day at the pristine Thorpe Hall Golf Club just outside of Southend on Sea. A strong field of current and former employees gathered in hope of being able to lift the John Simpson Trophy.



Best front nine: Paul Kenworthy

Just as importantly, there is also the expectation of hearing more tales of those brilliant, completed projects that seem to get built faster and more profitably with each passing year. This together with some fine food before and after play made for a full and entertaining day.



The full 'Motley Crew'

Getting back to the golf, as those of us who play will know, the game is best described as a series of tragedies masked by the occasional miracle.



Nearest the pin in one: Kevin Major

On Tuesday 9 June, Dennis Charlton navigated his way around the course with the fewest number of tragedies which, when coupled with



Nearest the pin in two on a par 4: Sam Sadler



Runner up: Barry Sadler

his miracle shot of holing out from 100 yards, made him the worthy victor. Very well played Dennis.

As the photos show, the minor prizes were widely spread, so most had a bottle of something to get them dreaming that the miracle shot will be coming their way next time.



Winner: Dennis Charlton

Barry Sadler

Maple Cross

Valentine's meal

This meal was later than usual, on 26 February, as Norman had been away enjoying a well-earned holiday escaping the British weather.



Valentine's meal

We arrived at Biggles to a brisk, chilly wind. Aerodromes do tend to be in exposed spots which is great for aircraft, if slightly less so for hairstyles.

Drinks were served before the meal to the 17 people who came, so everyone had a chance to catch up on Christmas and holidays.



Valentine's meal

We did notice that there were no water glasses on our table, but the waiting staff were quick to put that right before anyone had to become dramatically dehydrated.



Valentine's meal

The food was excellent as ever, with starters including smoked salmon & prawns, garlic mushrooms, melon, calamari or soup.

Main courses included veal, Peri Peri chicken, stroganoff, trout, steak and chilli beef, all of which looked very tempting indeed. Desserts were certainly generous on the cream but no one seemed especially troubled. We rounded everything off with coffee.



Valentine's meal

The meal ended around 15:00 hours, after which everyone gradually set off for home pleasantly full and no doubt ready for a quiet sit-down.

Spring lunch

This year we made our way back to Lussmanns Restaurant in St. Albans. Norman had optimistically booked the upstairs room for 25. In the end, 15 signed up and 11 actually arrived after some cancellations. Eleven turned out to be an excellent number for a relaxed pre-bank holiday lunch.



Spring lunch

The restaurant opened at noon, which was luckily also our meeting time, although the curtain was still drawn across the entrance when people began to arrive. Drinks were ordered and conversation got underway immediately.



Spring lunch

Lunch was as good as ever. Starters included soup, pate, sprats and cheese, followed by mains ranging from sole, fishcake and lamb to steak, hamburger and burrata.

Desserts featured bread and butter pudding, pineapple, crème caramel,



Spring lunch

and blue cheese. Talk continued throughout, and when coffee/tea appeared we realised that three and a half hours had somehow vanished – proof that good company makes time fly by!



Spring lunch

Windsor horse racing

Ten of us met at the Windsor racecourse in June to enjoy some adrenalin fuelled excitement. Some also watched the horses!



Windsor horse racing

The weather was cloudy but still warm as we settled into our seats in the club area. Tickets included half price drinks until 17:00 hours, a free drink and free fish & chips. Norman also included a little something to ensure everyone could bet.



Gill indicating her winnings but had insufficient fingers

There were seven races, some looked at the odds for their choice, others by names they liked – I believe the latter were the most successful.

Following all the excitement there was also a Queen tribute band knocking out a lot of the favourites. Unfortunately, nobody has the vocal range of Freddie Mercury, but it was a good laugh!



Windsor horse racing



Windsor horse racing

Some stayed until the end around 22:30 hours but Norman & Sue had to leave quite promptly as they were flying the following morning. All in all, a lovely evening.

Jeff Taylor



Windsor horse racing: Queen tribute band

Rushden

Members have enjoyed a range of activities this year. There is a core of 15 or so regular attendees with others as and when.

In April we had an enjoyable lunch at the Olde Victoria Inn, Burton Latimer, and followed this with the Star and Garter, Chelveston, in May. We are meeting for lunch at the Lilacs, Isham, on 4 November and are returning to the Olde Vic for a Christmas lunch on 9 December.

We have recently started informal evening meetings in local pubs and restaurants. They include the Aviator, Sywell Aerodrome in July and the Cock Inn, Denford, Thrapston, in September. These have been enjoyable chats and reminiscences.



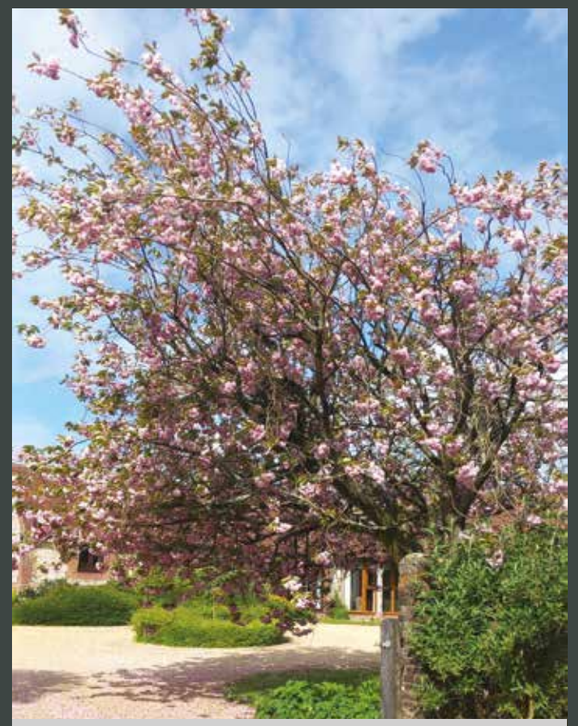
Informal pub meet

An evening at the Stirrup Cup, Barton Seagrave, is set for mid-November.

Ron Gulliver

Solent

A walk in the woods



Bluebell woods

On 21 April, John and Carol Clayton accompanied me for a walk through the bluebells in Little Hyden Woods near Clanfield in Hampshire. The weather had been wet recently but thankfully we were lucky to have a dry, slightly blustery day with the ground conditions not unduly muddy.



Bluebell woods

We met at the local recreation ground but chose not to warm up by using the skate park facilities – unfortunately we had left our boards at home! The 5km walk was to take us through bridleways, woodland and lanes.

The partly stony first lane, Green Lane, led us between hedgerows on both sides and past a country cottage with a tree in full bloom at its entrance. It was then onto Thieves Lane which undulated through



Bluebell woods

Ditch Acre Copse with bluebells to wet our appetite for later displays. After a short walk down a tarmac lane we followed the bridleway into Lowton Copse/Little Hyden Woods to enjoy the carpet of bluebells we had come to see and enjoy. After leaving the woods we walked along the surfaced Little Hyden Lane into Clanfield, with its obligatory village duck pond, and onwards to our cars. A most enjoyable way to spend two hours in the fresh air at springtime.

Peter Wallbank

Visit to Highclere Castle

In early September, 23 members visited Highclere Castle, Hampshire, the home of 'Downton Abbey'. Although our visit coincided with the first really wet day in the last few months, nothing could dampen our enthusiasm for the trip.



Some of the members who visited Highclere Castle

We stepped onto the set of Downton Abbey where the Gentille Earl spends his days walking his beautiful labradors around the estate and the Dowager Countess fills her conversation with quips and easy wit.



Graham Willoughby and his wife Phil

Who will ever forget Dame Maggie Smith asking: "What is a weekend?"

Highclere is, of course, the ancestral home of the Herbert family, the Earls of Carnarvon, with their links to both politicians and royalty.



Members at Highclere Castle

The most famous ancestral Earl was the fifth who in 1922, with Howard Carter in the Valley of the Kings, Luxor, discovered the tomb of King Tutankhamun.

The castle has a stunning Egyptian exhibition which transports each visitor back 100 years to an ancient world of discovery, elegance and charm.

We had a splendid day out, enjoyed by all!

Joan Murray

Solent annual BBQ

Who knew, when we planned this year's barbeque in October last year, that it would be in one of the hottest heat waves of 2026.

Once again, it was arranged at the Royal Victoria Country Park on the banks of Southampton Water on 24 June. This popular event was attended by 20+



Royal Victoria Country Park

members with partners. Despite the heat, shade was plentiful and the food plus company was appreciated by all.

The country park is on the site of the Victorian military hospital initially built in the 19th Century to treat military personnel across the Empire. It later provided care for the injured in the Boar Wars and World Wars I and II.

The main hospital building was demolished in the mid-1960s when a box containing a Victoria Cross, Crimea medal and a set of coins, originally placed by Queen Victoria beneath the foundation stone, was removed and opened. The original hospital chapel has been retained/refurbished and is now open as a visitor's centre/exhibition space plus venue.

Derek Ward

Northeast Quadrant (NEQ) Building 75, University of Southampton, 17/07/2026

NEQ is a £123m contract for the Southampton office and is currently the largest project in progress within the Southern region. The project commenced on 13 January 2025, with completion due in May 2027. It comprises of four blocks for teaching and learning use with two large lecture theatres.

The visit included an overview from project director Simon Clayton and design lead David Black. The challenges at design stage were to incorporate the requirements of the many (hundreds!) of stakeholders. There are strong links to the Medical Faculty at Southampton Hospital. Local procurement was a priority when the construction packages were let. While the construction process was of keen interest to the nine members, the biggest change demonstrated to them was how IT and AI are becoming major tools for monitoring, reporting and forecasting construction progress.



L-r: Colin Foskett, Roger Osgood, John Clayton, Julian Smith, Peter Wallbank, Steve Malone, Robert Fleming, Derek Ward, Lawrie Draper: young recruits! We all look as though we have spent too much of summer in the sunshine

A big thank you to the local directors and the site team for providing access to view this prestigious building in Southampton. We look forward to returning before handover.

If you would like to explore the project, please use QR code.

Steve Malone

Tempsford

In April this year we were persuaded to return to the Bridge Hotel, St. Neots, following a change of ownership. Seventeen attended and enjoyed good food and company.

This was followed in May by a return visit to Bletchley Park which was attended by a group of 12. There was a lot of walking and most displays are now 'virtual' rather than physical which, for me, was disappointing and there were fewer volunteers on hand with whom to chat.

June saw a return to The Fox at Carlton, Bedfordshire, and in July a return to the Rising Sun, Potton, where groups of 10 and 15 enjoyed, once again, good food, service and company.

Our planned garden party in conjunction with Rushden area was cancelled owing to lack of bookings – this seems to be a national trend.

On 13 August (the hottest day of the year here) our group of 20 enjoyed a boat trip on the Grand Union Canal from Stoke Bruerne, through the Blisworth Tunnel and back (2.5 hours) followed by a pre-booked lunch at The Boat Inn, through whom the cruise was arranged. We had a commentary from the manager as the cruise progressed which made the event much more interesting. The tunnel is about 2,800 metres long and takes about 30 minutes to navigate in each direction – very welcome that day as the



Above: Bletchley Park



Grand Union Canal: on the The Indian Chief



Grand Union Canal: tunnel southern portal

temperature was 36C. Two longboats passed inside the tunnel without changing speeds thanks to the skill of the 'pilots', although this was not possible when the tunnel was first developed (best not to stay near an open window as water could splash in from either side).



Grand Union Canal: group awaiting lunch

Early in September our group of eight returned to the Fox & Hounds, Riseley, for lunch. I was unable to attend but am told our small group enjoyed getting together again.



Grand Union Canal: tunnel segment mould

In October, we returned to The Park Pub, Bedford, and in November to the Anchor, Great Barford, for a carvery lunch preceded by a talk from AgeUK. We are yet to organise our Christmas lunch which is again booked at Pavenham Park Golf Club – we may consider a change next year.

We have retained our venues for the first lunches of 2027 (February and March) where we hope that the previous high standard we have enjoyed will be maintained.

Harold Thompson

Waterbeach

Pictured below, 32 members enjoyed a champagne afternoon tea at Congham Hall, near Kings Lynn, on 15 July.

Mark Jude



My working life - part I

By Alan Burgess

Leaving school

My dad and I battled with the headmaster and the school leaving employment officer over their thoughts on my prospects – I wanted to be an electrical engineer. They told us that: "I had set my sights too high," that: "I was more suited to office or shop work," which only served to be a red rag to a bull!

My apprenticeship starts

And so, in November of 1963, I began an apprenticeship with an electrical contracting company which was local to where I lived (Darlington) and I still live today. It was where, by a kind of default, I stayed until I joined IEI some 25 years later, having risen to electrical site management roles, proving my headmaster and school leaving employment officer were wrong to judge my prospects. Throughout those years, the various jobs took me to many sites. These consisted mainly of either a commercial or industrial basis. At times, there was some specialty working alongside and for a company called Murphy Solid Waste Refuse Baling Systems on their facilities across all UK mainland areas. These jobs took me from the top of Scotland to the South coast of England into Wales. Then came my final job in Southsea, Portsmouth. Hampshire, working on the Pyramid Leisure Centre, (which was where I met with IEI) I encountered the devastating un-forecasted hurricane in October 1988. Thus came an end to working on the 'tools', all told with many happy memories, so a nomadic existence became the 'norm' for me, so to speak.

I joined IEI in May 1989 which was a design, build, M&E specialist organisation within the Conder Group of companies with offices in Leeds (from which I worked) and Basingstoke. During the August/ September period of 1992, IEI became part of Kier following a buy-out from the original Conder Group of companies, as they succumbed to a receivership selloff.

During this period, I gained experience on the following projects:

- 1989, Luton: a new office complex incorporating a flight and passenger cabin and a simulator building for Monarch Airlines at Luton Airport. I gained a lot of mechanical systems knowledge. I also gained valuable social skills, having to work alongside other nationalities, Canadians in particular, who from speaking in our discussions in Canadian would then suddenly enter into a type of spoken French language (Quebec), even though we were discussing in English various installation issues. Sometimes funny, other times not so!

  During the building commissioning periods, the building management offered me a few flights in their various flight simulators, either early morning before or late evenings after work, which was a most rewarding experience

- 1990, Ware: Glaxo in a drug micronising research building working to high Food and Drug Administration (FDA) validations procedures (American drug validation for exports)

- 1990, Oldbury: Town Council's new headquarters office complex incorporating a nuclear bunker facility – scary thoughts at the time!

- 1991, Ware: Glaxo again on other projects with further revalidation works to suit both UK and the FDA. This necessitated working intense time periods (24-hour multiple shifts).

Following the Kier buyout

- 1992, Glaxo: 'U' Building at their production facility in Ware, Hertfordshire. Drug packaging facility from where the Conder Group succumbed to insolvency and redundancies were implemented. Fortunately, I was one of the few people to get their jobs back. This played a major part of my later progression with Kier with reinstatement of all terms and conditions from when I first joined IEI

- 1993, Lakeside Shopping Centre, Thurrock: two multi-storey (six-storey) new build car parks

- 1994 to 1995, Meggido Lines, Catterick Garrison: military vehicles garage/ workshop facilities for the MOD comprising some 23 buildings for training and maintenance purposes



IEI Meggido lines Catterick fueling station



IEI Meggido lines Catterick fuelling station

- 1995 to 1996, Newmarket Cottage Hospital: a replacement hospital to serve the needs of patients following the closure and demolition of an adjacent aged main hospital.

It was a fair way through this project IEI decided I was going to be again placed into a redundancy situation. However, fortunately, this was while I was in the employment of a Kier group company and, therefore, I was offered an opportunity to attend an interview with their human resources department. Following on from the interview, I was asked if I would like to go for a site interview at a Kier Build project in Harlow, which I did, even though I had already secured another job for a company based in Loughborough.

- 1996, Kier Build integrated M&E systems division: after a successful interview (previous pharmaceutical works helped I think) an inter-group move happened. I joined the Kier Build Joint Venture with Haremead at the Horizon Frontiers Science Park project in Harlow which was being undertaken for SmithKline Beecham. It was from this project that I went on to work on many more, up and until the point when retirement took place in March 2013.

My working life continued

Projects I was involved with

Below is a list of projects which took the bulk of my time and from which I gained considerable knowledge into all aspects of systems related to M&E services, processes, validation, commissioning, other construction elements and management of buildings through to completions. I was the last person on site sometimes.

- February 1996 to April 1998, Smithkline Beecham, Frontiers Science Park, Harlow: we had some quite outstanding milestones at the time with achievements of upwards of 500,000 and bettered plus, I believe, 1,000,000 worked hours with no lost time hours due to any form of accident. This was helped by the client stipulations and with regular recognition prize draws taking place. I never won any myself, other than we got site clothing and other company related items issued to us!
- April 1998 to May 1999, Serpentine Green Shopping Centre (new build), Peterborough: it was during this period that Kier Build formed an M&E specialist team that became known as the IME division (integrated M&E design build) of which I became a part of and remained throughout my later Kier career
- June 1999 to February 2001, Wellcome Wing, Science Museum, London: I was virtually the last person to leave the project having to complete all aspects of works dealing with not only the M&E aspects but also all the remaining unfinished structural/building snagging issues. This also included the integral IMAX cinema complex – all with some headaches and late night working due to the museum and IMAX being open to the public during the day. It so happened that I got to know the train timetables by heart – the last train out of King's Cross was 01:35 hours towards Peterborough which I caught many times following desperate dashes across London while also being given rides by a lighting systems commissioning engineer and others. I worked here when the Royal opening by the late Queen Elizabeth II accompanied by Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, took place in June 2000



Wellcome Wing, Science Museum facade



Kier staff site team 1999 at the Wellcome Wing

One night I had to sleep in site cabins after the work aspects had finished somewhere around 02:30 hours following the drain modification works. This was the only time the works could be undertaken due to the museum itself being open until about 18:00 hours. Unfortunately, due to the expanse of the museum site, this set of drains continued to run and flow through the internal high-level suspended drainpipe in the large display basement area which was to be worked on that evening. There were further problems in having to blank off the drainpipe in an outside man accessible utility hole and bring in a vehicular powered vacuum gulley sucker to extract the effluent as the level rose within the chamber. However, this came with time/noise constraints (start, stop cycling) due to adjacent problematic neighbours, and especially with an adjacent embassy. I found out the following morning that the ambassador and his family had gone away on holiday the day before. If only I had known this earlier, this job would have been much easier

- February 2001 to July 2003, BAE Systems Factory, Stevenage: due to the needs on site, I became an authorised and qualified high voltage-switching engineer. This meant we had an in-house provision for these jobs as they became necessary. It was while on site my first ever heart attack took place and I was later hospitalised some 180 miles from home in the Lister Hospital in Stevenage. Three weeks later, I was transferred to The Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospital, Middlesex, even further away from home! I ended up having a quadruple bypass graft operation with a further week in hospital, overall needing almost nine months away from work. After convalescing, I returned to the site and then moved onto the Colmore Square project in Birmingham
- July 2003 to August 2004, Colmore Square 10-storey office development, Birmingham: this improved my cardio fitness greatly by virtue of climbing the stairs many times, sometimes from basement level two up and through all other levels to reach the roof top plant room spaces
- Various duties working in and from Tempsford head office
- Hereford Technology School, Grimsby: I believe now renamed Ormiston Maritime Academy



The 'A' team at Havelock Academy

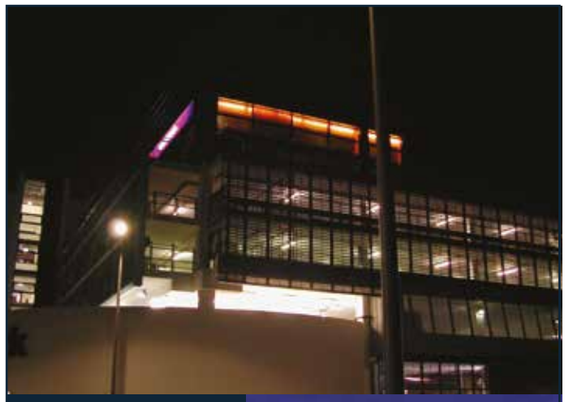
My working life continued

- Hilton Hotel, Liverpool



Early construction of the Hilton Hotel

- Buildings 11 and 12, Harbourside, Bristol: initially involved with building 11 which was a multi-use building incorporating shopping, car park and a casino. On completion, I then moved over to building 12 (a four-storey bespoke office building for HBOS banking group) and from where I was one of the last of three to leave on completion before moving on to the next project



Above Building 11 harbourside and right Building 12

- A 10-storey office complex in central Milton Keynes: Pinnacle, as it was known at the time, was the tallest in Milton Keynes then. During the final stages of commissioning there were a few fire brigade visits, purportedly due to smoke being seen coming from the building roof structure and reported by well-wishing members of the public raising alarm calls. Unbeknown to us, they turned out to be mostly from drivers passing by on the nearby A5. The building was the only one at the time that had, as part of the services, roof mounted 'wet cooling towers', forming part of the buildings' cooling systems. The towers produced clouds of steam which the alarm callers had seen as smoke signals, but the fire brigade still had to come to site. It turned out they used the calls as a form of training exercise



Milton Keynes Pinnacle building



Strong steam from cooling towers

- Josephine Butler Academy, Ashington, Northumberland: a new build school and joint venture project with Kier Northeast



Josephine Butler Academy handover invitation

- Kier, Hebburn office: tender working on a proposed new major trauma hospital in Cramlington, Northumberland. Albeit unsuccessful, I believe we were second



Camden office

- March 2011 to 2013, office building for Camden Borough Council at the Kings Cross development, London: this was the last project I worked on before my retirement.



New Camden office

I suppose one of the worst parts of my working life was the finding, availability and affordability within allowances etc, of where to stay and, at times, for indeterminate periods. Due to the locations of some sites, I was able to stay with my family. For approximately seven and a half years I was able to stay in the same guesthouse in Ware, becoming part of the family if you like. Therefore, I made many friends in and outside of the work environment which continue to this day.

Part II of My working life by Alan will be continued in our Spring/ Summer issue 51 next year.

Reader's feedback

We would like to ask members to write in with any suggestions for future editions. You may fancy, for example, gardening tips on flora or vegetable growing, recipes or anything that matters to you. Please send your ideas to andrea.mcdaid@outlook.com

A tribute to Richard

Partner of Gill Ball, by Gill Ball

Hello, my Kier friends. I did not think I would have to be writing this. Some of you will know, and some may not, that my dear partner of 26 years, Richard, passed away suddenly at the beginning of March this year. It was unexpected and sudden.

Richard had a very aggressive Lymphoma stomach cancer and from diagnosis in February to the day he passed it was just a few weeks. He began showing strong symptoms around Christmas time. When most of us were over-indulging in eating, Richard's appetite had begun to diminish.

Being stoic and a little stubborn, I urged him to consult the GP. When he eventually did, he was put on a two-week NHS fast track system which I cannot fault – it was superb! However, his cancer had taken a real hold on him and the tumour kept growing. Richard never complained but he was very poorly.

We held his funeral at our beautiful local 11th century Christchurch Priory and I would like to share a little insight of his life.



l-r: Sue Elliott, Richard and Gill at the Windsor races

We were partners for over 26 years and both of us, having been married before with children of our own, did not feel the need to cement our relationship with that 'piece of paper'. My family have known Richard and his family for over 40 years, first meeting in hospital when Richard and his wife (now deceased) were awaiting the birth of their daughter. I was on bed rest before the birth of my youngest son. An immediate friendship was formed, one that lasted for many years, with shared holidays and family time.

Richard spent his entire working career of just over 42 years with London Transport on the Metropolitan Line, beginning his career in 1969 as a railway operating apprentice. Later, he was a guard on the Metropolitan Line before moving into a driver's role at Hammersmith and eventually returning to Neasden depot.

In the mid-1990s, he joined the Duty Train Managers' team and soon became a Manager. He often worked night shifts which helped with his family life, but it was not all work – he would often turn up with Danish pastries, bagels from Brick Lane, or even a bucket of KFC, to keep everyone going.

Richard was very much 'old school'. He would work things out with pen and paper, calmly and methodically, even when dealing with last-minute problems like driver shortages. He was known for quietly calling in favours, treating everyone fairly and making sure people were looked after. It earned him a great deal of respect. He would often say to me: "I am a Manager and I will manage – give me a problem and I will solve it." That really was how he approached life.

Nowhere was that more evident than in the garage at home – his own Aladdin's cave of tools. He had everything he might possibly need, just in case one day he might, just might, need it! Whether it was a car repair or fixing something around the house, Richard loved it. He loved fixing things, helping others and simply spending time there.



Richard with Noddy

Cars were a lifelong passion. He never showed off but he knew exactly what he was doing – running cars well into old age, always insisting it came down to regular oil changes and good maintenance. Never mind a few dents and rust on the bodywork if what was under the bonnet was well looked after.

In retirement, Richard bought his pride and joy – a red 1952 Triumph TR2, affectionately named 'Noddy'. After restoring it from the ground up, we both enjoyed many happy times attending rallies. He was one of life's good Samaritans – always willing to help and if he saw a broken-down car, he would immediately suggest stopping to see if he could assist – he thought he was the fourth emergency service!

Richard also had a real sense of adventure. He completed a parachute jump and would probably have done more, but I made it very clear that once was enough. This was because, just before his landing, an instructor appeared to be coming down with what looked like a mannequin which I assumed was part of a training exercise – only to discover later it was actually a participant who had passed out mid-jump. So, he turned to a slightly calmer experience – a hot air balloon ride which he complained was far too gentle and not nearly adrenaline-fuelled enough.

Richard loved the idea of flying and experienced an aerobatic flying in a Yak 52. He had the time of his life – loop the loops, barrel rolls – and landed as fresh as a daisy! That only fuelled him further. He later even took the controls of an aircraft himself, drawing on his interest in flight simulation.

Other adventures included indoor skydiving, racing at Brands Hatch, go-karting and flying in a Tiger Moth. Sailing was another passion. With his skipper friend he took part in trips across the Channel and along the south coast. One memorable trip to France involved a long search for local cuisine. After wandering the marina, unable to decide where to eat, the skipper suggested they head back to the boat, assuring everyone he had something on board. Tired, slightly merry, and out of patience, they agreed. What they had not realised was that the skipper's idea of 'something on board' was his so-called emergency rations. And so, in the middle of France, surrounded by fresh mussels, oysters, and local delicacies, they were presented with a tin of Fray Bentos steak and kidney pie!



Richard and Gill on holiday

We both did a little travelling together visiting Canada, touring the Rockies,

A tribute

continued



Richard with friend Gerry at a Kier Fellowship lunch

as well as India, Sri Lanka, California, plus many places across Europe and the UK.

Richard had a sharp and curious mind. He took great pleasure in sharing his knowledge, always with patience. He even took a Mensa IQ test and scored highly which perhaps explains why quiz nights with me could be slightly one-sided!



Richard (second down from top left) and Gill opposite at a Fellowship meal

When we moved to Christchurch, we joined the local golf club, making new friends and playing regularly in competitions. Like many golfers, Richard was always striving to improve his handicap, analysing his game, occasionally criticising himself but always with good humour.

Above all, my Richard was someone who was always there – calm, dependable and supportive, bringing great happiness to me and all my family, whom he treated as his own.

Richard was, quite simply, a true gentleman. Rest in peace, Richard.

A great day on the course

Our Kier Fellowship golf day on 23 September 2026 at Dyrham Park was a great success. Eight of us enjoyed perfect weather, a well-kept course and a relaxed round of 18 holes. The sausage baps set us up nicely plus the chicken and leek pie afterwards was spot-on.

Kier memorabilia made for some enjoyable prizes and the standout performance came from Tim French who won the trophy with 41 points.

Thanks to those who joined us and helped make it such a good day.

Neil Meixner



Tim receiving the trophy from last year's winner Malcolm Burton

The Copey Cup

by Malcolm Burton

Back in the early years of 2000, a group of Kier London people who played golf decided to start meeting for a round of golf after work in the summer months. The name of 'WEGS' was agreed for the golf participants which was short for Wednesday Evening Golf Society.

One evening in 2005, over a pint after golf, discussions were held about a WEGS away day with a trip across to France to play the two golf courses at Hardelot. A date was agreed and Barry Sadler, Darren Wisbey, Gerry Hooper and Ian Tidey booked themselves in for the trip. Derek Adams and I were also booked in to go however there was a date clash with the handover of Chase Lane School so sadly we had to pull out.

Word of this trip soon got around the Loughton office with most people thinking we were crazy to get up at 04:00 for the first Eurotunnel train to Calais, drive for one hour, play 36 holes of golf and then return home the same day.

Just prior to the day, Alan Cope gave me a call and asked me to pop into his office where, to my surprise, he handed over a small trophy named the Copey Cup to be presented to the winner on the day.



The attendees at the 21st holding of the Copey Cup: 11 players with five guests

The four golfers had a lovely, albeit very tiring, day on the two golf courses, The Pines and The Dunes. At the end of the day Gerry Hooper was the proud winner of the inaugural Copey Cup.

Ever since that first small event the Copey Cup has been played for every summer and has grown into a two day pairs event organised by Barry Sadler.

This year is the 21st anniversary of the start of the Copey Cup and we travelled to Dale Hill Golf Club on the Kent/Sussex border. It was mentioned that Alan Cope lived fairly close to the venue and how nice it would be if we could get him to come and present the trophy to the winners. Barry duly contacted Alan who said he would be delighted to accept the invitation.

After two days of highly competitive golf, we met up with Alan and his wife, Lynn, in the clubhouse. After a catch up over old times, Alan was invited up to make the presentation. Alan said how it was a testament to the spirit/friendship that existed within Kier that after all these years we were still meeting up and playing for the Copey Cup. He also said he was humbled and honoured to be invited to present the cup to the winners Graham Howe and Jamie McDaid.

The Copey Cup continued



Barry Sadler, Ian Tidey and Darren Wisbey enjoying some lunchtime refreshments

The WEGS originated in Loughton but has now expanded to include current employees/ Fellowship members from both Kier London and Kier Eastern along with invited guests. As well as playing for the Copey Cup, we have two other competitions throughout the year: The Spring Open played at the end of March organised by Kevin Major and the Autumn Classic played at the end of September organised by Paul Goddard. If anyone reading this article is interested in joining in with these events please contact me at: burton_malcolm@yahoo.com and I will pass on your details to the organisers.

While the Spring Open and Autumn Classic are very enjoyable, the Copey Cup is, and always will be, the most prestigious tournament on the WEGS calendar and for that we give thanks to Alan Cope.



Gerry Hooper: inaugural winner of the Copey Cup



Alan presenting the Copey Cup to Graham Howe and Jamie McDaid

New members

A warm welcome to:

Name	City/town	Area	Workd for	Service
Mike Armstrong	Ruislip	Maple Cross	Kier Places	41
Tom Austin	Huntingdon	Waterbeach	Kier Eastern	6
Jim Cox	Wisbech	Waterbeach	Kier Eastern	22
Victor Eze	Haywards Heath	Central	Kier Group	2
Kate Folbigg	Bedford	Tempsford	Kier Services	17
Ian Gaskell	Southport	Leeds	Kier Construction	4
Andrew Glenn	Daventry	Central	NRNN	12
William Hendry	Peterborough	Waterbeach	Kier Eastern/Mid	20
Jonathan Hyde	Luton	Maple Cross	Kier Utilities	5
Mark Jones	Great Yarmouth	Rushden	Kier Utilities	30
Kevin Knight	Chadwell Heath	Loughton	Kier Thames Valley	38
Ian Lawson	Stamford	Tempsford	Kier Group	20
Mark North	Huntingdon	Tempsford	Kier Infrastructure	4
James O' Brien	Canvey Island	Loughton	Workplace Solutions	11
Anish Patel	Swanscombe	Maidstone	NRNN	7
Gabriel Pierazzini	Faringdon	Bristol	Kier Construction	5
John Roberts	Killamarsh	Leeds	Kier Construction	2
Janet Robinson	Wisbech	Waterbeach	FK Construction	8
Alan Smith	Shireoaks	Leeds	Kier Places	20
Michael Teece	Thetford	Waterbeach	Kier Eastern	11

Kier watch

by Glenda Hamilton

David Hicks, contributor of the Ferrybridge article in issue 48 of KierLink, and I exchange the odd email or two. Whenever he is on his travels, he always manages to 'spot' a Kier sign or site and lets me know. While he was in London with his wife, Diane, in August to celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary, David sent me this photograph (pictured right) taken at Aldgate tube station, near where David and Diane were staying.



This sowed a seed about mentioning this in KierLink and asking if anyone else had spotted

Kier watch continued

a Kier site whilst on their travels and could embellish with any details and/or photographs.

This idea was firmly cemented following a catch-up with an ex-colleague and wonderful friend, Anna Dean, who worked with me for a while before swapping careers from HR to teaching. Anna now teaches at Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School in Ellesmere Port. Anna and I were chatting about 'this and that' when she mentioned there was a paper document in the staff room about Ellesmere Port High School next door to where she teaches. It left Anna wondering if she would meet any former colleagues when work starts.

Kier submitted a planning application for the redevelopment of the school, with a view for redevelopment to begin in Autumn 2026. Anna has been asked if she could take a photograph for inclusion in the next issue of KierLink.

Then Alan Burgess and I were chatting about his article for this edition of KierLink when he too mentioned that Kier was undertaking work in Darlington where he lives, namely Polam Hall School and the Government Treasury building.

Polam Hall is set within a historic nine-hectare estate and the West End Conservation Area. The work will include the sensitive refurbishment of the modern and flexible environments for Primary and Secondary pupils. The new permanent home for the Darlington Economic Campus is an £18 million government hub on Brunswick Street. The hub will bring together teams from across seven government departments, supporting the government's commitment to regional growth.

In typical Alan style, he has provided further details of the projects. Work on Polam Hall is the modernisation of an existing mixed pupil school, where children from pre-school through to sixth form are currently taught, both collectively and respectively within the facilities of the many existing school buildings. Parts of the existing school have grade listed protections so cannot be demolished, other parts not so.

Alan provided a choice of photographs which were taken from the 'Victorian era South Park' located to the East of the school grounds and from across the intervening local river known as the River Skerne.

The photographs below show there has been a large set of temporary school buildings, class-rooms, etc, erected for any necessary demolitions and new construction works to go ahead.



Above: these temporary classrooms, etc, have been built on some overlaid-and built-up ground fill where the original tennis courts were located.



The photograph above, shows the varied types of buildings of both Victorian and later, which, at some point had formed the 'boarding' facility at the time when the school was a private 'girl's only residential and day school.'

This was before time moved on and the school became a further version still, this time as a private co-educational sixth form comprehensive school, then later becoming part of a wider academy group (Woodard Academy Trust). There were various changes as needed at that time and thus, subsequently this further upgrade that Kier is now undertaking.



Above: another view of the school giving a wider reveal of the extensive grounds.

With reference to the new government building accommodating Treasury departments and other government entities, some of the allotted staff are already working in Darlington at another recently newly built facility, on a temporary basis until the dedicated new building is finished.

The construction is taking place upon a piece of land, which has had a varied history from times long ago when the railways were being developed and built. Then, amongst other varied industries and Victorian terrace housing with small traders, tanneries for instance, ground contamination occurred. This land later became a 'pay and display' car park following the closure and demolition of a Ford car dealership and the eventual partial ground site clearance, etc.



Above: the previous site embodying a Ford car and commercial vehicle dealership on the site where the new government treasury office building is rising out of the ground.

Alan says the power station cooling towers in the background are now long gone but they used to be a 'visual' sign that you were nearing home after being away on trips away.



Above: a picture from the local paper circa 1954 showing the site where the Kier project is now underway and a lot of buildings are no longer there. These having been demolished to allow newer construction of an Inner Ring Road, Police and Fire stations and, of course, the Ford Dealership.



Above: this photograph has been taken by Alan from the roof level car park building opposite the site and from this its location relative to the other pictures from local sources.

This lends itself nicely for you to share with your fellow members any sightings of Kier signage/sites while 'out and about.'



Brain health © Google

Can you answer these puzzles correctly? The answers will be revealed in our Spring/Summer issue 51.

Logic puzzle one

The bridge crossing

Four people need to cross a rickety bridge at night with only one flashlight. A maximum of two people can cross at a time, and they must walk at the speed of the slower person. Person A takes one minute, B takes two minutes, C takes five minutes, and D takes 10 minutes. How can they all cross in exactly 17 minutes?

Logic puzzle two

The three switches

You are in a room with three light switches. All are currently off. They control three light bulbs in an adjacent room that you cannot see. You can flip the switches however you like, but you can only enter the bulb room once. How do you figure out which switch controls which bulb?

Logic puzzle three

The two ropes puzzle

You have two ropes, and each takes exactly one hour to burn from end to end. However, the ropes burn at non-uniform rates (meaning half the length does not necessarily burn in 30 minutes). How can you use these two ropes to measure exactly 45 minutes?

Logic puzzle four

The three doors and the car

You are on a game show with three doors (A, B, and C). Behind one door is a brand-new car; behind the other two are goats. You pick door A. The host, who knows what is behind the doors, opens door C to reveal a goat. He then asks you: “Do you want to switch your choice to door B?” Should you switch?

Lateral thinking and riddles

The silent work

What word is pronounced incorrectly by every single English speaker?

The growing asset

What is something that gets wetter the more it dries?

The unique number

What is the only number in the English language that is spelled with letters in alphabetical order?

The heavy elements

Which weighs more: a pound of feathers or a pound of gold?