

KierLink

The magazine for the Kier Fellowship | Issue 49 | Spring/Summer 2026

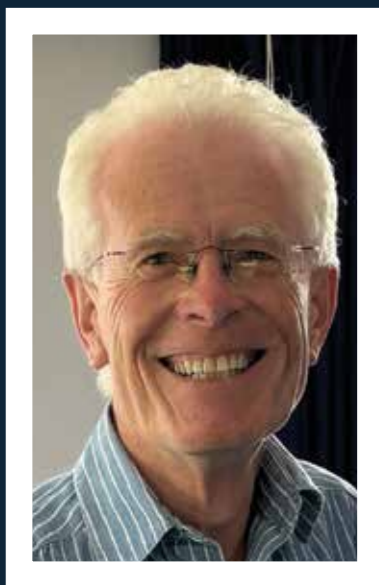


BTO garden spotlight
page 8

The joy of jigsaws
pages 10 to 15

Western Africa
pages 28 to 33

Pictured above: Solent members getting in the spirit for their visit to Jane Austen's House in February 2026



Neil Meixner

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. In particular for the roles of chairperson and administrator, the very people who are writing this.

It is essential that we obtain the services of some people who have more recent connections with Kier as both Brendan (retired nearly 16 years) and Neil (retired nearly 14 years ago) obviously know precious few at the helm of the reinvigorated business.

So, to those who have recently retired, we ask you to consider first whether you could help, if not with the two roles above, then as a general Board member. Secondly, if not, do you know any recent retirees who would fit the bill. Contact details as always are included below.

Of course, we also need to recruit new local helpers in order to keep The Fellowship fresh and vibrant. If you would like to help please do contact your area organiser or one of us. We still need an organiser for the Liverpool/Manchester area and helpers in all other areas are always welcome.

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 addresses below.

Interest in The Fellowship remains high with new members joining since the last issue. We currently have 1,358



Brendan O’Boyle

members compared with 1,339 in September 2025.

We make no apology for reiterating that we need to encourage a new crop of retirees/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 as below.

Please notify us of any change of address, either to your area organiser or Brendan, so that our records can be updated and ensure you continue to receive invitations to events plus copies of KierLink. It is helpful to have any new telephone number and email as well.

Contact emails:

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

Neil and Brendan

the preparation equally which is a very welcome and refreshing change.

You may remember that I hung my first ever wallpaper in the dining room – gosh that was in Autumn 2023! I did not enjoy the experience and was not planning on papering again. However, my husband fancies a ‘striking’ feature wall – in paper.

After collecting roughly 20 samples from B&Q there was only one we both liked but the more I looked at it the more I did not like it enough. Onto Google I went and found this amazing website that has a large selection of ‘wall murals’ and they are ‘striking’ – onto a winner but just have to find one we both like – another challenge!

I will send you photos of the end result in the next issue, assuming we have come to an agreement on the wall mural that is.

I have decided to set a challenge for three of our Leeds members: Sarah Topping, Fiona Steed and Glenda Hamilton – especially Fiona – should they accept it. They all love doing jigsaws puzzles but Fiona says: “...the harder the better.”

Ladies, have you thought of 3D puzzles? Have a look here: <https://www.ravensburger.co.uk>

Perhaps we can have a follow up article in issue 50 displaying your 3D puzzles and whether you enjoyed the challenge?

We have another great issue which I hope you will enjoy reading.

Until the next issue, I wish you all best wishes.

Andrea

Editor’s report

Dear members, I cannot believe we are nearly in June already – how time flies!

I have a new house project – the lounge. It was necessary to have a small section plastered professionally. I was hoping the said plasterer would suggest skimming the rest of the walls but, unfortunately, he seemed to think with a lot of hard graft they would come up ok.

It is usually just me that tackles this time-consuming, monotonous, messy job but to my surprise my husband’s been very hands on! So far, we have shared

Contents

Chairman’s, administrator’s and editor’s reports.....	2 to 3	The joy of jigsaws.....	10 to 15
New members.....	4	Around the regions.....	16 to 27
Message from the Chief Executive.....	5 to 6	Western Africa.....	28 to 33
Obituaries.....	6 to 7	Dan Doherty’s Leeds Journey.....	34 to 36
BTO garden spotlight.....	8	Inspirational quotes from famous people.....	36
Uncanny.....	9		

Copy deadline for issue 50 2026:

Monday 28 September

New members

A warm welcome to the following new members:

Name	City/town	Area	Workd for	Service
Carl Blakeley	Chichester	Solent	Kier Southern	5
Ian Burg	Woodford Green	Loughton	Kier Construction	9
Muhammad Asim Cheema	London	Maidstone	Kier Transportation	3
John Fitzgerald	Dunstable	Maple Cross	Kier London	8
Nikki Fitzgerald	Ely	Waterbeach	NRNN	4
Timothy French	Eaton Ford	Waterbeach	Kier Design	10
Stuart Gatt	Ellesmere	Central	Kier Construction	15
Gary Jeans	Hamstreet	Maidstone	Kier Transportation	30
Michael Johnson	Chester	Leeds	Kier Transportation	8
Michael Jones	Kings Lynn	Loughton	NNRW	18
Joe Jukes	Orpington	Maidstone	Kier Construction	10
Nigel Kew	Kings Lynn	Waterbeach	Kier Construction	40
Craig McAndie	Inverurie	Tempsford	Kier Scotland	7
Keri McEvoy	Burton on Trent	Rushden	NRNN	5
Tom Garnett	Leeds	Leeds	Natural Resources	9
Ian Kendall	Nuneaton	Central	Kier Design	7
Danny Millbery	Potters Bar	Loughton	Kier London	7
Kenneth Munday	Graveley	Tempsford	Kier Ltd	16
Ian Noble	Bristol	Bristol/Newport	Kier Design	8
Nigel Owers	Woking	Maple Cross	Kier Transportation	35
David Pannell	Winchester	Solent	Kier Southern	40
Shannon Park	Rochester	Maidstone	Kier Construction	9
Christopher Pueschel	Bridgnorth	Central	Kier Construction	6
Nigel Spearman	Basingstoke	Solent	Kier KIS	18
Ans Visoiu	Glasgow	Bristol/Newport	NRNN	19
Madeleine Weekes	Braintree	Loughton	Kier London	6
Stephen Whiteside	Mansfield	Leeds	Kier Places	8

Message from the chief executive



Stuart Togwell

Hello everyone, and welcome to the latest KierLink.

Shortly before becoming CEO last year, I wrote to you to share with you my pride in taking on this role, and my vision for helping Kier continue to grow & succeed in its next chapter plus shaping the future of infrastructure.

I have had the privilege of leading Kier for six months and my view has not changed. We have huge amounts of energy & momentum behind us and, to me, some of the greatest engineering minds this country has to offer.

Building on nearly 100 years of technical excellence, pioneering projects and supporting communities across the UK – which many of you have been instrumental in – we have a lot to look forward to.

One of the first things I did when I joined was listen to the organisation. I travelled to sites from Glasgow, to Manchester, to

Bridgwater, to hear from our people. In January, we were voted one of the best places to work in the UK by Glassdoor and, when I spoke to our teams, it was clear they really feel this – from the support they get from their managers, to policies we have in place when they need them, to the technical qualifications we are encouraging them to progress.

Being able to hear their pride is infectious. I feel really strongly that the next chapter of Kier helps us share these stories and what makes Kier unique.

In January, we announced the merger of two of our business divisions into one infrastructure powerhouse, and the feedback to this has been really strong. Customers & investors understand it, and in our chosen sectors we are winning plus delivering great work.

A notable highlight for me was the contract we have secured with STEP Fusion. This really is the first of this



Stuart with Tom Hinton (new CFO) and our team at HMP Glasgow

kind of work in this country. A Kier-led consortium will be delivering a Nottinghamshire plant to investigate fusion energy and its potential use in the UK to make our energy supply more homegrown & resilient. Our work in the nuclear sector was further bolstered by a recent contract to work on Sizewell C which follows over a decade at Hinkley Point C.

Major frameworks announced by the Department for Education and Department for Health & Social Care in recent months will ensure we remain at the heart of healthcare and education delivery across the country over the coming years – including through the greatest single investment in NHS infrastructure in decades. Our roads portfolio also continues to grow, with a place on National Highways’ £968m framework to reconstruct legacy concrete roads across the Strategic Road Network, while a string of AMP8 water framework appointments last year is now translating into contracts with multiple providers.

I am unapologetic in being focused on our customers and I hope this is music to your ears. I want us to offer the best product and ensure that quality matters. Louisa, in her new role as chief operating officer, and James, our new Group commercial director, have a real focus on this.

We continue to have a clear, and vital, focus on health, safety & wellbeing – of our people, our supply chain and everyone we work with. I call it ‘Kier Cares’ as I believe inclusion is at the heart of how we should operate.

Everything we do is still underpinned by strong financial and operational performance. In March, we released

our half-year results to the market which showed a net cash position for the first time in 13 years. This is an incredibly important milestone for the Group. It was announced alongside a record order book of £11.6bn growth in both our revenue and adjusted operated profit plus an increase in our shareholder dividend. In January, Tom (Hinton) joined us as our new CFO and we are already benefitting from his dynamism.



Stuart hosting a listening circle with Kier colleagues in Manchester

There will be much more exciting news to come and I look forward to sharing it with you.

In particular, I am looking forward to meeting Neil and hearing more about The Fellowship over the summer. I hope it will bring discussion and ideas to help us continue to take Kier forward.

Take care

Stuart _____

Obituaries

Beatrice Abbott	22/02/2026
M Alexander	19/11/2025
Rodger Anderson	25/11/2025
Gerald Anthony	20/08/2025
Adebayo Aranmolate	10/09/2025

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

Bridget Aspland	13/12/2025	Brian Horne	07/01/2026
Paul Baker	02/12/2025	G Ingle	26/01/2026
Malcolm Barthorpe	06/12/2025	Jean Jackson	30/10/2025
Roy Bass	09/01/2026	John Jones	04/11/2025
David Beckerley	21/02/2026	Roger Lewendon	09/01/2026
Winifred Brook	05/02/2026	Kenneth McGuinness	04/10/2025
David Browne	05/11/2025	Peter McKenzie	04/01/2026
Jean Brown	14/02/2026	Gillian McSweeney	12/02/2026
Michael Bushnell	10/03/2026	Joan Machan	24/12/2025
John Butterworth	16/10/2025	David Martin	17/02/2026
Joy Cage	21/09/2025	Barbara Melia	07/02/2026
Brian Chester	30/01/2026	Roger Moore	21/11/2025
Gillian Clark	04/12/2025	Avril Mullis	03/03/2026
Paul Curren	25/12/2025	Pamela Noden	06/03/2026
Anne Davies	09/02/2026	David Reynolds	25/01/2026
David Dennett	03/02/2026	Allen Robinson	18/09/2025
Hazel Earle	24/02/2026	James Ross	06/09/2025
Bridget Edkins	14/02/2026	Linda Sandels	29/12/2025
Alan Ellis	01/03/2026	Robert Shipp	13/12/2025
Reginald Emes	31/01/2026	Reginald Smith	05/12/2025
John Fitzgerald	01/12/2025	Rosaleen Spofforth	24/01/2026
David Foreman	19/08/2025	John Stafford	17/09/2025
John Freeman	10/01/2026	Yvonne Stokes	25/02/2026
Kavan Graney	20/11/2025	Margaret Sturdy	28/01/2026
Margaret Green	05/02/2026	Aleksandra Tecza	04/09/2025
Robert Greene	24/12/2025	John Telfer	30/01/2026
Barbara Grinling	24/02/2026	Mary Thompson	11/11/2025
Judith Hall	31/12/2025	Alan Threlfall	31/01/2026
David Heinzelmann	08/11/2025	Heather White	18/01/2026
Patrick Hill	18/12/2025	Maurice Williams	09/03/2026
Pauline Hill	10/09/2025	Pui Wong	02/02/2026
Peter Hills	02/01/2026	Margaret Wright	14/09/2025

BTO garden spotlight

Many members will have taken part in RSPB's January 'Big Garden Birdwatch' but may not be aware that The British Trust for Ornithology runs a similar weekly scheme, 'Garden Birdwatch.' David Priddis, area organiser for Bristol and South Wales, and his wife Sheila, have been keeping weekly records of birds and other wildlife in their garden for the last 23 years. Their garden was featured in the winter edition of BTO's quarterly magazine, 'Bird Table'. For more information go to: <http://www.bto.org/gbw> or email: gbw@bto.org and ask for membership details. This issue, we talk to David Priddis, who has lived in West Gloucestershire with his wife and family for over 40 years. Here he shares with us details about his garden, and some of his wildlife highlights.

Please tell us about your garden

Our garden covers about one acre but has an irregular shape with approximately 500m of boundary, made up of about 30 species of mixed native field hedges but some conifer. There are a mature oak and ash as well as a small old orchard. The lawns that cover most of the garden have large quantities of wildflowers, including Primroses, >2,000 Cowslips, >100 Common Spotted Orchids and a few Twayblade, Knapweed & Ox-eye Daises. We also have three ponds, one with no fish, just for wildlife.

Which species give you the most pleasure?

I enjoy recording and photographing all wildlife, especially birds and have recorded such since 2003. It is always good when birds nest in the garden and although the Tree Sparrows which were present 40 years ago have gone from the area, we still have Stock Dove, Jackdaw, Tits, Nuthatch, Honey Bees and sometimes Hornets using the bird boxes. I also record mammals, amphibians, butterflies and hoverflies.



Roe Deer

What unusual sightings have you had?

We have had sightings of rare Hawfinch, most winters, for many years. One-off past sightings include a Kingfisher in the apple tree by a small pond outside the kitchen window and a Shelduck leading a line of 12 newly hatched ducklings through our orchard!

Amongst mammals, it is always good to occasionally see a Stoat, and although we have lost our Hedgehogs, we have gained sightings of Badger, Polecat and Roe Deer.

It is amazing what is there if you really look for it. Thanks to the local county spider recorder, 78 species of spider have been identified in our garden, some of them nationally scarce! When clearing out some accumulated silt from a 2m diameter pond, I was amazed to rescue and return to the pond 62 Dragonfly Nymphs! I have recorded Golden-ringed Dragonfly and Beautiful Demoiselle (unusual for gardens) and have seen Southern Hawkers laying eggs in the pond.



Hawfinch

Mike Toms, Head of Communications, British Trust for Ornithology

Uncanny...

As Victor Meldrew would have said: "I do not believe it!"

You could not make this up! My husband Andy, a retired brewer, undertakes a little consultancy work from time to time assessing brewing apprentices which can take him all over the UK. He was stopping overnight in Barton under Needwood, Burton on Trent.

He happened to be in the bar and got chatting to a man there about 'this and that,' with Andy explaining why he was there. The man then went on to talk about his career and told Andy that he had worked for Kier. Not only that, he had appeared in the last edition of KierLink!

Andy then went on to tell him that I too had worked for Kier and said that I still had some involvement with Kier and the KierLink magazine. The man told Andy the page number in KierLink, page number 14, that he appeared on and said he was third from the left on the photograph (circled in red).

Having told this to me over the phone that evening, I had the KierLink magazine open at page 14 for him to have a look at on his return home and Andy pointed out the man who he had been in conversation with. I then contacted David Priddis to relay this extraordinary exchange, and David told me that the member's name was Denis (one L) Lawler who now lives in Bristol but hales from 'The Emerald Isle'.



Third from left: Denis Lawler

Finally, many thanks to David for his help with this article.

Glenda Hamilton

The joy of jigsaws by Glenda Hamilton

As area organiser for the Leeds section of the Kier Fellowship, I am very keen that our area continues to contribute to the KierLink and I keep 'sowing seeds' to members to 'have a think' about how they could do this. To-date, we have had two super articles featured: one from Jimmy Empson, the other from David Hicks. The former about his hobby, the latter about working for Kier. In addition, we now also have our own regular contribution from Frank Heleniak which is fabulous and provides some amazing and interesting facts.

I know one of our members is working on an article but as it would not be ready for this edition, I decided to contribute an article on jigsaws – something that my friend and fellow member, Sarah Topping, and I enjoy. I also knew that another of our member's, Fiona Steed, does as well. I contacted Sarah and Fiona and asked if they would be willing to contribute to this article and they were happy to do so.

Sarah's jigsaw journey

When my friend used to ask me if I liked jigsaws, it was an immediate 'no' – they just did not interest me, and I thought they were for older people! Fast forward to the end of 2024 and my friend bought me a jigsaw for Christmas. My first reaction was 'absolute confusion' as my friend knew I did not like them. However, at that time I had a lot of 'time' on my hands, and she thought doing a jigsaw would help me.

Chatting to another friend about this conundrum, she said that I would 'never start it, never mind finish it' because I did not have the patience – and she was not wrong on this point. However, this was like a 'red rag to a bull' and I thought 'just you watch me.' I started it, it took me ages, but

I persevered and completed my first ever 500-piece jigsaw puzzle and I was hooked. Since then, I have done lots more and currently have another seven lined up to do, a mix of 500 and 1,000 pieces.

My hardest jigsaw was the London Underground tube map. I did nearly give up on this one. It was extremely hard, but my niece helped me keep going and eventually I completed it. I even had to invest in reading glasses and a magnifying glass as the writing was so small.



London Underground: 1,000-piece jigsaw completed

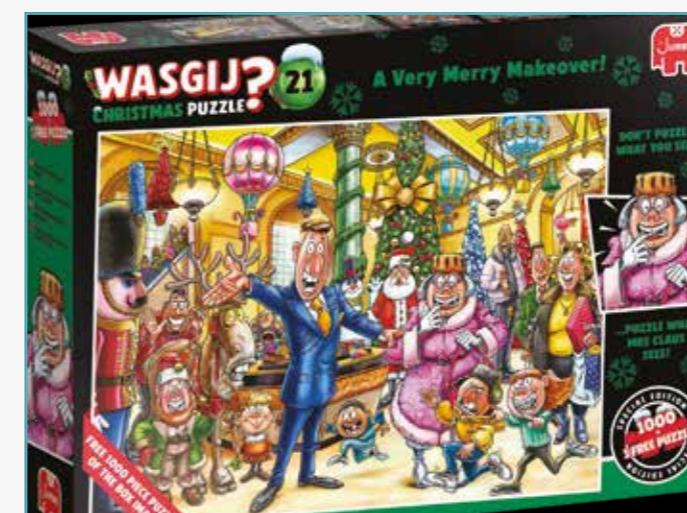
Unfortunately, I broke my ankle in December last year and having jigsaws to do really helped my mental health while I was 'out of action.' For me, the positives of doing jigsaws are plentiful. They give me something to focus on, keep me off my phone and help pass a few hours in the blink of an eye.

Fiona's 'Wasjig' challenge

When Glenda contacted me to contribute to her article on jigsaws, I was more than delighted to do so as I love jigsaw puzzles, the harder the better. That is why I like the 'Wasjig' puzzles so much. I like to buy my

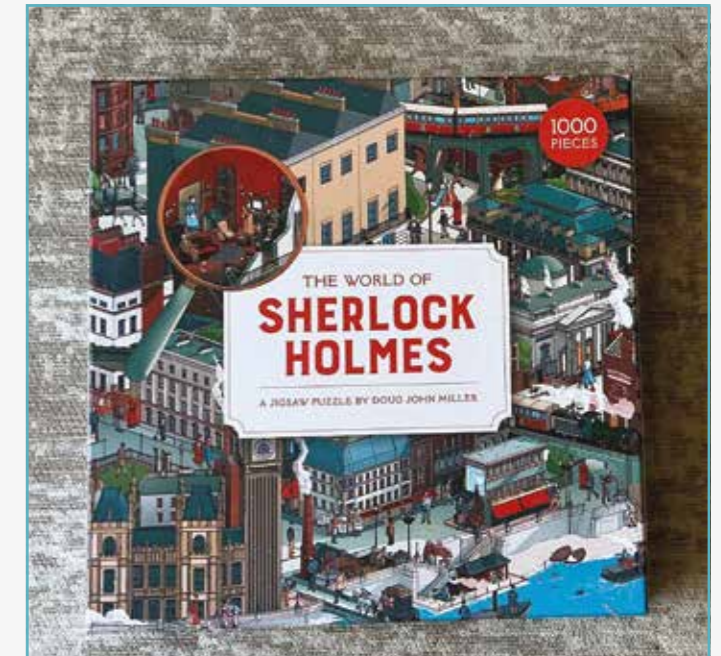
puzzles from the charity shops, and I get quite excited when I spot one. I can spend three or four hours at a time rummaging through the pieces looking for matching patterns and colours. There is quite a sense of achievement when they are completed, which can be four or five days after starting.

The scenes you have to recreate are always manic and very colourful. Plus, you have to build the picture using your own imagination because you are not given a picture to follow. The box in which the puzzle pieces come do have a cartoon picture on them but they are not the picture you are trying to create. For example, I recently completed a Christmas edition where the picture on the box was of an audience, seated in rows, intently watching... something! The completed puzzle showed a group of children on stage in various different fancy dress (Christmas pudding, Christmas tree, fairy, reindeer, elves... you get the idea) together with members of staff. Well, whatever the performance should have been was going badly wrong and members of staff were manically trying (as only cartoon characters can) to stop the scenery falling onto the children. Very comical.



Wasjig 21: a very merry Christmas

My favourite jigsaws – Laurence King and 1,000 pieces



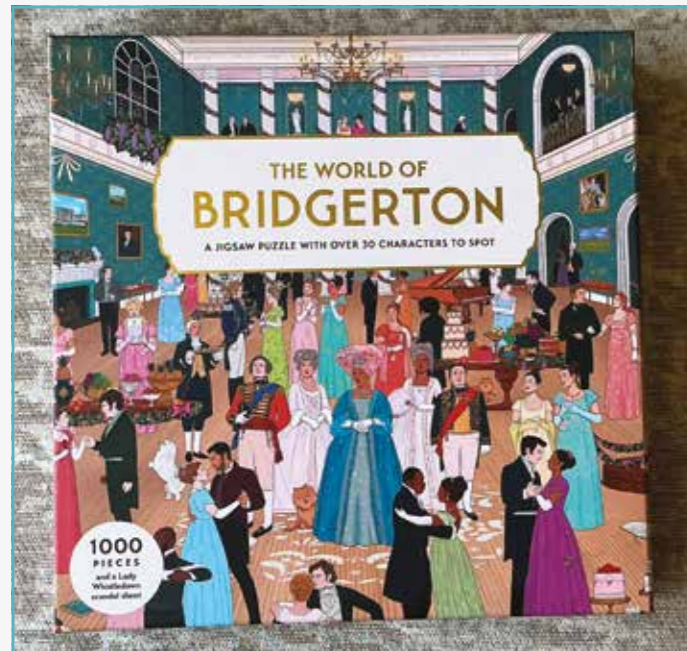
The World of Sherlock Holmes: 1,000-piece jigsaw

For as long as I can remember I have loved doing a jigsaw puzzle. When I was a lot younger, I used to time how long it would take me to do a puzzle and then piece them together again to see if I could better my time! Sounds crazy now but on doing a little research on jigsaws for this article, I learnt that there are speed puzzling competitions. When I start a jigsaw, it can become all consuming. After saying to myself, I will just spend another half an hour on a puzzle, I can still be puzzling an hour or more later!

My favourite jigsaws are 1,000-piece puzzles, and I enjoy completing Laurence King puzzles, particularly those which are part of a themed series called 'The World of'. I have a number of these, namely, The World of Agatha Christie, The World of Miss Marple, The World of Shakespeare, The World of Jane Austen, The World of Maya Angelou, The World of Sherlock Holmes, and The World of Bridgerton. The puzzles are beautifully illustrated and of excellent

The joy of jigsaws continued

quality with the pieces locking into place easily.



The World of Bridgerton: 1,000-piece jigsaw

Each puzzle offers a unique challenge and adds to the sense of accomplishment. A bonus is the double-sided poster contained within the box – one side shows the completed image, while the other offers interesting facts and details related to the puzzle theme, making the whole experience even more engaging. When completed, I really do not want to break them up. There is a sense of achievement when the pieces gradually form the image on the box – unless, of course, you are doing one of Fiona's favourite jigsaws – the 'Wasjig.'

I always start completing my jigsaws by doing the outside first having separated all the outside pieces from the rest of the pieces. I then sift through the remaining pieces and separate according to colour and place them in my stackable jigsaw sorter trays and then I am ready to start.

Sarah and I are searching for an all-in-one jigsaw puzzle table with sorting drawers built in that is not too expensive.

One of my friends bought me a beautiful jigsaw called 'African Savannah' for Christmas from a brand I had never heard of called 'The Original Jigsaw Company.' A brother and sister, James and Rachel, design and illustrate their jigsaws and they like 'bringing people together.' The story of why they formed the company brings back many happy memories for me as they say that there was always a jigsaw in their house and it was always put together by their family. This resonated with me as it was very much like that in our house. There would be a jigsaw on the table, and my mum and dad would always hover by and pick up a piece or two to try and fit into place.

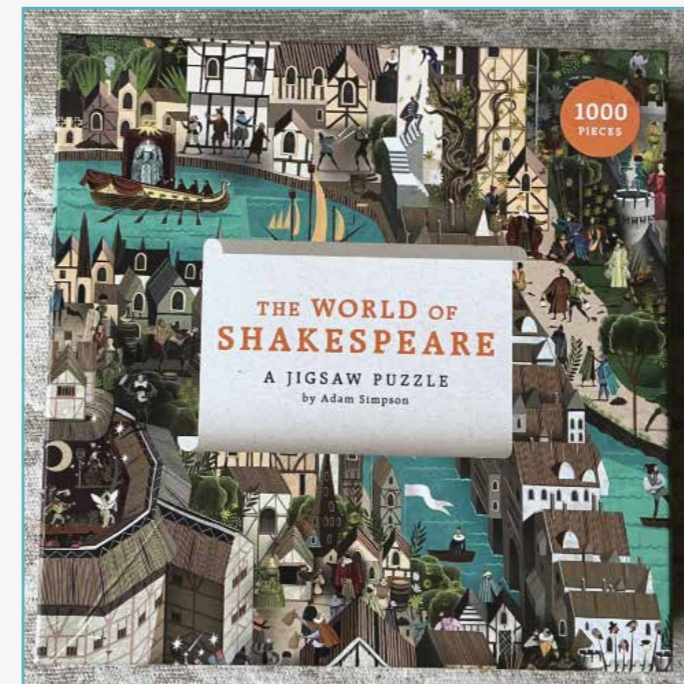


The Original Jigsaw Company, African Savannah: 1,000-piece jigsaw

Some may say that jigsaws are a 'waste of time' but some say that 'golf is a good walk spoilt' and I am sure that the golfers reading this will totally disagree. The most important thing is to enjoy doing them which Sarah, Fiona and I obviously

do. All puzzles demand patience and persistence, but the reward on seeing your completed jigsaw makes it all worthwhile.

Jigsaws can be extremely expensive but, as Fiona mentioned, you can pick them up at charity shops, pre-owned sites, attend jigsaw sales/fairs or do swaps. Sarah recently learnt of a jigsaw swap held monthly in a local pub. She attended this with one of her friends who also enjoys jigsaws and she swapped four. If there is sufficient interest within our Fellowship group, we may well introduce a jigsaw swap when we meet up at our lunch events remembering it is Wasjigs only for Fiona though!

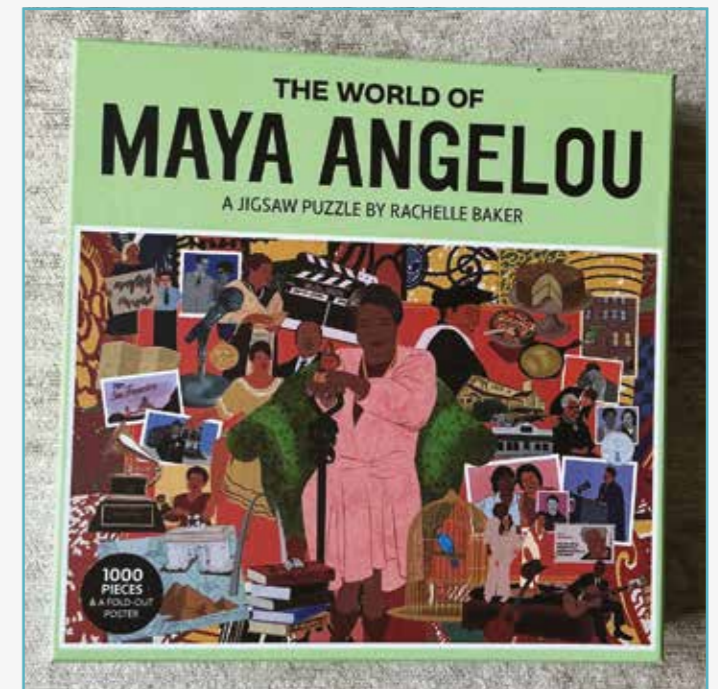


The World of Shakespeare: 1,000-piece jigsaw

Community involvement – attending a jigsaw fair

There really is something satisfying about piecing together a jigsaw, watching the picture appear bit by bit, and now for Sarah and I 'community involvement.'

In September last year, Sarah and I attended a jigsaw fair of new and pre-



The World of Maya Angelou: 1,000-piece jigsaw

owned jigsaw puzzles organised by the local scout's group to raise funds for their group. It was buzzing with puzzle enthusiasts of all ages. Two rooms and rows of tables displayed made up jigsaws. On buying a jigsaw, the jigsaws were broken up and re-boxed so you were guaranteed a puzzle had no missing pieces, which is extremely frustrating when it happens. We enjoyed chatting with fellow puzzlers, picking out new jigsaws, and supporting the Scouts through our purchases of which there were many as they were priced extremely competitively and Sarah spoilt me by treating me to some. In all, I took home 15! Some of these were 'The World of' jigsaws which can retail from £15 to £20 per jigsaw. My purchases were three jigsaws for £10 – an absolute bargain – or giveaway!

Volunteering for the jigsaw fair

Inspired by the fair's friendly atmosphere and its fundraising purpose, Sarah and I decided to volunteer for the 2026 event. Our task was to assemble jigsaws so they

The joy of jigsaws continued

could be sold complete at the next fair. We thought we would have plenty of time to work through the puzzles we would be given, but there was a twist. The organisers decided to bring the event forward, meaning preparations had to be ramped up sooner than expected for Saturday 25 April.

Busy with jigsaws

We have both been busier than ever piecing together puzzles. Sarah piecing together 500-piece jigsaws, with my focus on the 1,000-piece ones. There has been pressure on us to complete them, and what we did not know when we collected the jigsaws was whether they had all the pieces. Fortunately, they did.



1980's Sweet Memories: 1,000-piece jigsaw completed

One of the jigsaws Sarah completed for the fair was a 1970s sweet themed 1,000-piece puzzle and we went through the sweet treats that we remembered, or are still in existence today, but look slightly different.

The history of jigsaws

British born, John Spilsbury, a cartographer and engraver, was the person who invented jigsaws, in 1762 or 1767 (the date is not clear) which were initially described



Peter Pauper called Wonderland: 1,000-piece jigsaw completed

as 'dissected maps.' He fixed a wooden map onto wood and cut this into pieces along national boundaries, creating an educational tool to teach geography. These 'dissected maps' became popular in British schools/households and became the foundation for jigsaw puzzles.



AA Map Collection: 1,000-piece jigsaw completed

Over time the puzzles evolved, with cardboard replacing wood, which made them more affordable. By the early 20th century, jigsaws had become a popular

pastime for adults and children as they provided inexpensive entertainment.

There was a boom in puzzle making in the 1930s. Manufacturers, such as the well-known brand Ravensburger, introduced themed puzzles which led to further interest in puzzles.

For those interested in learning more detail about the history of the jigsaw puzzle, look at Wentworthpuzzles.com – it really is quite fascinating.

Why people love jigsaws

Jigsaw puzzles stimulate the mind and provide a satisfying sense of achievement. Solving a puzzle requires attention to detail, spatial reasoning, perseverance and patience. Some puzzlers say they help de-stress. I am not sure Sarah would agree with this although she does say that sometimes she has to walk away from them when she starts to find them too frustrating.

Famous jigsaw puzzlers

I had read that Mary Berry and Twiggy enjoyed doing a jigsaw but decided to find out which other well-known people do. Here is a selection:

- The late monarch, Queen Elizabeth II
- Stephen Fry: The British actor, comedian and writer
- Hugh Jackman: The Australian actor
- Bill Gates: The tech billionaire and philanthropist
- Ronny Wood: A member of the Rolling Stones.

Who knew?

- There is a UK Nationals Puzzle Championship (Bradford). This is hosted by the UK Jigsaw Puzzle Association (UKJPA) and is the premier speed-puzzling event in the country.

Categories include solo, pairs and team categories

- Gibsons sponsor the Open Jigsaw Championship (Newmarket). There are several categories – fun, pairs and elites (high speed)
- There is a UKJPA Speed Puzzle Competition in Cardiff that is sponsored by Ravensburger
- The speed record for doing a 1,000-piece puzzle is held by Sarah... no not Topping, but Sarah Mills from the UK. Sarah completed her jigsaw in one hour 52 minutes at the 2023 British jigsaw championship
- A Dissectologist is the official historical term for a person who enjoys, assembles, or collects jigsaw puzzles
- There is a Benevolent Confraternity of Dissectologists – a club for jigsaw puzzle enthusiasts.
- During the COVID pandemic there was an increase in the popularity of jigsaws
- It is estimated that £24m worth of jigsaws were sold in the UK during 2022
- The Yorkshire Jigsaw Store started business in 2014 with 100 puzzle titles. They now have over 2,500 puzzle titles
- The most popular format is the 1,000-piece jigsaw
- The term 'jigsaw' comes from the name of the saw called a 'jigsaw' that was later used to cut the pieces, having previously been cut by hand.

In conversation with Andrea McDaid, the editor of KierLink, her sister completed a 1,000-piece puzzle in a day.

I hope this article has sparked some interest and the number of 'Dissectologists' increases within The Fellowship.

Glenda Hamilton

Around the regions

Bristol/Newport

We have held two very successful lunches for our numerically small but geographically spread out area – a Christmas lunch with 31 attending and also one in late March with a surprise 33.



Above: Christmas lunch at the Old Barn Inn

Both were held at the Old Barn Inn, Llanmartin, near Newport. This friendly inn is easily accessible from the M4 motorway and is about mid-way between Bristol and Cardiff. Despite this, members travelled over 700 miles between them for each meal! As usual, we were well looked after and the food was excellent.

It has been good to welcome a few newer members. In March several younger members 'were volunteered' for our committee to help our area organiser who has arranged nearly all the last 50 events! At Christmas, we were pleased to also welcome our current Kier Building contact, Steve Griffiths and the directors' PA, Nikki McEvoy.

We hope to hold some visits to stately homes, or other functions, during the summer.

David Priddis



Above: lunch at the Old Barn Inn in March

Central

Once again, our annual Christmas lunch at Lilleybrook Golf Club, Cheltenham, was the highlight of our 2025 events year. It was great to see so many old friends and colleagues, and the



Christmas lunch

catering team did us proud. Unanimous good feedback on the day prompted us to book again for next December.

Our 2026 events year started with a planning meeting at the Beckford Inn near Evesham. It was supported by 20 members



Christmas lunch

and, after an enjoyable lunch, the group came up with an interesting collection of days out to enjoy through the year. Richard Collin volunteered to manage these onto the Kier Fellowship website events calendar which I recommend you visit and put them all into your diaries. You'll find them at www.kier.co.uk/who-we-are/kier-fellowship/

The Newbury lunch club continues to be popular, with the 12 who met in February now also planning to organise a trip to Newbury Races again in August. The next lunch

club meeting was held on 19 May 2026.

With the winter weather returning, we were glad that the next of our events was indoors at The Gupshill, Tewkesbury, with a fun quiz organised by John and Judy Blagg following lunch.



Christmas lunch

Further upcoming events include Sheila Heath's popular garden party in the Forest of Dean in June, and a chance to try lawn bowls with a taster session at Tewkesbury Bowling Club in July.

Robin Butler

Devon/Cornwall

Since the last edition our area has enjoyed two events as detailed below.

Christmas lunch: December 2025

Once again, the Boringdon Park Golf Club was the venue for our Christmas lunch where a number of members and guests had a delicious festive lunch and enjoyed the company of friends and ex-colleagues.



Christmas lunch at Boringdon Park Golf Club

Spring lunch: March 2026

We met at our usual venue, The Marsh Mill Beefeater, where 20 of us enjoyed lunch with plenty of laughter and friendly banter.

Our next get-together will be in September and our Christmas lunch will once again be booked at Boringdon Park Golf Club – dates to be confirmed.

Shirley Riddle



Spring lunch at The Marsh Mill

Leeds

Since my last report, I organised a lunch which was held on 19 October 2025 at the Bridge Hotel and Spa, Walshford, which is a favoured venue. Unfortunately, due to a mix-up about the room that we use, we were unable to go ahead with the lunch planned for 7 December. Obviously, this was a disappointment, particularly to those members who had been unable to attend in October.



Group photograph: at the time the photograph was taken sadly, member Gordon Reid, had left – we'll get you next time Gordon!

Twenty-six members attended the lunch in October which is now the largest number of attendees since I have been area organiser. Dan Doherty, managing director, Northern and Scotland, joined us for lunch accompanied by his wife, Patricia. We also had new members join us who thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Once again, the lunch was a success with conversation flowing and plenty of laughter. Sarah Topping went around the room and tallied up the years' service of members, 492! Yes, you read that right. That is the number of years given to Kier!



The room layout

Our next lunch will be held on Sunday 24 May. After a discussion with Dan, I have invited those members of Kier who have achieved 25 years' service to this lunch and the invite has been warmly welcomed. We thought this may be a means to encourage colleagues to join The Fellowship at the appropriate time.

While Dan's offer to visit Leeds Town Hall and the Rotherham Valley site was warmly welcomed and appreciated, unfortunately it did not receive any take-up.

Our active membership currently stands at 49 which is an increase on last year. Since the last edition of KierLink, sadly I must report the death of one of our members, Andy Ellis.

Comments about our articles in the KierLink are being received. David Hicks really appreciated his story about his



Our raffle prizes

time at Ferrybridge Power Station being published.

Glenda Hamilton

Frank's corner



- No number before a 1,000 contains the letter A
- Australia is wider than the moon
- A cloud typically weighs around a million tonnes
- The largest piece of fossilised poo discovered is 300mm long and over two litres in volume
- All the world's bacteria stacked on top of each other would stretch for 10 million light years
- The fear of long words is 36 letters long: hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliop
- Chainsaws were first invented for childbirth – bet it was a man!
- Wind turbines kill between 10,000 and 100,000 birds each year in the UK. Interestingly painting one of the bases black can reduce bird deaths by 70%
- You can't fold A4 paper more than eight times
- The biggest butterfly in the world has a 31cm wingspan – it belongs to the Queen Alexandra's birdwing
- The world record for holding your breath under water is 25.5 minutes.

Frank Heleniak

Loughton/Witham

Bowls/lunch, Writtle: 11 September 2025



Members enjoying the superb lunch provided by the Bowls Club ladies

We returned to Writtle Bowling Club for our late summer bowling and lunch. Twenty members and guests attended and had a delightful day. We followed our usual pattern of arriving for coffee, a little session of lawn bowls, lunch (excellent as always) and then some more bowls in the afternoon. We were expertly coached by a few of the club members who were encouraging and supportive despite our mixed efforts.



Happy Birthday to John Jones

Returning to the club house our afternoon tea was interrupted by a rousing chorus of 'Happy Birthday' as we celebrated a special birthday for John Jones. John, who is a long-standing member of The Fellowship and a member of Writtle Bowls Club, made the initial introduction for us to use the club for these excellent days.

John Abbott

RAF Biggin Hill: 15 October 2025

Nineteen members made an early start from Loughton to visit RAF Biggin Hill Museum, Remembrance Garden and Chapel, Kent.

We were met by John Callaghan, a retired safety officer for Kier London who is now a volunteer guide at Biggin Hill, together with Margaret, Verger of The Chapel.



In the Chapel

The museum and chapel tell the story of RAF Biggin Hill through the personal experiences of those who served there and the community who supported them.

The museum journey began over a 100 years ago when Biggin Hill was just farmland. Its high altitude and strategically important location between London and continental Europe destined it to become the most important airfield of the Battle of Britain, laying the foundation for the European landscape as we know it today. One of Britain's oldest aerodromes,

RAF Biggin Hill is still internationally recognised as Sir Winston Churchill's strongest link.



John Callaghan addressing the group at Biggin Hill

Margaret gave history details as we toured the Remembrance Garden and Chapel. The Chapel was built and dedicated in 1951, replacing the first station church. The present Chapel retains some of its original internal appearances from the original church and has an atmosphere of great tranquillity and peace. It is more ornately furnished, and has exceptional fine stained-glass windows, designed by Hugh Easton, as well as a number of interesting artefacts.

The Chapel has regular services held on Battle of Britain Sunday and Remembrance Sunday. All the airmen killed or missing in action while operating from Biggin Hill during WWII are commemorated by name on either side of the Altar.

In the Chapel, John Callaghan gave a very detailed talk, assisted by slides of the action undertaken during the WWII, Battle of Britain at Biggin Hill, listed as follows:

- Defences anti-aircraft guns
- Defences barrage balloons
- Barrage balloons memorable in the grounds of Biggin Hill
- Defence aircraft and effectiveness

- Casualties recorded in The Book of Remembrance at Biggin Hill
- Facts and figures during Battle of Britain.

We then had an excellent lunch laid on by the catering staff of Biggin Hill. They provided a lovely enjoyable array of food in a very pleasant private room. Everyone praised the staff, John and Margaret, for making us so welcome.

To conclude our visit, John Callaghan gave us a tour of The Biggin Hill Memorial Museum explaining the rich history and the communities who made it possible. The museum collection displays focus on the human experiences of war.

Overall, everyone thoroughly enjoyed the visit, and we returned to Loughton weary but safely by our excellent coach driver.

Chris Oats

Christmas lunch: 11 December 2025

Thirty-six members assembled at Mulberry House, Ongar, for our Christmas lunch. Members and their guests enjoyed a welcome drink followed by a three-course meal with wine followed by coffee and petit fours. As is always the case at Mulberry House the room was decorated nicely for Christmas, the food was excellent and the staff attentive.



Carol presenting Geoff with a token of appreciation for his long service to The Fellowship at the Christmas lunch

At the end of the meal, Carol Abbott presented Geoff Brown with a card and a small token of appreciation for his years as area organiser for our region. Geoff is stepping down as area organiser after more than 20 years. We are looking for someone to take over the role so please let us know if you are interested.

Lunch with a speaker: 26 March 2026



Bill delivering his excellent reminisces

We returned to Mulberry House for lunch. This time there were 27 of us and we enjoyed an excellent set menu three-course meal followed by tea and coffee. The highlight of the afternoon was, undoubtedly, our speaker, Mr. Bill Hamilton. Bill, a proud Scot, moved to

Solent

English Heritage: October 2025

This fascinating English Heritage site, which sits between Fareham and Portsmouth and overlooks Portsmouth harbour, has been a Roman fortress, a Norman stronghold and even a prisoner of war camp during the Napoleonic Wars. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a Grade I listed building. A Norman church, St. Mary's, is situated in the southeast corner of the grounds.



I-r: Derek Ward, three staff members, John Gains and Anne Gains



Members enjoying a marvellous talk from Bill after a superb lunch

London in 1979 and served successively as Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Special Correspondent with BBC Television News.

He spoke eloquently, entertainingly and with passion about his career which started as a junior reporter on the Fife Herald. He covered such events as the assassination of Airey Neave at the Palace of Westminster in 1979 to meeting Mother Theresa in Albania in the early 1990s. Bill was awarded the 'Order of Mother Teresa', Albania's highest civilian award for his work to relieve the plight of neglected children under the Stalinist regime.

John Abbott

On 1 October, four members visited Portchester Castle. As the castle is 'open to the elements' we were grateful for a dry day after much recent rain. We set forth to discover 2,000 years of history but not before taking a photo with three appropriately dressed staff members. The castle is a rugged structure built over three floors. The climb to the roof parapet was well worth it as it afforded spectacular views over the grounds and the Solent. Our morning endeavours were concluded with a much deserved cup of coffee.



On the site



View of the Solent

Peter Wallbank

January lunch: January 2026



Golf club

Once again, members met at the Hayling Island Golf Club for their annual January lunch, attended this year by 27 members. As usual the food and companionship were good and although the weather wasn't as kind as it has been previously, the views over the Solent were still worth seeing.

Derek Ward

Jane Austen's House: February 2026

Jane Austen's House is a cherished museum in Chawton, Hampshire, where the beloved author lived for the last eight years of her life. It houses an unparalleled collection of Austen treasures. Highlights include Jane's jewellery, letters, first editions of her novels and the table at which she wrote her much loved novels. Visitors can step back in time to 1816 and follow in Jane's footsteps as they explore the rooms where she lived and wrote. A series of temporary exhibitions explore Regency life and Jane Austen's works. The pretty garden is a perfect place to relax after your visit.



Jane's house



Jane's writing table

On a bright and thankfully dry February day, eight of us assembled to tour this fascinating museum. As you can see, we dressed for the occasion!



l-r: Joan Murray, Ellie Mackie, Mary Lamb, Alan Lamb, Gary Mackie, Derek Ward and Paul Murray

Even in February there were a good number of visitors but nothing compared to last year which commemorated the 250th anniversary of her birth. The house where Jane and her sisters lived, although not large, was of a comfortable size allowing them free space to undertake their daily chores and leisure time. A much slower pace of life in those days.

The table on which Jane wrote her novels was very small as was her very neat writing. The only minor setback of our day was a visit to the pub for lunch which did not serve food on a Tuesday. A sad reflection of the tough times publicans are going through even in popular places.

Peter Wallbank

New Forest Walk: April 2026



New Forest ponies

Eight members met at Piper's Wait car park, Nomansland in the New Forest, for a gentle walk through this varied area.

The route passed through marvellously varied landscapes starting in open heathland before passing through woodland just waking up after a long and wet winter. We then arrived at Eyeworth Mill Pond, a small pond created in the mid-19th century to provide water for the nearby gunpowder factory, now long gone. The pond is now a favoured spot for ornithologists – in fact, we heard an early cuckoo near the pond.

During the walk, and depending on the season, it is possible to see various species of New Forest wildlife. Varied landscapes usually mean varied habitats which in turn often provide homes for a huge range of wildlife with heathland birds such as Linnets, Stonechats and Dartford Warblers, Woodpeckers, Nuthatches and other woodland denizens along with Roe Deer, Fallow Deer and, of course, New Forest Ponies.

As we returned to the car park, all were thinking of the reward of a well-earned drink and lunch at the nearby Lamb Inn.



The eight members on their walk

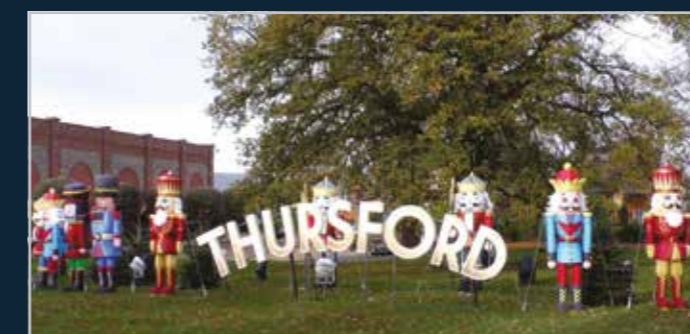
Derek Ward

Tempsford



Entrance to Thursford

The highlight of our schedule since the last report was undoubtedly the Thursford Christmas Spectacular – the annual show in Norfolk which we attended on 20 November.



Entrance to Thursford

Twenty of us travelled from St. Neots in lovely, sunny weather, stopping on the way for a quick, pre-booked lunch at The Running Horse Inn, Fakenham, before arriving in Thursford in good time prior to the show starting at 14:00 hours.

While photography is banned during performances, it is permitted inside the theatre (which also houses a traction engine museum) before and after.



Thursford theatre

It is many years since we last saw the show and it did not disappoint. Three hours of almost non-stop entertainment; singing, dancing, acrobatics, comedy, all to a very high standard and good, clean



Thursford steam train

family fun. After the performance we returned to The Running Horse for our pre-booked evening meal before returning to St. Neots.



Above: our evening meal at The Running Horse

We encountered an unexpected road closure of a section of the A14 on the way back but Ron Gulliver's local knowledge guided the coach driver and we arrived back ahead of time. Thanks to Jane Gulliver for arranging this event.

Our Christmas lunch was again held at Pavenham Park Golf Club, this time on 11 December. Our usual mix of good food and company with a table quiz arranged by John Busby & a raffle organised by Viv Chesterfield, meant that we all had a good time.



Above: Tempsford members

The raffle made £130 which was donated to AgeUK Bedford.



Above: Christmas raffle

In October and November, we had lunches at The Park Pub, Bedford, and The Anchor, Great Barford, respectively with an informative talk by a volunteer from Old Warden aircraft museum, on the Special Operations Executive activities from Tempsford during WWII. We have had two lovely lunches in 2026 – a return to The Barley Mow, St. Neots, and The Mermaid, Ellington, near Grafham Water.

We are planning three day trips this year: a visit to Bletchley Park – home of the WWII code breaking team; a cruise on the Grand Union Canal and, in the absence of a National Garden party, a joint one with Rushden area at the Stanwick Hotel, Northamptonshire. All our events are listed on the Fellowship calendar page of the Kier website.

Harold Thompson

Waterbeach

The Waterbeach area is still seeing a steady growth in member numbers driven mainly through recent retirement of long serving individuals.

Our Christmas lunch was held at Crown Lodge, Outwell near Wisbech, on 10 December 2025. We had 49 attendees which is possibly the most we have ever had for such an event.

A very pleasant time was had by all with plenty of chatting and reminiscing to complement the food and drink.

We have already booked, what is becoming a regular event, a summer afternoon tea and our next Christmas lunch is already booked in December.

Mark Jude



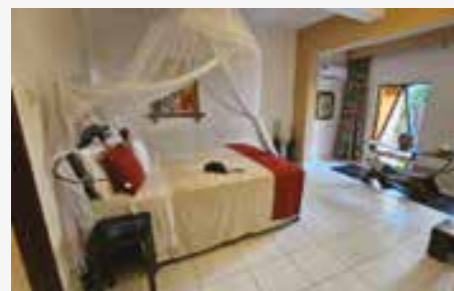
Above: Christmas lunch at the Crown Lodge, Outwell

Western Africa

A memorable journey by Jeff Taylor

My wife Shirley died in September 2025 and in her final year she expressed a wish that she could travel to The Gambia just one more time. We had last been for my birthday in 2016 and had been twice before that birdwatching with Chris Packham which was a magical experience.

So here I was in 2026 having booked with 'The Gambia Experience' to revisit on my birthday in January to walk the same paths we had done 10 years before. I had also booked a trip to Senegal, just over the border, as I needed to keep moving. Being on my own abroad with no goal was a lonely experience.



Bedroom at Ngala Lodge

I started my journey at Ngala Lodge which was child free and had a quiet sophisticated feel about it. I had a suite which was 12 steps from the nearest pool from the gate of my private

garden so I swam every day, except the last, after the pool turned green. I think something had failed on the filtration system and the pool guy even drank some of the water to 'prove' it was safe but there were no takers. The other pools were fine!



The deck by the Atlantic

Sitting on the deck by the ocean was calming and I found time to start painting again which was relaxing.



Lunch at Ngala Lodge

The food produced by a French chef was superb, lovely flavours and well presented. The staff were always on hand to help and chat whenever required. I got to talk to many of the other guests

and one couple even gave me a card for my birthday which was a lovely gesture.



Blue-breasted Kingfisher

On my last full day, I booked a kayak trip to do some birdwatching. This was lovely, going up and down the river in near silence allowed us to see the birds up close. There was also a short walking tour to see the plants surviving on the salt flats, mainly mangrove. They also fed fish by hand which was interesting.

The journey to Senegal started at 07:00 hours with a guide driving me to the ferry port. He then passed me on to another colleague whose job was to get me on the ferry and deliver me safely to a third guide for the trip to the Fathala game reserve.

The port was what I would imagine is typical in Africa, slightly organised chaos. The ferry was a roll-on/off



The ferry crossing - leaving Banjul

type, however I was told that the landside ramps stopped dropping many years before. Their solution was for the first vehicle in the queue to drive up the ramp, which was at about a 30 degree angle, the weight of which made the ramp come down. The first vehicle was a transit type fully loaded. He took a run at the ramp and with much smoke from the tyres came to a halt part way up. The rear doors opened and half his load slid out! It took a while to clear the containers, of what appeared to be cooking oil, so he could get out of the way. Then they got a government four by four to drive up the ramp to the top and it finally came down. Unfortunately, no photos are allowed in the port, so I have no record of this - that is probably the reason!

The passengers were able to board while the vehicles were still disembarking and we got a seat on the

upper deck. The voyage was uneventful and we passed the other ferry about mid channel with much waving & shouting between the two vessels. At the other end we had to find the third person in the chain. After a lot of talking on the phone there was a successful handover.

A few miles from the port we had to pass through passport control into Senegal. For the first time in my life, I was not present. The guide said to give him the passport and stay in the vehicle, so I did. It was all done very quickly, twice, once leaving The Gambia, the second entering Senegal. I guess it was about an hour's drive to the reserve and it was nice to arrive and relax.



The bedroom at Fathala Lodge, Senegal

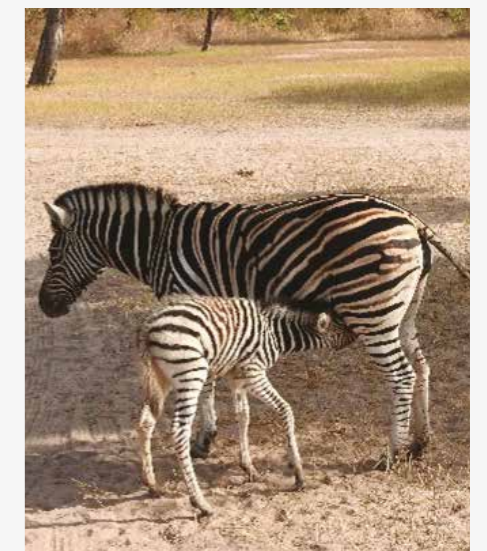
It has glamping accommodation, although the 'Gl' part was a bit faded but perfectly OK. Their take on 'Wi-Fi all areas' was to present you with your own 4g router which you could

carry with you and plug into any available socket. It worked to an extent, was quite slow to me but then we were many miles from the nearest mobile phone tower.

I had a two-hour game drive the afternoon I arrived which was lovely seeing all the animals up close. There were zebra, giraffe, buffalo, a solitary rhino (he had killed his mate the previous year), loads of monkeys, antelope and many more.



Rhino



Zebra and young

Western Africa continued



Giraffe

The pool was lovely with a view of the watering hole so you could swim and watch wildlife at the same time. My first evening's food was a slight shock after Ngala, but I think it must have been because there was a group of 12 French people who all had to be served at the same time. I and another couple seemed to get forgotten, but I was relaxed, just enjoying the scenery.



Pool at Fathala Lodge

The next morning, I was the only one at breakfast and, was told, the only one staying at the lodge although a couple were due in the evening. That first full day I had a trip to a desert island.

There were four staff and me heading off in the Landcruiser to the jetty where the boat captain took us to the island. It was a relaxing place but I had not expected to be on my own.



Desert Island

Luckily the young lady, whose job was to cook the food over the barbeque, sat with me and we chatted the whole time.



My friend on the island

I learned about her life as a single mum and she commiserated with me about the loss of Shirley. She had lost her grandmother who had raised her after her parents died the previous year. So,



My island lunch (all mine!)

in the end, with all the chat, it was an enjoyable visit.

In the evening, I asked about the other group who were supposed to be arriving. They said they were waiting for the ferry. Unfortunately for them, it was the evening of the Africa cup final with Senegal playing Morocco. Senegal won. There was much celebration at the lodge and apparently on the ferry as well – it stopped running with the captain being the worse for wear! So, for that day I was the only guest at the 20-room lodge.



African Grey Hornbill

The next morning, I was still on my own but was told the other party would be arriving later, so I had breakfast then went on a foot safari with a guide.

It was interesting wandering through the bush, seeing many birds and animals. At one point the guide pointed out a large depression in the sand crossing the track. He said it was created by a python which are native in this area. It was a pretty large depression which made me think about what else might be out there!



Me and the rhino

We ended up at the watering hole I had been to on the jeep safari on day one, and the guide took some pictures of me. He told me to turn around, I found the rhino had arrived and was looking straight at me. It was

slightly intimidating being stood on the ground with nothing between us but he eventually looked away and started eating again.



Walking with lions

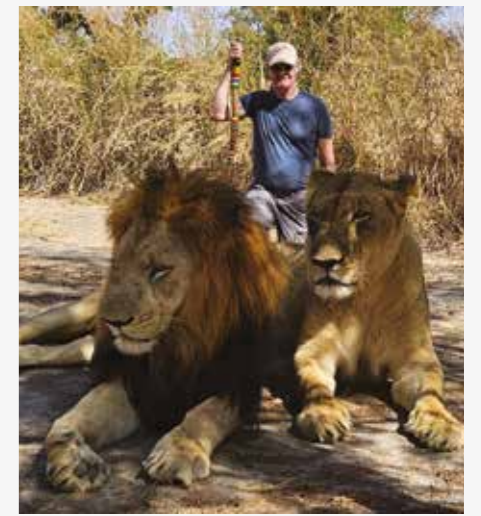
On the way back to the lodge, the guide mentioned the 'walking with lions' tour. I told him I had thought about it but the only time on the board in the lodge was the same as this foot safari.

He said it was not a problem as there were other tours for the day visitors. I said fine, 'in for a penny', as the saying goes. I joined a group of 20, the maximum, and was given the instructions:

- no touching the lions
- no getting in front of them without the keeper being on hand
- no loud noises and many other rules.

The male and female lions turned up so off we all walked. The keeper who had given the talk had raised them from cubs and so they respected him. Mind you he was about 6'7" and broad, so everyone respected him!

We each got a turn to walk behind the two lions with a video being taken, then standing and crouching in front of & behind them with photos being taken. The only time I found it intimidating was when I was on one knee behind them and the lioness turned around & stared straight at me.



Behind the lions

I did feel sorry for the lions as they did this two or three times a day. It lasted about 40 minutes, so not too bad, and it brought in a lot of income for the reserve.

Western Africa continued



In front of the lions

That night I finally met the other people at dinner. It was a husband and wife plus a youngish child. We got talking and I told them about Shirley and my birthday. To my surprise she said that their trip was for her birthday as well. It turned out that we were both born on the same day, although I was 25 years older than her!

The next morning, I left to return to the Gambia, in reverse, but this time I had to show my own passport plus get my photo & fingerprints taken to get out of Senegal. At the port it was again slightly organised chaos. For about five minutes I was left on my own while the guide went to sort something out. Still, it all worked smoothly and I arrived at my final destination, Hotel Bakotu, where I had stayed three times before.

It was nice being somewhere I knew, although in the 10 years the reception had been upgraded as had the rooms. Unfortunately, the access onto the golf course had been closed. It was not a real problem but you used to be able to easily walk through it to see the birds who frequented that area.



Bakotu pool

While there, I did a long walk along the beach, retracing the steps I had done with Shirley. I ate at Sailors, a raised platform on the beach, sitting at the same table as before. It too had been extended but it was nice to see the view again. I talked to quite a few people in Bakotu and had meals with one couple



The beach near Bakotu

from Sweden. I also talked to a retired Irish teacher who came over with many others for about 10 weeks every year and taught the local children.



My birthday river trip

I had one tour from the hotel on a boat up the river on my birthday which was interesting. Seeing lots of birds and chatting to others. The food was cooked on board and was again very nice.



Yellow-billed Stork and African Spoonbill

.....

After 11 nights I had to say 'au revoir' to The Gambia and fly home. I may well return as it's lovely and warm, around 30°C all year, so I have already put my name down in case they do another birdwatching tour. Being with like-minded people would make it the perfect holiday.

Although the visit had been sad at times, it was a cathartic experience to walk in the footsteps of my wife. It let me remember the past and consider my future without her.

Jeff Taylor _____

A message from... David Priddis, area organiser, Bristol/ Newport

How lovely it was to receive a message from David. He messaged to offer his thanks to David Hicks and me for the 'most interesting account regarding Ferrybridge Power Station' in the last edition of KierLink. David said:

"I well remember the 1 November 1965 as I was hitch hiking up the A1 from my college near Bedford to Newcastle that day. At one stage I was picked up by a small van and the driver said he was so grateful to have a passenger to have the extra weight to help hold the van on the road as the gale was so strong! It was only later I discovered what had happened at Ferrybridge."

What a memory from David and how different times were then – hitchhiking, for example. I do not think this would be safe to do now – as if it were then!

David Hicks was absolutely thrilled to receive the message from David. He was also delighted with how the final article looked in KierLink and said that he and his wife, Diane, were 'over the moon' with it. They showed the article to family members Matthew, James and his wife Minnie who were not aware that David had worked at Ferrybridge in the cooling towers and were surprised by the collapse.

It is great how KierLink has the ability to connect members by telling stories which have the power to invoke memories and this is a fitting example of that.

Glenda Hamilton _____

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 Brendan.




Dan Doherty's Leeds Journey




See over to hear from Dan...




Kirkstall Abbey Visitors Centre
Value: £10m
Year: 2003



Leeds Grammar School
Value: £40m
Year: 1997





LGI Hospital
Value: £20m
Year: 2005



Leeds City Museum
Value: £20m
Year: 2005



Roundhay Park Mansion House
Value: £10m
Year: 2003





West Village Bruntwood SciTech
Value: £80m
Year: 1985



Double Tree Hilton
Value: £33m
Year: 2008


Leeds Town Hall
Value: £18m
Year: 2025/2026

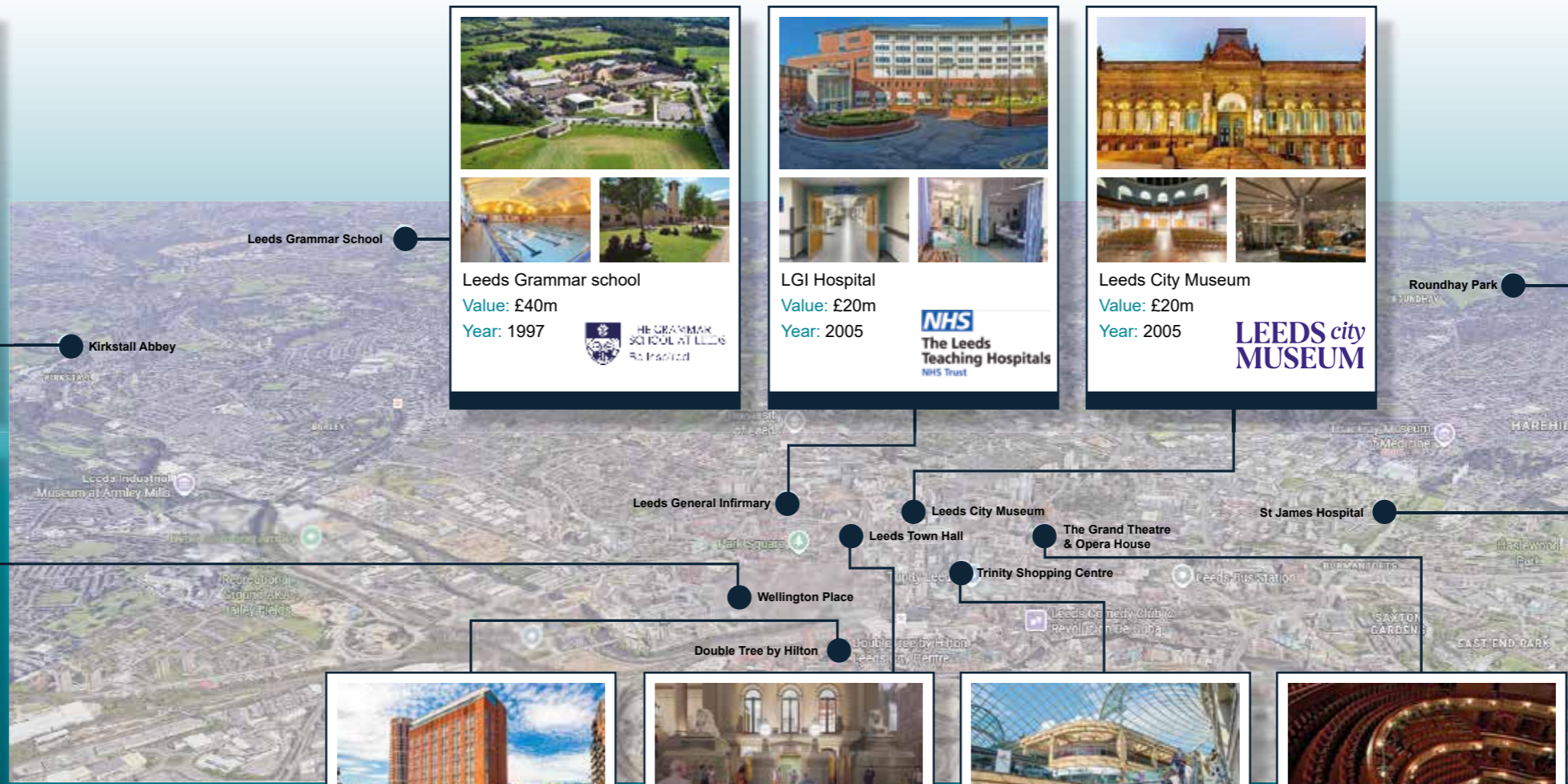
Trinity Shopping Centre
Value: £200m
Year: 2013

Leeds Grand Theatre
Value: £30m
Year: 2005




St James Hospital
Value: £30m
Year: 2006

1985 1997 2003 2005 2006 2008 2013 2025/2026

West Village bruntwood scitech	Leeds Grammar School	Roundhay Park Mansion House	Kirkstall Abbey Visitors Centre	Leeds City Museum	Leeds Grand Theatre	LGI Hospital	St James Hospital	Double Tree Hilton	Trinity Shopping Centre	Leeds Town Hall
--------------------------------	----------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------------	-------------------	---------------------	--------------	-------------------	--------------------	-------------------------	-----------------

Dan Doherty says...

"In 2026, Leeds is celebrating the 400th anniversary of its first Royal Charter, granted by King Charles I on 13 July 1626. This milestone marked the birth of Leeds as a self-governing borough – the origins of the city we know today.

As someone who grew up in Leeds and worked most of my life in and around the city, I am immensely proud to have had an involvement in the built environment that has shaped the city for almost 50 years.

For the best part of 25 of those years – with both Laing O'Rourke and latterly with Kier Construction – I have had the privilege to both lead those businesses and be associated with many interesting and challenging schemes. Many of which are landmark buildings that are synonymous with the city – Roundhay Park, The Grand Theatre and Trinity Shopping Centre to name a few.

My journey continues to this day with the work we are doing at Kier on Leeds Town Hall.

As I approach the end of my working career, I have reflected on what some of those iconic projects were and plotted them on the map of the city on pages 34 to 35. I thought I would share that, which I hope you will find interesting.

You might recognise some of these schemes and maybe you have shared some of my journey."

Inspirational quotes...

from famous people



The question isn't who is going to let me; it's who is going to stop me.

Ayn Rand



Winning is not a sometime thing; it's an all the time thing.

Vince Lombardi



Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear.

George Addair



Believe you can and you're halfway there.

Theodore Roosevelt



You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.

Wayne Gretzky



It's fun to do the impossible.

Walt Disney