

Winter 2017-18



Welcome to the Maple Cross Fellowship Newsletter

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First of all my thanks for the positive feedback I received for the first edition. I hope this, my second, is enjoyed as much.

In this edition I am adding a section on art in the Fellowship. I've had pictures from members which I hope you will find interesting and impressive. There is also poetry and a section on members' stories. Hopefully you will find these fascinating and will consider contributing something yourselves.

I'm always looking for participation from you the readers, and so even if you aren't artistic or don't have stories from your past, perhaps you could write a few words referring to holidays, hobbies or anything else which might be of interest, and please where possible include pictures.

I'm sure many of you cook, play music, paint, draw, dance or do many things which will amaze others in our group and may even make them think about doing something similar. So please share your experiences.

Don't worry about the spelling etc. I rely on a great invention in the computer world, spellcheck, but more importantly my wife Shirley who proof reads the newsletter. I sometimes have to edit contributions to fit spaces and may not find room in a particular edition, but don't worry there's always the next one!

There was a disappointing response to the quiz, however I did get one reply, and this was correct, though being the only entry, it would have won whatever the answer ☺. The place was Plaza de España in Seville, Spain, and the winner was Brendan O'Boyle.

In the quiz this time, the photo is taken from a position rarely seen, but I hope you can guess what it is. To make it easier to enter I've included my mobile number so you can now text me the answer. However remember to include your full name or I won't know who its from!

Jeff Taylor



A cartoon of me by Linda from my art class

Organiser's Report

"during last year a new website for the Kier Group Fellowship has been developed"

Happy New Year for 2018 to all our Members, I trust that you have had an excellent Christmas with lots of presents and family gatherings. I hope that most of you have been healthy over the winter, I know that there has been a lot of Flu (Australian I'm told) and other illnesses around, plus the weather has been quite cold and dreary. But the New Year is here and the nights are starting to get longer already, so we can look forward to Spring and all the new activities that I have got planned for this year.

I would like to extend my thanks to Jeff for the fantastic effort that he made in producing our Summer Newsletter (Jeff's first). The format has been acknowledged by a number of members as a new breath of air. But we still miss Duncan's stories, which I'm sure will be back in some future editions. Also thanks to those who have given some information and stories to help Jeff make the Newsletter all the more enjoyable for us to read on lonely nights by the fire. Please keep your stories and features coming to me or Jeff.

I previously mentioned my year planning, well included on the back of

the Christmas Luncheon Table Cards was my ideas for the New Year. These are included in this Newsletter and are on the Facebook page that Jeff keeps updated for us all.

Also during last year a new website for the Kier Group Fellowship has been developed and access is now available for all at www.fellowship.kier.co.uk. This has a diary page for all events that have been organised by me and my colleagues all around the country, so eventually all our events will be shown there. May I suggest that you open up your computers and type www.fellowship.kier.co.uk into your browser and explore this new development for our Fellowship.

I am looking forward to a busy year and meeting lots of you at our proposed events. Please keep attending and I will try to organise more different events as time permits, as I have said previously if you have any particular types of events that you would like or different venues for lunches please let me know.

Thanks for all my Christmas cards and good wishes for all that I do that I received over Christmas.

Norman Elliott

Definitions

Conference :- The confusion of one man multiplied by the number present

Experience :- The name men give to their Mistakes

Miser :- A person who lives poor so that he can die RICH!

Smile :- A curve that can set a lot of things straight!

Office :- A place where you can relax after your strenuous home life

Parents:- Bankers provided by nature



From Duncan

Late Summer Luncheon



The numbers attending were not as many as at our usual venues which Norman put down to either the timing (just after the school holidays when a lot of us tend to take our holidays) or possibly the venue was too far out into the countryside for our members to drive to. Do let us know the reason to help with future planning

Nevertheless the lunch was good and all who attended had an excellent time.

On Thursday 7th September 2017 a select few (18) of the Fellowship members experienced the delights of a new venue in the Chilterns near Chesham.

Norman had made a booking for lunch at The Chartridge Golf Club following a recommendation from another Member of the Fellowship.

The venue was perfect and we had our own private room on the ground floor which made an excellent place to sit and discuss our summer experiences over a sociable drink and delightful three course lunch.



"we had our own private room on the ground floor which made an excellent place to sit and discuss our summer experiences "

Sorry I couldn't make the lunch, it clashed with a hospital appointment which as you all probably know get more frequent with the years. Thanks to everybody for the "selfie" below. Ed.



Long Service Lunch



On Friday 13th October (yes really! Ed.) the Fellowship members gathered at the De Vere Latimer Estate in Chesham for the 42nd meeting of the Fellowship together with those with long service who are still working for Kier at Maple Cross. It was nice to catch up with former colleagues from the office and hear all the gossip.

Following the meal Martin Reilly the Operations Director for Kier Construction Southern, gave a short speech advising how Kier as a whole and Maple Cross in particular were doing with regard to future work and earnings. All very impressive. Norman Elliott gave the toast to Kier and thanked Martin for his continued support.

“32 people attended with 21 of those being from the Fellowship”

32 people attended with 21 of those being from the Fellowship.

The meal consisted of Chicken Liver Parfait followed by Slow roast Featherblade of Beef and a Vanilla Brulee to finish. All very nice.



Christmas Luncheon



As last year the Christmas lunch was held at Shendish Manor near Hemel Hempstead on Thursday 14th December. Luckily the snow of the previous weekend had nearly gone, and it left the grounds with a pleasant sprinkling of white which made the location even more picturesque, almost a white Christmas.



We first met at the bar in the next room, where people mingled and caught up with friends. With 50 people attending, it wasn't long before we were spilling out into the nearby corridor .

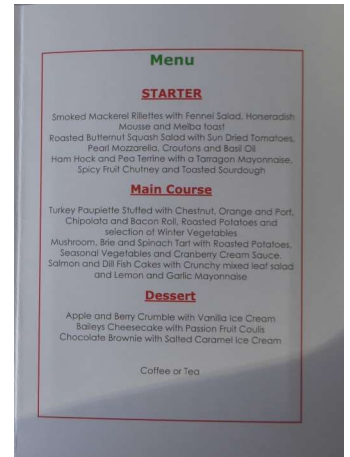


There was a lovely warm and cozy atmosphere to go with the beautiful view outside, and as before the service was efficient and the meal really enjoyable.

After the meal Norman told us of the exciting plans for next year (listed at the back of this newsletter) and Jim Conner read his Christmas poem, which was very good and captured the feeling of many about the modern Christmas spirit.

(You can find a copy in this newsletter)

After the meal the discussions continued for quite a while, and as the sun was setting we departed Shendish Manor, perhaps to return again another year.



"With 50 people attending, it wasn't long before we were spilling out into the nearby corridor "

Fellowship Art by Bruce Sweetland



I can't remember where the idea of the snowy, moonlit, forest came from, something I've seen somewhere perhaps. It was done in black ink with an uneasy yellow watercolour for the moon. It makes me think of silence

This picture is of a chapel, a beautiful early 20th century arts and crafts building in the grounds of Mount Vernon Hospital. It's built in sandstone with flint panels and a greyish slate roof and it has a wonderful solidity and presence about it, the sloping buttresses make it look as if it's there to stay. I used watercolour paints but struggled to find a technique which adequately represented the flint work



This is a drawing of a sea eagle, an enormous bird with wing spans of up to eight feet. When I was drawing him I was struck by his head and feet which reminded me of a reptile

Fellowship Art (Cont.)



I was walking past the cheese grater building in the City of London on a bright sunny day when I saw the third image. I know it looks like abstract art but it is in fact a pretty accurate representation of what caught my eye. The black rectangular grid is the framework to the glass façade, the red boxes are the counterweights to the lifts and the blue and orange beams are the steel framework of the building. The bottom right hand corner of the painting is still the surface of the cheese grater but reflecting the buildings opposite! A truly remarkable sight. To get the bright colours I used oil paints on special paper.

I have been wondering about why I choose to draw and paint. It is rather an odd thing to do when you think about it, after all the subject itself is there in front of you and there seems to be little point in trying to make a copy of it, which can never really capture the original. I think it is something to do with possession. When you make an image of your subject you capture it and it becomes yours.

Bruce Sweetland Dec 17

All artwork shown here is © Bruce Sweetland. A fantastic selection of drawings and paintings. I like them all but particularly the picture of the "Cheese grater" which is remarkable in that it combines realism and modern art in one picture. Ed.

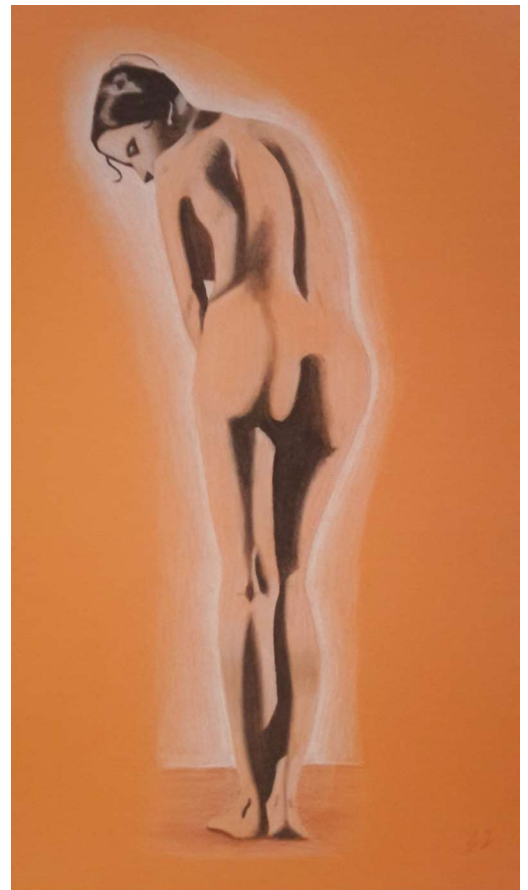
Fellowship Art by Jeff Taylor

I took up art again in 2008 more than 40 years after winning a Brooke Bond art prize for a picture I drew in primary school. I'd started planning for an early retirement and was trying out different things to see what interested me. First of all I did pencil sketches and after a while moved into water colour, both mainly whilst on holiday. This continued until I joined Colourwheel art classes in January 2016 where I have been taught to use many different mediums, some of which you see below.



This watercolour picture was done in 2010 in Northumberland. I loved the way the light hit the plant & curtains, and I added the wine bottle as a darker counterpoint. However as the painting progressed each evening, the level of wine reduced until, after replacing it with a new bottle twice, I decided it was simpler to paint the picture with the bottle empty.

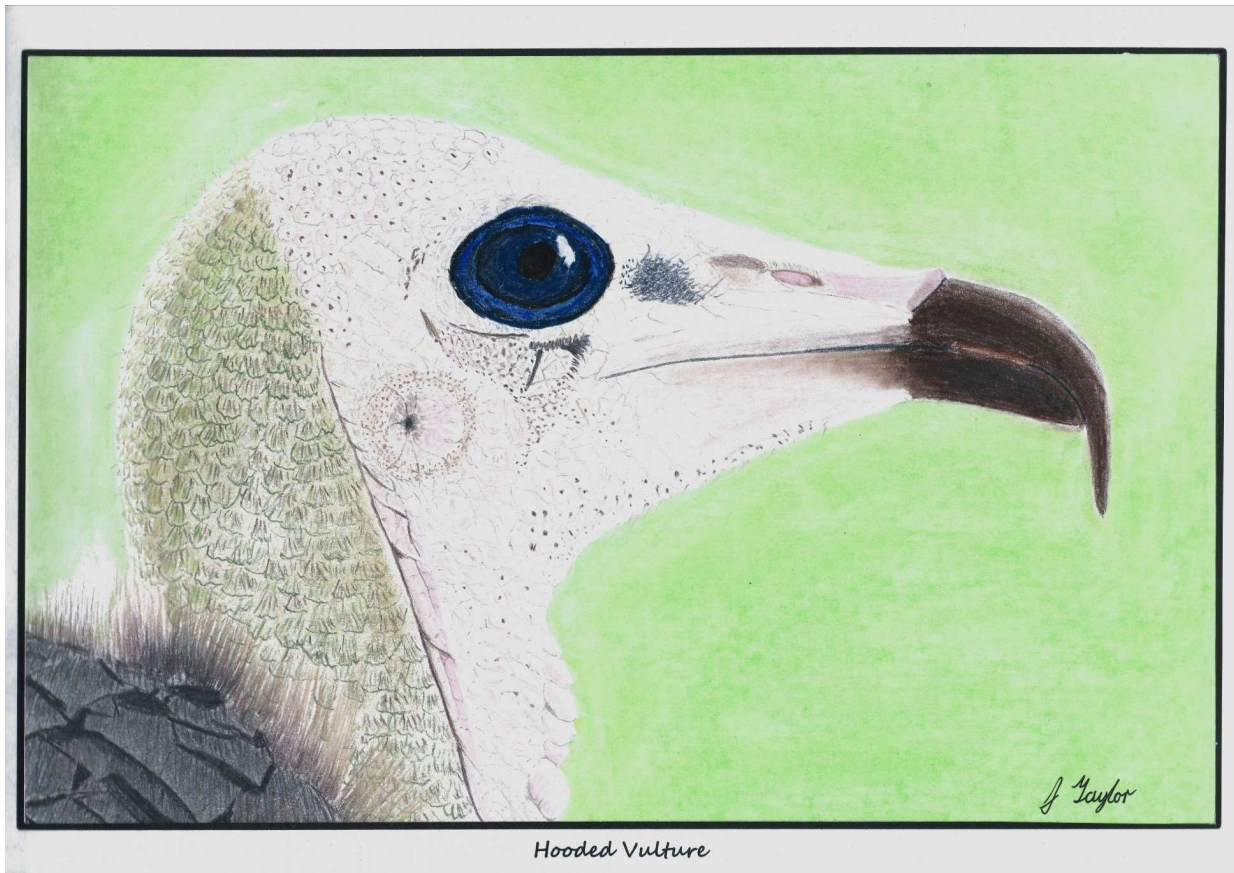
Whilst on holiday in 2017 I received an e-mail with a picture which was the classwork for the art class I was doing. The object was to use just black and white chalk, charcoal & / or soft pastels to produce a 3D looking image on a coloured paper. I decided to use an orange paper I had as it gave the best tonal range for the human form. I found it quite challenging to produce all the varying shades and shadows but am pleased with the results.



As part of our end of term project over two weeks, I decided to paint Saint Paul-de-Mausole, the monastery where Van Gogh stayed for a while in Provence. We had visited here a few years before and I felt that using acrylic paint I could finally do justice to the scene. It took more than the six hours in the lessons to complete, especially all the lavender flowers but I think it was worth the effort.



Fellowship Art (Cont.)



The last two pictures are done using soft pastel which is great for shading, though quite messy! We spotted the Hooded Vulture whilst on a birdwatching tour in The Gambia with Chris Packham, who said it was waiting for the abattoir to open! It didn't move as we walked past and I was able to zoom into its head for a photo. I used this as the basis for the picture.

The Cheetah painting shows the beauty of art over photography. The image was taken from a photo Shirley took on a trip we made to South Africa (suggested by Tony Mingoia, thanks Tony). The pose of the Cheetah is the same as it was in the photo, but it had a radio collar on, so that the guides could find it, and the background was uninspiring. Using art I was able to put a suitable background in place and remove the collar which makes a much more interesting portrait.

Jeff Taylor



Its Christmas by Jim Connor

*It's that merry Christmas time of the year
The time for laughter, jollity and good cheer
At least that's what it should be all about
But to tell you the truth, I have my doubts*

*It starts with the cards when you get out your list
And check to see whose name you might have missed
And those that forgot to send a card last noel
Makes you wonder if you should forget about them as well*

*There's presents to get, but what should you buy?
Will they be appreciated, no matter how hard you try?
You walk round and round 'til your head starts spinning
Your legs are aching and your senses dimming*

*There's mums with push-chairs like mini JCBs
Ploughing their way through as though they were felling trees
Oblivious of others of the chaos they create
When ignoring their kids while texting their mates*

*Now mobility scooters seem to proliferate
They know where they are going, and they don't want to wait
Sat upon by some that are less lamb but more mutton
Driving as though they were Lewis Hamilton or Jenson Button!*

*And Santa's Grotto with queues a mile long
Just for a cheap plastic toy and a Jingle Bell song
And maybe a photo with false smiley poses
On the knee of a Santa with ill-fitting beard and halitosis*

*And then there is the food. Why do we buy so much stuff?
Surely a good Sunday roast would be quite enough
But no - we have to strip the super-markets of all they display
Just because they shut their doors for one whole day*

*But after all these trials and tribulations
We really can enjoy these celebrations
And being with family or loyal friends
Can make it all worthwhile in the end*

*So the destination makes this journey worthwhile
And hopefully it will all end up with a smile
But there is one question always leaves me dumbfounded
Why do we always have Christmas when the shops are so crowded?"*

(Remember this for next year! Ed.)

Members stories by Jim Connor

It Was Spring 1958

I was 16, and in my final year as a student at Willesden Technical College (Building). To get there from Wealdstone where I lived I took the bus to Cannons Park Station (just outside Edgware) followed by the Bakerloo line train to Neasden, and then walked the rest of the way to the College.

However for about six weeks from the beginning of May there was a London Bus strike. So I had to ride my bike to the station, leaving it at a local petrol station/garage with the kind consent of the garage owner, and then take the train.

This was not too much of a problem in general, but it came at a time when we were all getting lined up for interviews at various building companies etc. The College had arranged two or three interviews for me, one being with William Moss and Sons Limited at Staples Corner, Cricklewood.

There were relatively few car owners in those days, and we'd never had one in our family. The normal way for me to get to Staples Corner for the interview, would be to catch a bus to Edgware and then a trolley-bus down the Edgware Road to Staples Corner.

Because of the bus strike I only had two options to get there. Cycle or hitch-hike. As I would be dressed in my best clothes, and carrying a large folder of the drawings I'd done at the College, I decided to take the chance and hitch-hike.

So with a clean shirt, newest jacket and trousers, and polished shoes. I optimistically set out on my journey.

There was very much more a feeling of "community spirit" in those days, and, dare I say, a much less threatening atmosphere than there appears to be now. So I don't recall having any trepidation in making the journey.

Somehow, with the kindness of several motorists, I not only got to Staples Corner, but arrived in time for my interview. I was interviewed by the lovely Miss K Rayner, and a little while later I received the job offer of an apprenticeship as a Junior Surveyor at the princely sum of four pounds ten shillings (£4.50) a week.

I joined William Moss and Sons Limited on 18th August 1958. By that time the bus strike was over, so I was able to catch the bus from Wealdstone to Edgware, and the trolleybus to Staples Corner. The rest, as they say, is history. How the world has changed since those innocent and optimistic days.

Jim Connor



Members stories by Alan Taplin

While at the Christmas dinner, I overheard Jeff say he needed input for the magazine. Like a fool I told a story relating to my hobby of wood carving. I should have kept my mouth shut, as I have not felt like this since school days when you had to write a composition on your summer holidays, I'm not one for putting pen to paper!

Back in the day when the Hampshire branch of the British Woodcarvers was formed, my wife Tina, with a very good friend Ian, used to travel round the county doing craft fairs, school fetes etc. trying to bring in new members. Ian being a very good carver used to set up a display and demonstrate, while Tina bent the ears of the public.

Unfortunately Ian was so good he never had many carvings for the display, as unlike me he did not mind parting with them for money. That's the difference I suppose between a highly qualified accountant and a steelfixer! Anyway the display would always be 75% mine. In the end Ian got fed up with explaining my carvings to the public, and that mine, unlike his, were not for sale. As a result Ian insisted that in future if I wanted my work to be seen by the public I would have to set up alongside him at the next show.

This happened to be in Wokingham, at the Guide Dog for the Blind training centre open day. We arrived in plenty of time, set up in the gazebo provided and found we had a half hour to spare. Tina and Ian set off to have a look round while I looked after the stand. I set about putting the finishing touches to a carving of a hand I had been working on. At this point I had better tell you I had put on a rather large straw hat, being a rather hot day, plus I thought if I kept my head down I would be able to hide behind it.

Anyway there I was minding my own business when I suddenly realised there was someone watching me. I might have muttered 'good afternoon' but fear got the better of my conversation skills. Anyway after a few minutes she decided to tell me I was "brilliant". Well as big as my hat was, my head was trying to burst out of it. 'Well' I thought, 'why haven't I demonstrated before, with comments like that?' Now bearing in mind all this time she had been stood there and I hadn't looked up, lacking the courage to do so, but after that comment I did have to thank her.

At that point she gave me a rather strange look, then lent towards me, so we were damn near rubbing noses. I was not expecting what she said next, "You can see!," she said "Oh well it's not that brilliant then, is it!" There you go, the highs and lows of demonstrating in just five minutes. I later found why she had thought I was blind, because in the gazebo next door there was a blind man weaving baskets, now he was brilliant.

Alan Taplin



Alans carvings of his niece & nephew

The theme being "Likeness"

(No matter what the lady said, I think Alan's Carvings are brilliant, Ed.)

Members stories *by Jeff Taylor*

I was a young student and joined Kier for my first period of industrial training in 1974. The contract was for the construction of the structures on the new 10 mile A14 Ipswich to Stowmarket link. The section where I was based was at Claydon where 5 bridges were to be built. One bridge had just started, but all the rest had to be built from scratch. David Gartside was the Site Manager & Harry Bradford was the foreman.

After joining the team, we all had to attend a meeting to explain the new Health & Safety at Work act which, we were told, meant we had to wear safety helmets, and think about safety on site. There were no method statements, tool box talks or forms to complete. A much more innocent though less safe time than today.

Before long David tended to leave me to it, and I worked with Harry who explained what needed doing as I'd never worked on site before. I did the setting out, ordered concrete and reinforcement (which was mainly cut and bent on site), checked everything was correct before supervising the concrete pours. In addition I had to calculate the bonus for the men. This entailed measuring the holes & notches being cut by the chippies & the amount of steel cut, bent & fixed by the steelfixers. This led to many arguments. There was also the correspondence with the on-site Resident Engineer to be done. So I was quite busy.



**People wearing of Safety Helmets
However where's the scaffold?**



**Me stuck in the mud. I had to be pulled out
with a dumper and lost my wellies!**

The freedom of decision making and the team spirit on site made me sure this was the career for me. So I joined Kier after graduation and spent the next 35+ years doing what I loved, i.e. building things with Kier.

Jeff Taylor

It was great experience, with moments of excitement such as when whilst reversing the Landover, I missed the bridge over the river and slipped down the river bank. My excuse is that it was a closed in back, but I should have been more careful! Four wheel drive was no good, the back was underwater & I couldn't open the doors due to the vegetation, so I had to use the radio to call for help. This was site wide so the whole 10 miles heard and it was probably the most embarrassing moment of my time with Kier. The Landover was pulled out with an excavator using chains, and I wasn't allowed to drive it again. When available I was given a dumper, otherwise I walked. I also got stuck doing this as well!

We also had a fire in a remote site hut and watching Harry towing the burning hut away from the gas bottle store was quite interesting, and when the crawler crane toppled backwards, (the piling hammer didn't stop swinging as he stopped slewing) the dangers of site work became apparent. However it was all good training for a future career.

Oops!



Cookery Corner - Pork Saltimbocca & leeky mash

Ingredients - For 2

Leeky Mash

- 1 large potato
- 1 Leek
- Margarine / low fat yoghurt
- Salt & Pepper
- Sunflower or olive oil

Saltimbocca

- 2 pork steaks
- 2 slices Parma ham
- ½ Lemon zest
- Squeeze of lemon juice
- 50ml Chicken stock
- 1 tsp dried Sage
- 100ml Pale Cream Sweet Sherry
- Black Pepper
- Sunflower or olive oil

Preparation 20 mins Cook Mash 15 - 20 mins Pork 6 - 8 mins



Peel the potato, cut into pieces and boil / microwave until ready for mashing. Cut the leek into thin rings 2 - 3 mm thick and chop the rings roughly. Cook the leek gently on the hob in a little margarine or oil for about 10 minutes covered, stirring occasionally. Mash the potato and add some margarine or low fat yoghurt plus salt & pepper. Allow for the margarine / oil in the leeks. Gently stir in the leeks and keep warm.



Remove any fat from the pork & place each between 2 pieces of cling film. Flatten with a rolling pin or mallet until about 5mm ¼" thick. Sprinkle each steak with sage & lemon zest, then season with black pepper (no salt). Cover with the Parma ham & tuck any spare under the steak.. (For small ham slices use 2 on each)



Heat a teaspoon of oil in a large frying pan & fry the steaks for 2 minutes each side. (The Parma ham will stick to the steaks). If the pan seems dry add another teaspoon of oil. Then transfer the steaks to a warmed plate.

Add the sherry to the pan so it bubbles up and scrape any bits off the bottom. Then add the stock. Simmer this for a couple of minutes to reduce so it is like a very light syrup.



Drain any juice from the steaks into the pan and add the lemon juice. Then put the steaks on a serving plate with the mash and drizzle the sauce over the steaks.

Note this picture has an extra piece of pork!!



Recipe based on the Hairy Dieters Cook books

Prize Quiz What is this called?

Name of this monument, taken from an unusual angle?

Please send your **answer** & your **full name** to:-

kfmaplecross@virginmedia.com

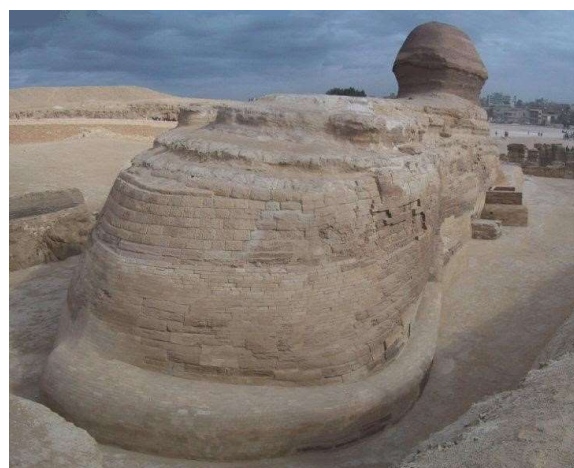
or text 07780 600 580

or post to :-

Jeff Taylor, 24 White Paddock, Maidenhead, SL6 3NF

by the end of **March 2018**.

One reply per fellowship member only. The first correct entry selected at random will win £5 off a Maple Cross Fellowship event of their choice in 2018.



Games & puzzles

Sudoku

8		7	4		3	1		5
	9		8		7		3	
		9	7	5	4	2		
		4				8		
		2	1	9	8	4		
	7		3		1		4	
2		8	6		9	5		7

Easy

7								
	3			4				
2		5	3		7			
	5	2	6			9		
8							4	
		9			3	2		
5		7	4		2	6		
4					9		1	
	6	8		3		7		4

Hard

Wordsearch

E	O	H	D	J	M	Q	P	X	W
D	N	E	D	B	T	U	L	W	Y
Y	E	W	T	I	H	E	H	S	E
L	V	S	S	Y	A	L	E	D	R
C	O	U	B	P	M	V	M	W	U
T	Q	O	B	Y	E	J	A	N	T
N	A	Y	A	R	S	Y	H	O	P
E	T	Y	N	E	D	E	T	V	G
R	W	Y	E	N	N	U	I	A	E
T	W	P	G	E	B	N	W	C	S
L	E	W	N	U	W	X	R	R	X
L	X	C	T	A	Y	T	I	J	Y

Which of these rivers is not in the grid?

AVON
 CLYDE
 NENE
 SEVERN
 SPEY
 TAY
 THAMES
 TRENT
 TWEED
 TYNE
 URE
 WITHAM
 WYE

1968 - 50 Years ago:-

January - The Ford Escort replaces the Anglia

March - Coal mining in the West Midlands ends after 300 years

May - Manchester United become first English winners of the European Cup

July - The BBC sitcom Dads Army was first aired on television

September - The General Post Office divides deliveries into 1st class & 2nd class

November - The Trades Descriptions Act comes into force.

Wordsearch - The words can be found forwards, backwards and on both diagonals and in either direction.

Kier Fellowship

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Find us on 

[Kier Fellow Ship](#) - The main profile

[K.F. Maple Cross](#) - Group members only

If you wish to be added to the closed group, send your Facebook e-mail address or details, to:-

kfmaplecross@virginmedia.com



This magazine serves the Kier Fellowship members from the Maple Cross area. It is provided by members for members.

Please send any contributions you may have, such as anecdotes from your working life, photos, recent events, holidays etc. which may interest others, to Jeff Taylor, at :-

kfmaplecross@virginmedia.com

Please provide feedback on the newsletter, good and bad, so it can be improved. If there is anything you wish to see added, please send requests to the above e-mail address.

Also if you have any suggestions for other events please contact Norman Elliott.

Also Kier now have a dedicated Fellowship website go to :-

www.fellowship.kier.co.uk

Forthcoming Events

15th February Valentine's Day Luncheon

March London Show

26th April St Georges Day Luncheon

May Combined Event with Solent

11th June Windsor Horse Racing

24th June Tempsford Garden Party

July Afternoon event & Cream tea

September Kier Fellowship Golf Day

20th September Late Summer Luncheon

12th October Long Service Luncheon

14th December Christmas Luncheon