

KierLink

The magazine for the Kier Fellowship Trust | Issue 45 | Spring/Summer 2024



ANNA MARIE UK
CIRCUMNAVIGATION
PAGES 6-13

THE 'TEMPSFORD TRIO'
JUST LOVE TO CYCLE!
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FIGHTBACK FUND...
CONTINUED
PAGE 35



Congratulations to Jerry Pullinger!
Medals so far as he continues to run for the Fightback Fund!

Chairman’s matters and Administrator’s report



Neil Meixner

I am delighted to tell you that Louisa Finlay, a huge fan of the Fellowship, has agreed to be the Kier Group representative on our Board. With her full support Kier is really engaging with the Fellowship and we are delighted to report the progress made since the last edition of KierLink.

With the increased support from Kier, we are pleased to advise you that the KierLink will be published twice a year with a summer and winter edition as was the case in the past.

Kier IT has been very active and has integrated our new website on the Kier Group site which is now operational. While there are a few alterations we would like, namely, to be able to sort the events into area & event type plus a gallery area for the Fellowship pictures, it is a great aid to our communications.

Please have a look at the new website using the direct link at: www.kier.co.uk/fellowship

As we further develop the content of the website, we welcome members articles and photographs for incorporation in the future.

We reported last time that the Fellowship is being encouraged to get involved in other areas of the business, ranging from work winning to mentoring but this is work in progress. So, please refer to the website and do try to take part and support these great events.

We repeat our previous message that if you’d like to help, for example, with mock professional interviews, one-to-one mentoring or indeed providing particular work-winning expertise, do get in touch with either of us.

We are delighted to announce that Glenda Hamilton has taken over as area organiser for Leeds and we welcome her to the organising team.

The Fellowship needs volunteers in order to be successful and we still seek to fill two vacancies in our ranks, one in Liverpool/Manchester and one at Rushden. Please, even if you don’t want to be the area organiser, get in touch with either of us if you’d be willing to help.

We are sure you’ll enjoy this edition of KierLink. We are always seeking interesting items for inclusion in future editions. If you have been on a

memorable holiday, have celebrated a special event, or indeed want to share some work experiences, please contact any of the following by email and we will be pleased to assist you.

- Andrea McDaid (andrea.mcdaid@outlook.com)
- Neil Meixner (neilmeixner@gmail.com)
- Brendan O’Boyle (**as below**).

Interest in the Fellowship remains high with new members joining from all 12 areas since the last KierLink. We currently have 1,344 members.

We need to encourage a new crop of retirees/leavers so if you know of any why not see if they’d like to join the Fellowship. The application form is available on the website or you can get one by contacting Brendan O’Boyle as below.

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

If you require help or information with any matters relating to the Kier Fellowship, please contact Brendan O’Boyle by email:

brendan.o’boyle.ext@kier.co.uk

Have a hopefully warm and pleasant summer!

Neil Meixner & Brendan O’Boyle

Editor’s note

Dear members,
We’re now back to two issues of KierLink a year thanks to Louisa Finlay’s and Kier Group’s support. Wonderful news!

We have some wonderful reading here. It makes me happy that you make time for each other after all the years of working as colleagues and becoming friends. And you’re so busy!

A couple of tips for the next issue, if I may, to get the best out of your articles:

- In your Word article document, please do not ‘insert’ the photo. Please ‘caption’ the name of the photo underneath your text where you would like it to be placed i.e. (INSERT: Christmas lunch at The King’s Arms (1); (INSERT: Christmas lunch at The King’s Arms (2))
- Then, ‘attach’ your JPG/PNG photos named with that ‘caption’ to the email. This way I know where to place them and can adjust the quality for printing
- When taking pictures from your mobile, change the ‘setting’ to the highest quality in your camera. It may take up more memory but the quality for print will be much clearer and could be used at a much larger size
- Backup your photos from your mobile if it gets clogged... don’t lose precious memories!

Big news for our Tesco DotCom team. We’ve been voted best in our group five out of six weeks recently for KPI targets. It’s never happened before! Now we are one of two stores in our group that have been allocated to train staff in every employment area.

I’m looking forward to reading what you’ve all been up to over the summer. Take care and best wishes,

Andrea McDaid



Sssssh.... Obviously no managers in the warehouse at the time this photo was taken (25/05/2024)!

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Apology note:...

We have received notifications that some members have had to pay postage for the last issue of KierLink. Huge apologies!

We will endeavour to make sure this doesn’t happen again for future issues. However, if it does, please contact Brendan O’Boyle in the first instance.

Copy deadline for issue 46 2024:

Friday 20 September

Obituaries

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

Colin Abrey	21/12/2023
Cynthia Ashton	01/12/2023
Gordon Beechey	12/11/2023
Winifred Bevan	09/01/2024
Christopher Bradley	13/02/2024
Eileen Cahill	18/11/2023
David Cooper	22/01/2024
Arthur Coppen	12/11/2023
Pearl Cotter	09/01/2024
Andrew Dickens	12/11/2023
Dennis Dolby	09/01/2024
Ronald Gallagher	08/04/2024
Geoffrey Goodfellow	28/10/2023
Marilyn Gould	24/11/2023

Jack Hague	27/01/2024
Gladys Haigh	15/11/2023
Walter Hare	04/01/2024
Peter Hawes	21/01/2024
John Hicks	08/01/2024
Henry Hilldrup	29/12/2023
Peter Hodder	08/01/2024
Anthony Howarth	27/11/2023
Harry Hutchesson	23/11/2023
June James	12/01/2024
James Kay	08/10/2023
Richard Large	07/12/2023
John Morrow	30/12/2023
Jean Moss	31/12/2023

Kathleen Pagett	26/01/2024
Brian Parker	19/10/2023
Margaret Phillips	06/12/2023
Simon Potts	07/11/2023
Martin Rogers	19/11/2023
Jennifer Sanders	09/01/2024
Amrik Seehra	08/11/2023
Douglas Sharpe	19/11/2023
Sally Sinnock	12/11/2023
Alan Smith	26/10/2023
Moira Thomson	13/02/2024
Sheila Titmarsh	23/01/2024
Barbara Weaver	07/12/2023

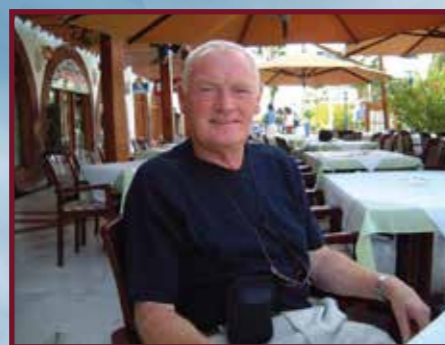
RONALD (RON) GALLAGHER: 9 APRIL 1938 TO 8 APRIL 2024

It is with great sadness we advise of the passing of Ron Gallagher. Ron was born in Liverpool in 1938, was one of five children growing up in Anfield (yes, he supported the red side of the city).

He started life in construction as an apprentice joiner and spent many years at night school learning all aspects of construction. He served his national service in Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers where his skills were put to great use.

He went on and worked his way through the ranks of foreman, planning engineer, site manager, construction manager, then construction director at Moss Construction. His work took him through a couple of business takeovers and when he retired, he

was managing director of Kier North West in Liverpool.



After retirement he enjoyed holidays and travelling with his wife June.

He was a keen golfer with a handicap of five in his prime and was a member of Hesketh Golf Club for 38 years. He loved a project and putting his joinery skills back to work he helped family members well into his eighties!

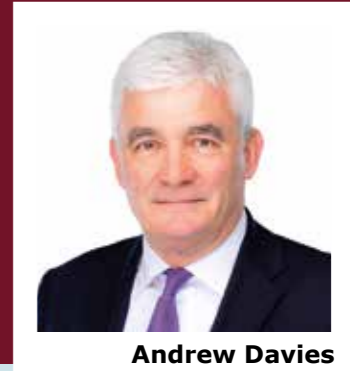
He was a huge family man. It was difficult to keep him away from baby-sitting duties and school collections for Adam, Hannah, Holly & Isabel. They were lucky to have spent so much time together.

Ron was loving husband of June Gallagher, father of Jill & Ian, father-in-law of Kris & Tony and grandpa to Adam, Hannah, Holly & Isabel.

The funeral service was held on 25 April 2024 at 12.00 midday at Burscough Crematorium followed by a gathering at Maghull Town Hall. If you would like to pay tribute to Ron, please donate to his chosen charity – the North West Air Ambulance:

<https://ron-gallagher1.muchloved.com/>

Message from the Chief Executive



Andrew Davies

Hello and warmest wishes to everyone in the Kier Fellowship.

I am delighted to be sharing with you all an update on the Group for your new spring/summer edition. Since your last edition, we have continued to perform well across the business, and the last six months have seen us reach some important milestones which I'm delighted to share with you.

Our half-year results in March were again very positive with revenue growing by 23%, adjusted operating profit up by 13% and order book growing to £10.7bn, while we've continued to make great strides in reducing our net debt.

This positive performance has seen us return to the FTSE 250 for the first time in five years – a hugely significant moment for us. This achievement underlines just how far we've come, as well as further strengthening our position and standing as a company operating in the UK. Importantly, we also announced the first interim dividend payment to shareholders since 2019.

We have also continued to bring high quality work into the company in every division. To name just a few wins:

- We have been appointed to the £3bn SCAPE Utilities Frameworks which will deliver utilities, civil infrastructure and transportation services across the country
- We have been named on Network Rail's latest capital delivery works framework (CP7) for the North West and Central regions covering projects over the next five years reaching up to £200m in value
- We have also seen major awards across key areas of our construction business including over £180m in education projects, £80m in healthcare and a new house block for the Ministry of Justice at HMP Elmley worth over £100m
- Finally, our property division has completed the £10.5m sale of its Logistics City Scheme in Whiteley in conjunction with the Housing Growth Partnership.

These results and milestones again reflect that we are delivering to our medium-term value creation plan. As you will have heard, the Prime Minister has announced plans for a General Election on 4 July 2024. We expect any impact to be minimal and mainly during the pre-election weeks. Our order book is strong and all mainstream political parties are committed to infrastructure as a key engine for economic

growth. This will reinforce the vital work that Kier delivers in the UK.

Our performance spans beyond our operational, commercial and financial performance. In recent months we have been recognised for our action around sustainability. We received the London Stock Exchange's 'green economy mark'. Our group-wide near & long-term greenhouse gas reduction and net zero targets have been approved by the UN-backed organisation Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). Our construction, transportation, natural resources and nuclear & networks divisions have now been awarded PAS2080 certification.

We continue to look at how we support our people and in the past couple of weeks we have relaunched our service recognition awards. We have also shared important updates on how we are supporting colleagues with professional memberships and we, once again, are running our annual group-wide fundraising campaign. Moving through May, it encourages us all to get 'out & about' and raise vital funds for the Trussell Trust and local charities across the UK.

In March, we opened a number of our sites up to local communities to look beyond the hoardings and discover more about a career in construction. This was part of an industry-wide campaign, Open Doors Week, which aims to attract new talent to join us. We had over 800 visitors come to our sites plus lots of positive feedback about the setup of our sites and the warm welcome people received from our teams.

I know some of you have visited our sites and I hope you find these visits useful – seeing the continued talent we have within the business, skills, expertise as well as the technology being utilised.

The Kier Fellowship continues to provide an important link between our past and our present. Your skills and knowledge will support many of our colleagues who are starting, or looking to develop, their careers.

To everyone attending the Kier Fellowship garden party in June, I hope the weather prevails and you all have an excellent day.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support.

Anna Marie UK Circumnavigation

by Nigel Burrows

INTRODUCTION

The plan was to sail my 10.7m sailing yacht, a Dehler 34, clockwise around the UK. I wanted to do it in one season, and I knew from previous cruises that a rest after 10-14 days sailing was advisable. Also, I knew my wife Anna was not keen to sail on the open seas so going through the Caledonian canal would allow her to join me. Consequently, I came up with a plan to sail the following legs with a one-week rest between.

- Leg 1: Home Port Suffolk Yacht Harbour to Milford Haven, Wales.
- Leg 2: Milford Haven via the East coast of Ireland to Dunstaffnege, Scotland.
- Leg 3: Dunstaffnege/Oban via the Caledonian Canal to Port Edgar, Edinburgh.
- Leg 4: Port Edgar, Edinburgh to Home Port Suffolk Yacht Harbour.



LEG 1: HOME PORT SUFFOLK YACHT HARBOUR TO MILFORD HAVEN

Wednesday 24 May: Together with my brother-in-law, Peter, we set sail for Ramsgate. The sails had been put on the boat about ten days before and had not been touched. On raising the main for the first time, and much to my surprise, a nest containing an egg fell out and unfortunately broke. The wind soon died, and we motored most of the way to Ramsgate, spotting a porpoise and seal on the way, arriving at 15.30hrs.



The start: 24 May 2023 SYH

The following day we left at 07.00hrs on route to Eastbourne. Much stronger winds, 15 to 20 knots (knts) blowing from the east, so we sailed with two reefs in the main making it much smaller. Off Lydd we were called up by the range control boat and informed that live firing was underway, and could we go half a nautical mile (nm) further out to sea – we did not argue! We arrived at Sovereign Harbour Eastbourne at 16.00hrs having covered the 63nm in nine hours at an average speed of 7knts.

Friday 26 May: Left Sovereign Harbour at 09.30hrs for Brighton marina, just a short distance along the coast. The winds were still blowing strongly from the east, so we sailed under the jib arriving at 13.30hrs.

The following day our destination was Gosport. This meant a passage through the Looe channel off Selsey Bill. To get a favourable tidal stream through the channel it can be as much as 5knts. We needed to leave Brighton at 06.00hrs. The wind was still from the east and blowing 15knts so we made good headway.



Beachy Head on route to Brighton

At around 09.00hrs, we were visited by a pod of about ten dolphins which continued to circle the boat for about ten minutes before

swimming off in the direction of Selsey Bill – a lovely sight! We arrived at Gosport at 15.15hrs.



There was a change of crew at Gosport with Peter leaving and my friend Steve joining me. Steve and I left Gosport on route to Poole, a distance of 40nm, on **Monday 29 May** at 07.00hrs. Good winds blowing from the east at 15knts. We sailed under the jib and had to reduce that as the winds picked up to 22knts. We entered the harbour following the small ships channel and made our way around Brownsea Island arriving at Poole Quay Haven marina at 13.30hrs. As it was a Bank Holiday it was very busy, especially as the sun was shining but the berthing master found us a place.



On our way out of Gosport: new crew member Steve on the helm

Tuesday 30 May: Left Poole at 07.50hrs on route to Portland Harbour a distance of 22nm. Again, we had strong easterlies and at times were doing 7.5knts with the jib up only. We arrived at Portland Harbour entrance at 12.40hrs.

It took us another 30 minutes to motor to the marina. This man-made harbour is one of the largest in the world in the southwest corner. The marina and its facilities were developed as the sailing venue for the 2012 Olympics. Soon after we arrived, an army Chinook helicopter flew in together with a few smaller helicopters. We later learnt that this was Suella Braverman arriving to inspect what is now the location of the asylum accommodation barge.



Portland Harbour

The following day we were up at 06.00hrs to leave at 07.00hrs. It was overcast with strong winds. There is a tidal race around Portland Bill which can be dangerous if you get your timings wrong. There had been many discussions on the pontoon the previous evening between boat skippers about it. It was comforting to see that we had got the timings right for the passage plan as everyone left with us, plus other boats coming out from Weymouth. Most boats went in close to the headland where there is a narrow passage to avoid the tidal race. We went out to sea which is further but, as it was my first time around this headland, was the safest option. We could clearly see the confused water between us and the headland. We started with the jib

only but by midday we put a reefed main up then eventually a full main as the winds died – our top speed was 7.6knts. We arrived at Torquay marina at 16.15hrs giving us an average speed of 5.8knts. After that a drink was required. The recommended pub was the Hole in The Wall, dating back to 1540, which served good beer and excellent fish and chips.



Leaving Torquay

Thursday 1 June: Left Torquay at 09.00hrs sailing under the jib only but still doing 6.5knts with 20knts of wind behind us. We sped round to the entrance of the River Dart, only a short 10nm, and motored up the Dart to Dartmouth with the sun coming out – very pleasant. We called up the marina but there was no space. We initially picked up a buoy but got moved off by the harbour master as there was a cruise ship coming in. He pointed us in the direction of the council pontoon, not mentioned in my Reeds Almanac, the skipper's bible.



Arriving Dartmouth

We tied up on this pontoon which is in the river with no connection to the land but this wasn't a problem as there are water taxis which run late into the night. From Dartmouth we took the ferry to the Kingswear

side to see the steam train that runs to Paignton then the ferry back to the Dartmouth side for a beer and a meal. Walking back down to the river to catch the water taxi to the pontoon, we saw a small crowd who were being entertained by a large seal swimming around close to the old fortifications. A wonderful sight in this pretty natural harbour.



Leaving Dartmouth: cruise ship in background

The following morning we saw the cruise ship arriving and watched as various tugs expertly turned it around and tied it up to buoys fore and aft in this very narrow river – especially difficult as it was very windy. We set off at 07.00hrs under full jib but had to reef that in as the wind hit 25+knts. By midday the wind eased off and we put the full jib out again. We arrived at Plymouth breakwater at 13.15hrs and had tied up in Plymouth Yacht Haven by 14.00hrs. The sun was out so we walked to Turnchapel, the local village, and had a beer in the Boringdon Arms.

Saturday 3 June: Motored out of Plymouth at 08.00hrs – it was sunny and the winds were light. A porpoise followed us at a distance for a time until just outside the breakwater. The wind filled in and we reached 6-7knts until around 14.30hrs when the wind died. At 15.00hrs we dropped the sails and motored passed Plymouth Docks to the Premier Plymouth Marina. As we tied up, we managed to drop a mooring line into the water. A beer

was beckoning so we decided to retrieve it later. We went to the bar for a beer and booked a table for our evening meal.



Falmouth

After our meal we got the fishing tackle out to retrieve the mooring line. The security turned up to tell us fishing from the marina was not allowed. We explained what we were doing and managed to retrieve the line.

Sunday 4 June: Our next passage was from Falmouth to Milford Haven, 150+nm which I expected to take around 28 hours. The plan was to leave Falmouth on the morning of **Tuesday 6 June** and take advantage of the favourable tides. The way the tidal flows split around the Cornish Peninsula, if you leave Falmouth at the right time, you get three hours of ebb tide to take you southwest before heading north with six hours of flood tide. There was to be a change of crew with Steve leaving and my friends Matthew and Charley joining me. As Steve was not leaving until the following day, we caught the bus into Falmouth old town and went to the nautical museum. We then had to sample the local Cornish pasties for lunch.

I normally do all my passage planning on a navigation app on my iPad Pro called Navionics then transfer this to the chart plotter on the boat. I then have the chart plotter as the main navigational aid and the iPad as backup. As we were

going to be sailing overnight, and not in sight of land for long periods, I took the opportunity to buy charts for Land's End and approaches to Milford Haven as a further backup in case of electrical failure. Back on the boat I plotted our proposed track to Milford Haven. When sailing, we do an hourly log recording position, heading, speed over ground, wind speed and wind direction. For the passage to Milford Haven, we would physically mark our position hourly on the chart so if the electrics and iPad failed we'd have a good idea where we were.

Monday 5 June: Preparation for tomorrow, I cooked a Bolognese sauce and rice for the evening meal and made sandwiches for the day. My new crew, Matt and Charlie, arrived that evening. They're experienced sailors (both have their own yachts) so they reviewed my plan for the trip to Milford Haven and thought it was okay.



Rounding Land's End

Tuesday 6 June: Set sail at 08.00hrs from Falmouth with a two-hour watch system. I started followed by Charlie then Matthew. It was sunny with favourable easterly winds. We had great views of the Cornish coastline as we jibed along the coast coming close into land then jibing back out again. We had the lunch of sandwiches and heated up mini pasties & pork pies

before we turned the corner at the Longships lighthouse where we set course straight to Milford Haven. We were soon joined by a large pod of dolphins that stayed with us for three to four hours. Matt heated the Bolognese sauce and rice I had prepared for dinner as it started to get dark. There was too much north in the wind so we couldn't keep to the marked track on the chart plotter. During the night the wind increased and moved more to the east so we could head more on to the right line.



Charley and Matt: my crew to Milford Haven

Wednesday 7 June: Reduced sail and put a second reef in at the start of my watch at 02.00hrs but the boat was still leaning over at quite an angle. Both Matt and Charlie had gone down below for a sleep – it was a bit lonely up there in the dark. I clipped my safety line on and thought: "What am I doing here?" I needed to keep a watch out for ferries going to and from Ireland which crossed our track. My boat does not have radar but the chart plotter shows boats that have an Automatic Identification System (AIS) as a triangle. This system is compulsory on large commercial vessels but most modern vessels, including my boat, have it. I could see on the chart plotter a triangle indicating a vessel which would cross our track. If the bearing from my boat to this vessel stays the same then we'd be on a collision course. By selecting the vessel symbol on the chart plotter, lots of information about the vessel

including whether it is a danger is shown. After a while I saw the lights of the ship and, using my hand bearing compass, could tell that it was going to pass behind us.

The wind eased a bit around 06.00hrs, we still made very good time and continued sailing on the same heading of 015 degrees until the mouth of Milford Haven where we tacked and headed up the Haven to the marina arriving at 08.00hrs. We had sailed the 150nm trip in 24hrs at an average of 6.42knts. We tied up and got the covers on.

It appeared that all that crashing around overnight had loosened something in the toilet and there was dirty water in the bilges. I cleaned the bilges while Matt & Charlie put the covers on the sails and washed the outside of the boat down. We were all tired, so I decided to investigate the leak further when I came back to the boat in a few days' time. We closed the boat up and caught the 13.00hrs train out of Milford Haven.

LEG 2: MILFORD HAVEN, WALES TO DUNSTAFFNAGE, SCOTLAND

Monday 12 June: The plan was to set sail again on Wednesday 14 June but I decided to go back to the boat early to sort out the heads (toilet). My brother-in-law, Peter, was rejoining me for this leg. On arrival I took the panel off in front of the toilet holding tank and found the connection for the pump had sheared off. We managed to make a temporary repair but a new waste tank was required for a permanent solution – this would have to wait.

Tuesday 13 June: Milford Haven has a lock so that there is sufficient water for the boats to remain afloat at all states of the tide. This normally operates on demand



Heading out of Milford Haven 14/06/2023

every half hour, seven days a week, 24 hours a day. We found out that the pumps for the locks weren't working and to maintain water levels the lock gates would only open two hours before high water up to high water. The plan for Wednesday was to sail across the Irish Sea to Kilmore Quay in the Republic of Ireland. To arrive during daylight hours, we'd have to pass through the lock before the first high water which was 03.28hrs which was a few hours earlier than I had planned to leave.

A friend of mine, Martyn, joined us for this leg. He was travelling from Kent and due to a broken-down goods train he didn't arrive until 19.30hrs – nearly three hours late. Not wanting to make Martyn's experience worse, we took him out for a beer and some food before we told him that we were leaving very early next morning.



Ferry following us out of Milford Haven

Wednesday 14 June: The alarm went off at 02.00hrs and we passed through the lock at 02.45hrs – plenty of time to spare before the gates closed. As we

were motoring out, a ferry heading out to sea passed us escorted by a tug. Quite unnerving in the dark. We had favourable winds and sailed along at over 6knts in heavy rain. At around 13.00hrs the rain stopped, the wind died and a mist surrounded us. With a strong tide against us we motored the rest of the way to Kilmore Quay arriving in the sun at 17.30hrs having travelled 76nm. We nearly missed the entrance into the harbour as two trawlers were moored up leaving just enough space for us to enter. Before departing Milford Haven, I had dutifully filled out the Borders Forces C1331 form, a requirement when sailing from non-EU to EU member countries. As we arrived, we hoisted the yellow quarantine flag and as a courtesy the Irish tricolour. We never did see any customs officers.



Dinner onboard at Kilmore Quay, Republic of Ireland

Thursday 15 June: Clwyd, another friend of mine who lives in Kinsale, was joining the crew and was expected that evening. While we waited for him, we caught the bus to Wexford and explored the town. There were lots of unique shops along a semi pedestrianised street and a commercial harbour for large trawlers. We caught the bus back to Kilmore Quay and got off at Johnstown castle, a Georgian/Victorian Manor House, where we had a guided tour around the house and grounds.

The final route to Kilmore Quay is a marked channel called St. Patrick's

Bridge through a sandbank then a right angle turn on a safe watermark buoy. After which you follow leading marks for 1nm to the harbour entrance. When we got back to Kilmore Quay, we could see a yacht that had tried to take a shortcut and had gone aground. We later found out that it was a French boat and the harbour master had tried to call them up but they had not responded. It was gone the next morning so must have refloated safely on the high tide during the night, but it could not have been comfortable for them.

We had some great local fish & chips for dinner that evening and ate them sitting at the cockpit table – very pleasant. There are two pubs in Kilmore Quay and we tried them both that evening ending up the Wooden House pub where Clwyd arrived around 21.30hrs.



On the way to Arklow: the crew keeping dry down below

Friday 16 June: Left Kilmore Quay at 06.50hrs. The wind was on our nose until we rounded the headland so we motored. We turned the corner after about an hour, the wind was light and tide strong so we carried on motoring. It also started raining heavily. The rain eased off at 09.00hrs but still no wind and a tide of 3knts, so progress was slow. We eventually entered between the outer piers and headed up the River Avoca to the Arklow marina arriving at 17.30hrs. I had phoned the marina ahead of our arrival and had been told to raft up against another

boat called Three Swans which was on one of the pontoons in the river. The area around the marina was very industrial. We walked over the bridge and into the old town in heavy rain where we found Christies, a bar restaurant, serving local sea food and a perfect Guinness.



Entrance to Dublin Bay

Saturday 17 June: Up at 05.45hrs and motored out at 06.30hrs. Initially the wind was fickle, and we sailed until around 11.00hrs when the wind increased to 12knts. We cut the engine and carried on under sails only achieving 6.3knts. We arrived at Dun Laoghaire marina around 12.50hrs having covered 36nm. From this marina we could catch a train into Dublin. Peter and I cleaned a small amount of water from the bilges, and looked everywhere for where it was coming from, even taking the panel in front of the waste tank off, but it was dry underneath. Much later, when we were coming down the east coast, we found the water was coming from the raw water-cooling pump. The engine heat was drying the water in the engine compartment, and it was not until it got much worse that I found the dried salts. This was to cause a problem on the last passage – more of that later.



The Ferryman, Dublin

Sunday 18 June: Caught the DART light railway into Dublin and went to the EPIC Exhibition which is the story of Irish immigration. We spent 90 minutes going around it (very interesting). I highly recommend it. Afterwards we had a Guinness at The Ferryman pub, a traditional Irish bar which is full of old bric-a-brac. Then we walked to Temple Area where we ate at the Gaelic Boxy, a traditional Irish potato restaurant.



Carlingford Marina

Monday 19 June: Up at 06.00hrs to get underway at 06.30hrs with a sunny day at last! We had 9knts of wind on our side – perfect to get the gennaker out. The gennaker is 90sqm which is more than the main and jib areas together. It's like a spinnaker but is asymmetric so can be sailed closer to the wind than a spinnaker but not so good for going directly down wind. With this sail up we logged a speed of 8.6knts and at times were in double figures. Around 13.00hrs the wind increased to 13.5knts, too much for the gennaker, so we reverted to a main and jib. We arrived off Carlingford Cut at 14.30hrs and made our way up the channel to Carlingford Marina. It is quite a long way to the marina and to avoid a sandbank you must go past it and then come back on yourself. It was still very windy and it was difficult to distinguish the opening in the marina wall. We got in and tied up okay at 15.45hrs having covered a distance of 53nm. After tidying up the boat we walked

into Old Carlingford, a very quaint town, narrow streets with lots of typical Irish bars. We ate at The Carlingford Arms sharing local oysters for starters. Then we had a beer in Ma Bakers followed by another beer in PJ's – all Guinness of course.



Ardglass Marina

Tuesday 20 June: Had a lie-in as to have sufficient depth of water we could not leave the marina until at least 09.30hrs which was two hours after low water. At 09.45hrs we motored out the marina backwards as far as the main channel as there was insufficient room to turn. We had 0.4m of water below the keel, but once in the main channel we had a lot more depth and room. We turned and put the sails up and headed up to sea. We were now leaving the Republic of Ireland, so the tricolour was lowered and packed away. Once out at sea the wind direction and speed were suitable to put the gennaker up. We had a very pleasant sail of 31NM to Arklow under the main and gennaker doing a top speed of 7.2knts, arriving at 15.30hrs. Arklow is a very small marina with a narrow channel entrance surrounded by rocks. I could not get hold of the harbour master so motored in and tied up next to a large very expensive looking aluminium French boat. The owner of the French boat helped us moor up. The French skipper expected more of his friends and a succession of large aluminium boats turned up. They had sailed

from the Brittany coast via the Scilly Isles. We walked the short distance into Arklow village and had a very nice Chinese meal followed by a few Guinness in the pub nicknamed 'Mannies' after the old harbour master.



A gust of wind on the way to Ballycastle



Royal Ulster Yacht Club

Wednesday 21 June: Up at 06.00hrs to leave at 06.30hrs to get out of the marina before the tide dropped too far. We mostly sailed but had to do a bit of motor sailing as tide against us was 2.7knts at times. We arrived at Bangor Marina around 15.30hrs and got tied up just as there was a torrential rainstorm with strong winds. I was glad we were safely in the harbour. All the yacht clubs welcome sailors from other yacht clubs, so we took advantage of this and went to the Royal Ulster Yacht Club for dinner. This had excellent views across the water.

Thursday 22 June: Caught the train into Belfast and did a guided walking tour about the troubles. We saw the peace walls separating the Republicans and Loyalists sectors. I didn't realise that the gates at the interface barriers on the Shanklin and Falls roads are still closed between 18.00 and 06.00hrs.

It was a very interesting walk, although a tad long at three hours. The guide was passionate about the subject having lived through the troubles. After lunch we walked to the Titanic Exhibition which is well worth a visit.

Friday 23 June: Up at 06.00hrs and left at 06.30hrs sailing from Bangor on route to Ballycastle, a distance of 51nm. We had strong winds and very strong tides. At one point we had winds of 20knts gusting 25knts plus a tide of 5.7knts against us, but we still covered 1.7knts. As we rounded Fair Head and changed course for Ballycastle, the wind was all over the place – probably being disturbed by the headland – and we did an accidental gybe. Nobody was hurt but four mugs of tea that were just coming up from the galley went over the side.

We arrived at Ballycastle at 15.00hrs but had to wait offshore until a dredger, working in the entrance, moved out of the way. We were safely tied up at 15.30hrs to find out that our French friends in their aluminium boats were also there. The Giant's Causeway is not too far away and we decided to get a taxi there. It was drizzling as we walked down to the rocks but well worth it to see this strange rock formation.



Giant's Causeway

Saturday 24 June: Up at 06.30hrs. Clwyd was leaving us and caught the bus and train back to Kinsale. We motored out of Ballycastle at 07.30hrs. Initially we had a very

fast passage doing over 9knts with the tide in 200m depth of water. Once we got passed Rathlin Island the tide turned and the wind speed was 16knts but we still made 5 to 6knts. The sun was out and it made for a very pleasant sail across the Irish Sea to Scotland. We arrived at Port Ellen on Islay at 13.10hrs, having sailed 29nm. The entrance channel to the port has lots of exposed rocks but is well marked as the local CalMac ferries use the port. The small marina is owned by the community and profits are invested locally. We investigated access to the local distilleries and found that Laphroiaig was within walking distance so we headed off for a tasting. They were all a bit peaty for me but Martyn bought a bottle.



Islay and Port Ellen ahead

Port Ellen is a very pretty small village with one restaurant and one hotel serving food, both of which were fully booked – pubs tend not to do food there. Fortunately, there's a Coop so we bought food and ate on board. For weather forecasting I use an app called Predict Wind. This gives me predicted wind speeds for up to five days. Gusts of 30knts were predicted tomorrow in the Jura Sound where we were going so we decided to stay another day in Port.



Lighthouse with Port Ellen across the bay

Sunday 25 June: Nobody got much sleep overnight as the strong winds moved the boat about and howled through the rigging. The water slapping against the sides also made a noise. The winds eased and the rained stopped around 12.30hrs. We took the opportunity to go on a six-mile walk around the headland to the lighthouse which unusually is square. Part of the walk crosses a beach which has 'singing sand' – I think it is supposed to squeak as you walk on it but it did not work for me. Maybe the sand was too wet?



Craobh Harbour

Monday 26 June: To get a few hours advantage of the flood tide, we got up at 05.00hrs and left around 05.45hrs heading to Craobh up the Sound of Jura. On route we passed the Gulf of Corryvreckan which lies between the Isles of Jura & Scarba and is the site of the infamous whirlpool. The winds were still strong and ranged between 12 to 18knts which meant that when the tide turned, we still made good time arriving at 14.15hrs having sailed 47nm. Craobh is a very pretty marina and has a clubhouse with wonderful views overlooking the marina which is where we ate that night.



Boat lift out of Dunstaffnage

Tuesday 27 June. Up at 06.00hrs leaving around 07.00hrs, we had planned to sail to Tobermory but events were to scupper that plan. We went between one set of islands but missed the channel going through the second set and the keel grounded – not hard but I decided to play safe and diverted to Dunstaffnage to get a lift-out and inspection. We arrived around 10.15hrs and managed to arrange a lift-out for 13.30hrs. Andy from the yard inspected every inch of the joint between the keel & hull and checked the hull with a tap hammer – all was okay! The boat was relaunched and Andy came on board to inspect the entire length of the keel – no problems were found.

It had been raining all morning and we were all wet. We should have been in Dunstaffnage tomorrow, the end of this leg, but the weather was not improving so we decided to end this leg today.

To be continued...

Leg 3

Dunstaffnage/Oban via the Caledonian Canal to Port Edgar, Edinburgh

Leg 4

Port Edgar, Edinburgh to Home Port Suffolk Yacht Harbour

Around the regions



Bristol/Newport



Lunch at the Old Barn Inn, end 2023



We finished 2023 with a well-attended and enjoyable meal, once again at the Old Barn Inn, Llanmartin, near Newport. It was good to welcome new member Gareth Owen and his wife Julie, together with retired director Peter Young who made the long trip from Devon to our friendly gathering. The 28 members signed a 101st birthday card for the Trust's senior citizen, Dick Nash, who is well and still singing in his Cwmbran Care Home (see KierLink Issue 44) as well as a 'thinking of you' card to a member who was ill.



Artist impression: Dyson Cancer Centre

Alan Jones arranged an interesting visit in February to the new Kier built £14m Dyson Cancer Centre at

Bath Royal United Hospital which was about to be 'handed over'.



CT scanner

The project manager, Simon Clark, took the time to show the permitted group of nine of us around. We understand that the NHS, Dyson and Macmillan all contributed to this new facility – Dyson's contribution allowed for some specification upgrades.



Above bed TV's

Most furniture was yet to be installed. Great attention had been made to create a calm atmosphere with peaceful colours.



Peaceful treatment area



Artwork panel nearing completion

There was an open-to-the-sky, high level courtyard and some very fine original artwork also nearing finalisation. Ceiling heating panels and some ceiling TV's all led to an uncluttered, spacious and restful feel.



Roof Courtyard available patients

Much of the complicated plant was roof-mounted (a nightmare for sealing services penetrations) and various isolation & passive-pressure treatment rooms all had to have individual AHU's. We retired to a local inn after for a meal.



Plantroom

In March we returned to The Old Barn Inn for our Spring meal. Once again, the company, food and the service were excellent. We were pleased to welcome two further new members, Fraser Lewellyn and Elen Bradley, who recently retired from London back to her Newport roots.



The Old Barn Inn, March 2024



Our numbers were somewhat depleted at late notice due to a knee replacement, an abdominal operation and a major heart attack suffered by a member's wife the day prior! Another member, who lived nearby, was able to collect a defibrillator and assist until the ambulance arrived. All ended well thanks to two excellent ambulance crews with a subsequent emergency stent and attention at the hospital 23 miles away.

David Priddis

Central

A busy 2023 for the Central area of the Fellowship ended with our most popular event, the Christmas lunch. Held again at the Lilleybrook Golf Club in Cheltenham, it was a great opportunity to meet up with many old friends.



Christmas lunch

The venue looked after us so well that we have already booked for Christmas 2024 on 11 December – get it in your diary!



Central members at Worcester Fish Race

A whole range of activities for 2024 was put forward at our 'planning lunch' in January, and we are grateful to our volunteers that have already been organising days out to:

- River Severn Fish Pass in Worcester
- Twenty-nine locks at Caen Hill on the Kennet & Avon Canal.

The River Severn Fish Pass was part of a £20m investment, with Kier as main contractor, to re-establish fish migratory routes



Worcester Fish Race

up the River Severn that had been blocked by the construction of weirs. Weirs and locks had been built during the Industrial Revolution to enable transport by barge up and down The Severn to the Midlands and were drastically endangering several species of fish. The day included a very informative guided tour of the historic locks and workshops at Diglis Island in Worcester and a visit to the underwater viewing gallery of the Fish Pass for an opportunity to see the Twaite Shad and Salmon swimming upstream.



Worcester Fish Race

Details of the planned visit to the Kennet & Avon Canal and our other events through the summer are available through the Kier Fellowship section of the Kier website.

Robin Butler

Caen Hill Locks, Devizes

Ten colleagues visited this Scheduled Ancient Monument in Devizes which is the steepest lock flight in the world.

The Kennet and Avon Canal joins Reading in the east and Bristol in the west.

The canal was originally built in the late 1700s and due to run further north but land owners would not allow it to run via Marlborough. Hence the route to the south via Devizes necessitating a rise and fall of 237 feet. This was a major civil engineering project for its time. The canal was completed in 1810.

The main trade initially was coal followed by the cloth industry, stone and iron ore.

The canal was closed in 1851 when it fell into disrepair. A Trust was formed and the canal was fully restored and opened by the late Queen in 1990.

Kier is the Maintenance Team Contractor for the canal, following May Gurney.

Central members met in the canal cafe for tea and finished off the visit with a pleasant lunch in a pub overlooking the canal.

The canal was very active with boats at the time of our visit.

Glyn Salmon



Devon/Cornwall

Since the last KierLink, we have enjoyed our Christmas lunch held at The Boringdon Park Golf Club (pictured below) – a new venue for us and somewhere we shall probably return for this year.



The members then enjoyed a further lunch at The Marsh Mill Beefeater in March. The numbers were somewhat depleted but those that did attend were happy to return again later in the year. This will be arranged for September once the holiday season is over with hopefully more members able to attend.

Future events to be held therefore are lunch at The Marsh Mill Beefeater: definitive date TBC and Christmas lunch at The Boringdon Park Golf Club: December 2024.

Shirley Riddle

Leeds

Having recently taken over the area organiser role from Anne Leslie for the Northern region in March 2024, I can report that two lunches were held last year at The Bridge Hotel & Spa, Walshford, Wetherby, and were attended by circa 20 members. A quiz and raffle took place facilitated by Anne.

Anne has done a sterling job in keeping the Northern section going and she will still be playing a part by helping me with any quizzes/raffles that are organised for events.

As for this year's events, I booked a lunch for 12 May, again at The Bridge Hotel & Spa and provisionally one for 15 December 2024.

I have issued a questionnaire to ascertain Fellowship members' interests and other related information. I have had a steady stream of replies and await further responses. However, having looked at our membership, geographically we are quite widespread, and I can understand the reluctance by some to travel to the current chosen venue.

In addition, a number of our members have advised that they are less able to travel the distance due to age and/or infirmity.

Our members are predominantly based in North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and the North East. I am looking to organise a pub lunch to try to attract members initially from the North East who may not ordinarily attend an event due to location, starting with a lunch in a country pub in or around the Darlington area.

Members also have the additional Group event, the Bedford Garden party, to consider attending on Sunday 30 June 2024.

I have spent some time, and continue to do so, in ensuring my contact list is up-to-date and correct.

I am also going to introduce and issue, wherever possible, cards to celebrate birthdays and any special occasions.

On a personal note, I have received some really wonderful messages of support from members that the Northern region is going to continue.

Finally, I would like to record my thanks to Anne Leslie for her sterling work and also to you Brendan for your support, which has been tremendous.

Glenda Hamilton

Loughton/Witham

Christmas lunch

On 15 December 2023, 43 members and partners met at The Nags Head, Brentwood, for our annual festive lunch. We were greeted with two roaring fires, one either end of the dining area ensuring that it was not only the turkey and potatoes that were roasted!



Lunch with a speaker

We met again at The Nags Head in Brentwood for our 'lunch with a speaker' on 22 February 2024. Thirty of us enjoyed a three-course meal which again was good, but the service was terribly slow. Our speaker was Steve Lester who delivered his talk entitled 'Insights of a Provincial Auctioneer'. Steve entertained us with various anecdotes, what to expect at an auction, how to bid and what the various terms & codes that auctioneers use really meant.



He concluded his talk with two accounts of house clearances. The first was for an elderly lady who claimed that she had nothing of value:

"Apart from 'this' which might be worth a couple of hundred pounds."



Faberge item



Reading table from the Elm tree marking the Duke of Wellington's post

This turned out to be a Faberge item that went on to realise a five-figure sum at auction!



We enjoyed a welcome drink, a three-course meal with wine, coffee and, of course, our usual conversation and fellowship. While the food was very good and reasonably priced, unfortunately the service was really quite slow. The Nags Head was a new venue for our Christmas meal, worth trying, but we will find somewhere else next year!

The second item was a clearance for a retiring clergyman. In the attic was a writing table made, probably by Chippendale, from the Elm tree that marked the Duke of Wellington's command post at the Battle of Waterloo. After restoration, the table raised nearly £40,000 at auction. Apparently, there were seven pieces known to have been made from this particular tree. The whereabouts of six of them is unknown so it might be worth looking in your attic!

John Abbott with photos from Chris Oats

Bentley Priory Museum visit

On 2 August 2023 12 members formed the party which went to the Bentley Priory Battle of Britain Museum organised tour. Our guide was brilliant! She had a passion for the air defence which was known as The Dowding System. In reality it was a human computer with many people involved... very interesting.

Air Chief Marshall, Sir Hugh Dowding, had the foresight to evaluate the radar system before the war. It was he who, with Churchill, persuaded a 'no war' cabinet to make more planes before the war. If not, in 1940, we would have been in trouble. The Battle of Britain was between July and October 1940. Remember the Churchill speech:

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."



Five hundred and forty-four pilots were killed in the battle (about one in six) and 2,500 Luftwaffe airmen. Many from other countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. There were some from the USA and if they went home would be arrested for treason as at that time the USA was not in the war.



The average age of an RAF fighter pilot in 1940 was 20 and of those killed the average age was 22. Some only had a few hours training. A great tour and a pity more could not go.

John Spray

FUTURE EVENTS FOR LOUGHTON

- 8 July: Area golf day at Abridge Golf Club
- September: Hatfield House
- October: Royal Opera House
- 19 December: Christmas lunch at Mulberry House.

Maidstone

Deposits have been made for the following two events organised for 2024 which are to be held at The Cornwallis Suite, Courtney Road, Maidstone, ME15 6LF. It has a good-sized parking area, and the premises are all on one level.

- Event one: BBQ on Thursday 27 June 2024, arrival at 12.00pm and lunch at 12.30pm
- Event two: Christmas lunch on Friday 20 December 2024, arrival at 12.00pm for lunch at 12.30pm.

Anne Ransley

Maple Cross

We've had just two meals to report in this issue. The first at Biggles in the autumn and the second at Shendish Manor for our Christmas get together.



There was also one site visit to the Kier HS2 site near Wendover, Buckinghamshire (pictured above). There were limited spaces available but attending members said the cut & cover tunnel and large viaduct was very interesting. The contract was on a cost-plus basis and a number of milestones were reached giving the company bonus payments. So good news for Kier financially!

I've also been keeping my eye on the company share price which seems to have turned a corner and dividend payments are due to resume this year. Good news for the Fellowship as well!

My wife, Shirley, and I managed to get away to the Cotswolds for ten days and had an enjoyable time even though the weather wasn't the best. Visiting various National Trust & English Heritage sites plus Batsford Arboretum made it very interesting, especially the latter with an excellent lunch.

Jeff Taylor

Biggles autumn lunch



On Thursday 12 October we gathered at the Biggles restaurant at Denham Aerodrome, one of our 'go to' places.

Eighteen members attended and we had a lovely meal. There was a choice of six starters, six main

courses, and for dessert the 'sweet trolley' on which all the items looked nice.



Norman gave a speech at the end explaining how Kier have increased the funding provided to the Fellowship which shows that the company's financial position must be improving.



He also mentioned the Christmas meal where so far, we have 15 people attending - hopefully more will decide to come nearer the time.



Christmas lunch



It was a reasonable day with occasional sun, though cold, as we arrived at Shendish Manor. The heating was on and we soon settled down for a chat in the bar before the meal was served.



There were 27 at the Christmas meal and we had a private room with three tables so quite cosy.



The service was good and the food lovely though some found the portions large - better than the alternative!



The Christmas crackers were silent to help with recycling. Perhaps it would be better to dispense with them completely which would be much greener?



After the three courses, Norman gave a short speech advising of the forthcoming events and that having the meal on a Tuesday this year had presented problems for some, so he'd try and arrange for the usual Thursdays in future. The tea/coffee and mince pies were self-service. The coffee was good though the mince pies less so.



Thanks to Irene for the use of some of her photos in this edition.

Solent

New Forest Walk: 14/03/2024



Seven members of the Solent region met at the car park in Fritham near Cadnam in the New Forest for a gentle walk through this varied area.

The walk took us through varied areas of woodland and wonderful heathland of the western New Forest. There are good opportunities for deer-spotting on this walk but not if it's busy! During the rutting season (early October), fallow bucks can be seen clashing antlers on several ancient rutting grounds within the area. Unfortunately, we were not lucky this time but did have the benefit of one of March's rare sunny days, so all were happy. The walk is approximately five miles of mostly gravel tracks with a few gentle inclines and passes through ancient woodland & heathland taking in scenes reportedly used in the 1990's film Robin Hood Prince of Thieves.

Refreshments followed in the nearby Royal Oak serving good cask ales and a selection of ploughman's lunches – definitely recommended.

Derek Ward

'Start the year' walk: 05/01/2024

Eleven members and a dog set off from Hill Head, a small town on the edge of the Solent. With rare sunshine warming our backs and a low tide we all thoroughly enjoyed the New Year beach walk. Unfortunately, the cliff top footpath was too wet, so we reversed our route back to the pub (note to self, don't use that pub again!)



Nine years ago, almost to the day, Hill Head became globally famous for the grounding of a Japanese car carrier right opposite the town.



Fifteenth annual lunch: April 2024

Our annual lunch was thoroughly enjoyed by 38 members and their partners. Those 15 years have flashed by, apart of course from the Covid years. I'm sure Dick Side would have been pleased with our progress.



One of our guests at the lunch was Steve Topliss, the new director based in Southampton and responsible for Kier Construction activities from Dorset to Kent.



I'm confident that Steve will make a difference to the Fellowship here in the south.

He briefed us on the latest news and developments.

Winchester Cathedral

Every year 300,000 people visit the cathedral. Our modest party of 12 were guided up the 213 sprawling steps of the slender tower – not for the faint hearted! The views were spectacular, reminding us of the strategic importance of this cathedral.



Once the seat of the royal power of the Anglo-Saxons and Normans, a Christian church was built here around 645AD and over the next 350 years became the most important Anglo-Saxon church in England.

One of the cathedral highlights is The Winchester Bible. Commissioned in 1160 by William the Conqueror's grandson it is a masterpiece, a lavish testament 12th Century creativity.

Graham Willoughby

Christmas at Uppark

The National Trust House was decorated to mirror what it might have looked like when in its pomp. As described on the website:



"Feel the thrill of glitz and glamour upstairs in the house where we welcome you in with twinkling Christmas trees. Whilst downstairs is all about the hustle and bustle of preparation, think citrusy scents and bottles of champagne..."



This was followed by lunch at a local hostelry, a pre-Christmas get-together.

Exbury Gardens & Steam Railway: 08/05/2024



More than 100 years in the making, Exbury Gardens & Steam Railway is a spectacular collection of landscaped woodland, herbaceous, contemporary and formal gardens in a unique location on the Beaulieu River a few miles south of Beaulieu.

Exbury also boasts a narrow-gauge steam railway that travels through the gardens, has a play area, fantastic restaurant and much more! It is renowned for spring colour, set apart from other gardens by their world-famous collection of Rhododendrons and Azaleas. These stunning shrubs are at their height in April and May, lining the paths with elegant flowers. Spring also sees a spectacular display of Camellias and Magnolias, as well as hundreds of thousands of spring bulbs in the Daffodil Meadow and River of Gold.

Exbury's 200 acres transform into a shady sanctuary of tranquillity during summertime with the Iris, Herbaceous, Sundial and Centenary Gardens coming into full bloom at this time of year. During the colder months, expert planting showcases the vibrant red and orange of their Acer and Nyssa trees of which we have a National Plant Collection. Steam Railway Exbury's narrow-gauge railway departs from a replica Victorian station Exbury Central, travels through a tunnel, over a bridge, around the new Dragonfly Pond and through the Summer Lane Garden which is only accessible by train.

Further information at: exbury.co.uk

Weald and Downland Museum: 27/09/2023

A small band of us ventured out in what looked like dubious weather for this visit. Thankfully, the weather turned out OK.



The museum is an open-air museum in Singleton, West Sussex, and covers 40 acres with over 50 historic buildings dating from 950AD to the 19th century, along with gardens, farm animals, walks and a mill pond.

The museum principally promotes the retention of buildings on their original sites unless there is no alternative, and encourages an informed & sympathetic approach to their preservation and continuing use.



The buildings at the museum were all threatened with destruction and, as it was not possible to find a way to preserve them at their original sites, they were carefully dismantled, conserved and rebuilt in their historical form at the museum.

These buildings, plus two archaeological reconstructions, help the museum bring to life the homes, farmsteads and rural industries of the last 950 years. Along with the buildings, there are 'hands-on' activities like cooking, weaving and a number of working exhibits which include a bakehouse, working mill and blacksmith shop.



The grounds also house 'The Repair Shop' which was filming on the day. Jay Blades came over and chatted with us for quite a while. This was, probably, the highlight of the day!



John Clayton

A walk in the park



The 15 November saw six members return to the Queen Elizabeth Country Park (QEC) near Petersfield for an autumn amble. The QEC is part of the South Downs National Park and covers over 2,000 acres of beech, mixed and coniferous woodland and downland.



When we arrived, we were met by the sight of the glorious canopy of the beech trees displaying a mixture of orange, yellow and fading green leaves. The varied weather conditions over the summer months resulted in autumn arriving a bit later on the south coast this year.

We ventured forth, in sunny conditions, through the undulating woodland following the marked trail (five miles/eight km). The autumn colours continued to vary along our walk as different species of trees were encountered. Not all of our time was spent gazing upwards as we were mindful of the slippery conditions underfoot after recent rain.

We emerged safely after 2.5hrs of ambling for a well-earned rest and refreshment in the Visitor Centre café.

Walking the boards

The Chichester Festival Theatre was the venue for our visit in February. It was built in 1962 and the £105k cost was community funded with a maximum of £1k per individual. The concrete structure is octagonal in shape and designed in the then modern 'brutalism' style with a thrust stage which dispensed with the traditional style of stage with wings and a safety curtain. It has 1,316 seats all of which have an open view of the stage with no visual interruption of columns etc. In 2012/2013 the theatre was updated, mainly back of house, at a cost of £22m.



The original plan was to put on three plays from July-September. The first director was Laurence Olivier who then moved on to the National Theatre. From the initial low-key ambitions for the theatre it has become a national and international success attracting many famous actors/actresses of the stage and screen. It is open all year now with a varied range of productions. The seats are in high demand and sell out very quickly. Several productions have their premier at Chichester before moving to London and other UK venues.



The 90-minute tour took us backstage to visit the scene dock, stage, auditorium, dressing rooms and wigs & wardrobe department. We heard about the theatre's historic beginnings, how they put on different productions and use the technical features available. Of particular interest was how the productions move from the original concept idea through to the design/development stage, including building a scale model, and then into the final version. The open stage is very adaptable with movable trap doors and it can also rotate. Productions have included ice shows, one of which required 65,000 litres of water to be contained to support a 21' canal boat.



Our 'cast' of 17 members, thanks to our excellent guide Susan, had a very interesting, informative and enjoyable morning. Our visit was concluded by a visit to the theatre café for tea, coffee and cake. If you are in the area the theatre is well worth a visit.

Peter Wallbank

Solent events programme 2024

DATE	TYPE	EVENT	CONTACT
Sunday 23 June	Visit	Thrupton Historic, Thrupton	Derek Ward
Wednesday 26 June	BBQ	Royal Victoria Country Park	Derek Ward
Wednesday 10 July	Visit	Mix n Match day (see below)	John Clayton
Wednesday 31 July	Golf	Pitch & Putt	Peter Wallbank
Wednesday 11 Sept	Visit	Liberty's Owl Raptor and Reptile Centre	Sue Bridger
October	Walk	Details nearer the time	Graham Willoughby
November	Visit	Details nearer the time	Steve Malone
Tuesday 4 June and Tuesday 2 July	Golf	Please check with either Gary Mackie or Derek Ward for full details: Gary: scegamac@hotmail.com Derek: derek.ward50@outlook.com	Gary Mackie/Derek Ward

MIX N MATCH DAY DETAILS

The venues below are all located south of Farnham and are within a few minutes drive of each other. You will be able to attend one, two or all three of the events.

Morning: Rural Life Living Museum

Admission £11.25: less subsidy TBA. Should we get sufficient uptake it could be possible to have a guide.

The Rural Life Living Museum is an open-air museum and visitor attraction which collects and preserves objects associated with farming and goods used by local craftsmen circa 1750-1960. Many aspects of village and rural life are displayed recalling a way of life once common to the local people. The museum is distributed over ten acres of field, woodland and barns. The programme of events offers the perfect way to experience the museum as volunteers set about to bring it alive by educating & entertaining visitors with crafts, demonstrations and hands-on activities. The museum is set in an RSPB site which has a number of walks that you can do in conjunction with this visit.

For further information visit: rural-life.org.uk & <https://www.rspb.org.uk/days-out/reserves/farnham-heath>

Lunch: Bell & Dragon Churt

Details at: <https://www.belandthedragon-churt.co.uk/>

Afternoon: Sculpture Park

Admission £10.00: less subsidy TBA.

Lose yourself for hours along a winding two-mile trail through ten acres of enchanting woodland and water gardens. More than 600 large outdoor sculptures are displayed throughout the stunning grounds all year. The park is teeming with wildlife and plants which are ever-changing throughout the seasons. In summer you will find yourself lost in a labyrinth of lush gardens and in the bare trees of winter you will witness more of the vast exhibition all around, spotting sculptures from afar but still managing to lose yourself in the depths of the woodland.

"Surrey's best kept secret... a hidden gem."

For Further information visit: <https://www.thesculpturepark.com/>

John Clayton

Tempsford

Since our last report we have continued monthly lunches at various pubs. The photos throughout are from our Christmas lunch at The Pavenham Golf Club.



On 8 August we were welcomed to the Wheatsheaf in Perry – a favourite venue where the food and service have always been first-class. Six members enjoyed a pre-lunch walk led by John Busby by Grafham Water, and were joined by a further eight for lunch.



On 7 September, five of us enjoyed a walk led by Ron Whitlock in woods near Old Warden We then joined up with another eight for lunch at The White Horse, Southill, where good food is also assured.



Thirteen of us tried a new venue on 12 October – The Crown, Eaton Socon. While not the most successful event we may well return in the future.

We had planned a pre-lunch talk on canals for 8 November, to be followed by a buffet lunch at The Anchor Great Barford, but there were so few takers that the talk was cancelled. In the end, just five arrived for a normal lunch – very unexpected as the speaker has been popular in the past and the buffet lunches are lovely. Better luck next time!

Our Christmas lunch was another success at The Pavenham Golf Club with attentive staff and first-class food. We had an added interest of a table quiz organised by John Busby and a raffle organised by Viv Chesterfield. Was it a coincidence that John’s table won the quiz? Of course it was – no skulduggery here! Each diner on the winning table (except Jon!) received a lottery ticket – unfortunately there were no winners. It had been agreed that the proceeds of the raffle would go to the Motor Neurone Disease Association (see article in the Autumn/Winter 2023 issue of KierLink). Thanks to the generosity of our members and a number of raffle prizes, **we were able to make a donation to the MND of £200.**

We have had three lunches so far in 2024:

15 February: 16 of us lunched at The Barley Mow, St. Neots, where the staff could not do enough for us and the food was really lovely – long may it remain so!

14 March: we had originally planned to return to the Eaton Oak,

St. Neots, but needed somewhere different in view of the previous experience. We had also learned that the owners of the Wheatsheaf in Perry were selling up and buying a smaller place on the other side of Grafham Water – The Mermaid in Ellington. Stephen Jarvis made contact and received assurance that they could accommodate 23 members and partners. They did so with aplomb although it was quite a squeeze.

9 April: fewer of us (six) had lunch together at The Five Bells, Henlow. This popular venue became very busy but we enjoyed the usual good quality food from the ‘meal deal’ menu.

Our plans for 2024-25 include a two-hour cruise downstream on the Ouse from Huntingdon, a visit to King Richard III Museum and the Cathedral in Leicester.

Harold Thompson



The 'Tempsford trio' just LOVE to cycle!

KEEP FIT or KEEP CLEAR?

Like many people, I have cycled since childhood to school and then work – I guess our generation always did. I remember the immense joy at receiving an adult racer for passing the 11+ exams, even though at that time it was rather big for me, and I had wooden blocks on the pedals so that I could ride it! I think it cost £15 brand new.

My children were introduced to cycling and we used to ride together until they got involved in other activities. I have continued in retirement but, in recent years, creaking knee joints and a dodgy ticker have meant abandoning this enjoyable pastime.

Two of my friends in the Tempsford area of the Fellowship have always been very keen cyclists – here is what each of them has to say about it.

Ron Whitlock

My cycling story began before my birth because my father was a mad keen racing cyclist. A tandem was my parents' only personal transport until I was 12 when my father bought a Vespa scooter. Before I was big enough to ride on the pillion seat behind my mother, I was transported in a sidecar welded to the frame of the tandem. Having survived all of that, I enjoyed the typical succession of bikes as I grew up. It's slightly surprising that I never joined an early cycling club or took up racing.

At one time my father owned a tricycle – basically a racing bike with an extra wheel. This was a traditional 'upright' design that is surprisingly different to ride compared with its two-wheeled relative. I still have his 1949-ish racing bike though it's no longer in great shape. It was a very desirable model in its day and bought second hand from a

British national endurance racing champion. I do like quirky things, so around ten years ago I bought a Moulton space-frame bike that separates instead of folding. It has a very convenient format with small wheels and fits into my estate car or a railway carriage quite easily without separating.



Whitlock senior and 1949 AS Gillott racer around 1994

All the foregoing is a preamble to my passion for my new trike which



Jane and Tandem, 2017

I can't indulge as much as I'd like. The British weather often inhibits my rides as does my demanding garden! My partner Jane and I used to ride most weekends (on a tandem) but the large garden and her painful hip have stymied that particular activity. Some of you will be aware of our love of gardening, as witnessed on BBC's Gardener's World (21 April 2023) which featured my home video which ran for all of one minute and 28 seconds!



On my Moulton with grandson on his Frog

My tricycle is an electrically assisted recumbent ICE Trike, replacing the unassisted model that I had for ten years. Both it and I were getting a bit creaky, and I had promised myself that I would 'go electric' when I reached 80. Well, I did it six months early. It is the most wonderful machine, even more comfortable than its predecessor – think 'deckchair with pedals'. The e-assist helps me up to about 15.5mph but any faster and I'm on my own as the law doesn't allow any assistance beyond that. Yes, it is a very expensive indulgence but I haven't had a new car in 14 years. The trike cost me 40 times what I paid for my first car back in 1967 but not in real terms!

Riding a recumbent trike is very different from the 'upright' design, as I hinted at earlier, but will present no difficulties to anyone who rides a bike. On the contrary, you can come to a halt at the traffic lights, have a snooze, all without falling over or having to put a foot down. A recumbent trike doesn't present the risk of falling off that I referred to regarding an upright, and I take the liberty here of plagiarising part of a learned article by a Tom Culver:

"When stationary the bicycle is inherently unstable: it falls over. The tricycle is stable: you can sit on it forever. But as speed increases and corners become tighter, the situation is reversed. The bicyclist can maintain his stability by leaning into the corner, while the tricyclist will fall over if he goes too fast. But there's more to it than just that.

This difference becomes apparent when a bicyclist attempts to ride an upright tricycle for the first time. The camber on most roads makes the novice tricycle rider feel he or she is falling towards the kerb, so they turn to the left to regain balance, and go straight into the ditch. This is not so obvious on a recumbent tricycle, partially because it does not feel as if one is on a bicycle: it is more like a car and, being much closer to the ground, it does not feel it is leaning as much. The conventional tricycle has the centre of gravity perhaps a couple of feet above the axle, whereas a recumbent tricycle, with a centre of gravity only a few inches above the axle, is very much more stable."



On the e-assisted ICE Adventure 26" HD at last!

Back to my own experience of the recumbent trike, I continue to enjoy the relaxed posture and never tire of seeing people, especially small children, amused when I whizz by (I think my speed appears faster than it actually is due to my low profile).

Until recently, I felt completely at ease at speed but a short time before writing this, I found myself going fast downhill on a bumpy road around a right-hand bend and with adverse camber. The rear wheel was 'skittering' and I thought I was going to roll! But here I still am a little wiser.

Here's hoping for a good summer 2024 – the recumbent tricycling and the gardening will just have to fight it out!

John Mouatt

My wife Louvain (Lou) and I have been keen cyclists from an early age. We've cycled in the UK and on a 'barge cycling' holiday in France. I've also cycled in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand while working overseas.

After I retired, I qualified as a cycling instructor and trained around 500 school children to cycle safely & confidently under the UK Government's 'Bikeability' training scheme for a couple of years in the Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire areas. Problems with a dodgy knee forced me to give that up but after a replacement knee operation in 2012, I went back to cycling.

We now live in the St. Neots area and I, along with another keen cyclist, started up a leisure cycling group in the area back in 2008. At that time the group was aligned to the Sustrans organisation. In 2016, I decided to part with them and together with another keen cyclist started up the 'Old Gits' (OGs) independent cycling group which is still active today.

The group meets for rides alternating on Sundays and Wednesdays ten days apart. The rides are generally around 25 miles in winter and 30-35 miles,



The Old Gits cycle group at the Waresley Garden Centre after a mid-ride stop (five with e-bikes!)

or longer, in the summer. There are no 'rules or regulations for the OGs, but everyone joining the rides are expected to have a well-maintained cycle, be confident cycling on all types of roads and understand that they ride 'at their own risk' i.e. there is no group insurance! However, members are encouraged to have third-party insurance – just in case of accidents involving others. Thankfully, the OGs have only had a couple of accidents. These were generally due to road conditions and not too serious. The group sets off from a local café in the St. Neots riverside park at 10.0am sharp and usually stop at a café or pub for a mid-ride stop for about 45 minutes before continuing with the return leg of the ride back to the starting point by around 3pm.



Route to the Giddy Goat Café in Riseley, 26.5 miles, 28/02/24: a typical Old Gits ride plot using the RWGPS GPS plotting software

Most of the OGs are retired and the oldest rider is 82. I'm 79 now and there are a couple of riders who are still working. Numbers joining the rides vary from three to five on Wednesday's and eight to ten on Sundays. Since starting the OGs the group have been on around 220 rides and totalled up over 6,000 miles on around 80 different routes

in the area. We have only had to cancel a few rides due to inclement weather conditions but had to cancel 20 rides due to Covid restrictions.

I am one of the OGs who plans and leads the rides and usually plan & plot the ride using a website called 'Ride with GPS' (RWGPS) which is a user-friendly site. From this I can transfer the ride file digitally as a .fit or .gpx file to my Garmin Edge cycle computer which I then use to follow the route on the ride. A few days before a ride I will send out a ride invitation to all OGs, attach a word.doc plot of the route, plus a GPS file to those who have GPS devices. It confirms the length of the ride and a commentary about the predicted weather forecast i.e. whether it's advisable to bring 'wets' or not!

The functionality of RWGPS website is that all the rides are stored on the site, and these can be called up at any time and reissued which is very useful. Currently, I have over 400 rides stored on the site including the OGs ride routes.

Attached is a group photo of some of the OGs at the Waresley Garden Centre after a Sunday mid-ride lunch stop. Lou and I are on the RHS of the group. Also attached is a typical RWGPS ride route plot, as issued to the group before a ride,

Lou and I initially had 'manual' cycles for many years but when I started to have problems with my knees, I bought a couple of Kalkhoff e-bikes which we had for over eight years. We sold them in 2020 and replaced them with a Raleigh Motus tour for Lou and a Cube Touring Hybrid Pro 500 for me. Both of these e-bikes have proved to be very reliable. Lou has covered over 4,500 miles and I over 6,000 miles on these cycles to date.

There are a few misconceptions about e-bikes and people tend to think that owning one is 'cheating'. However, the fact is the rider still has to pedal – it's up to the individual how much they choose to use the 'e' assistance. It enables people to extend their cycling lives generally at a faster pace than they would without the assistance. They give assistance on steep hills, enable the riders to cover longer distances and also be assured of getting home when they are tired! In the OGs group there are now six riders who have e-bikes and others are considering buying one.

Harold Thompson

When cycling with my children we used to hang the bikes on the back of my Rover Montego estate car and take them to off road routes like Grafham Water and Rutland Water. Although I have never been a long-distance rider like Ron, John and Lou, I have missed the pleasure of a leisurely ride on a sunny and calm day. In addition to the aforementioned physical problems, I have become nervous about riding on public roads so bought a folding e-bike during the pandemic that was light enough to lift into my car. However, being lightweight and foldable there are unacceptable compromises in the design. I have found it difficult to adjust the saddle position and handlebars to make riding comfortable.

Having seen Ron's first recumbent tricycle, I was keen to see his electrically assisted version. I was delighted when he offered to let me try it and last summer we went for a ride – he on my e-bike and I on the e-trike. I am not sure Ron enjoyed the bike but I LOVED the trike! Here is a link to the video I made with the camera strapped to my chest – copy and paste it into

your search engine: <https://youtube/HQMbF3dsGRc>

Subsequent efforts to acquire a lightweight, folding, recumbent e-trike have been difficult. The only one I could find that met all my criteria went out of production last year because no-one bought it. Having looked at machines from the Far East and Europe I came across an English company making trikes for people with disabilities – Tomcat UK. One of their models separates into two, making it possible to lift each part into the car.



My folding e-bike (now for sale)

https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipNM7E3UeRStLSpEUdqWK7c4DczO55kt7zeW6aOr5Z2xk899yP_oy5iyYkNaqJUYxg/photo/AF1QipO6qIKHCRcL8fS4PpWJxG3WBg-qMloe-vNN-3d0?key=S3ZaeWJLZURER0lxcnhDdkIDUGtRN3RrUm9FV2h3

https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipNM7E3UeRStLSpEUdqWK7c4DczO55kt7zeW6aOr5Z2xk899yP_oy5iyYkNaqJUYxg/photo/AF1QipMGEvvh3j0QcSQ1bHA9JtHO-Htwvhj6r51BTjg?key=S3ZaeWJLZURER0lxcnhDdkIDUGtRN3RrUm9FV2h3

Tomcat Flame right/below

The company offers free home demonstrations in order to match a customer's needs with the cycle that has the appropriate features. I have recently had such a demonstration of the Tomcat Flame and was joined by Ron and John – see pictures and additional links to video clips at the links below. My Tomcat Flame is on order but won't be delivered until about the end of June.



Waterbeach



We held our annual Christmas lunch for area members on 12 December 2023. The venue was at the Brothers in Arms restaurant in Walpole Saint Andrew, part way between Wisbech and Kings Lynn. Thirty-six members & partners

attended and had an enjoyable time for a catchup. This is the second time we've attended this venue.

We are currently considering where to go for 2024. We have already set the date as Tuesday 17 December 2024 and have a few options.

Very recently invitations have been sent out to current Eastern members for the Bedford Garden Party. We are receiving feedback.

We intend to arrange a summer event for an afternoon tea at local hotel Congham Hall. We are currently determining a date and format.

Mark Jude



A warm welcome to the following new members

NAME	CITY/TOWN	AREA	WORKED FOR	YEARS OF SERVICE
Derry Barton	Linlithgow, West Lothian	Tempsford	Kier Scotland	25
Elen Bradley	Newport, Gwent	Bristol/Newport	Kier Utilities	7
Glen Bright	Congleton, Cheshire	Central	Kier Midlands	17
Jack Brown	Basingstoke, Hampshire	Solent	Kier Places	15
Lee Campbell	Newcastle, Tyne and Wear	Leeds	Kier Infrastructure	16
David Collins	Carnforth, Lancashire	Tempsford	Kier Major Projects	15
Marie Donnarumma	Sholing, Hampshire	Solent	Kier Southern	18
Adam Ewing	Warwick, Warwickshire	Central	Kier Midlands	14
Paul Georgeson	Doncaster, Yorkshire	Leeds	Kier Major Projects	14
Ron Gulliver	St. Neots, Cambs	Loughton	Kier London	45
John Hayles	St. Ives, Cambs	Waterbeach	Kier Eastern	24
Robin How	Peterborough, Cambs	Tempsford	Kier International	33
Manohar Khatwani	Grays, Essex	Loughton	Kier London	1
Claire Lepoutre	Stevenage, Herts	Tempsford	Kier Infrastructure	21
Fraser Llewellyn	Swindon, Wilts	Bristol/Newport	Kier Western	10
Malcolm Mckenzie	Colchester, Essex	Loughton	Kier Eastern	7
Robert McNaught	Riddrie, Glasgow	Tempsford	Kier Scotland	17
Sandra Partrick	Norwich, Norfolk	Tempsford	May Gurney	36
Allison Pitcher	Harlow, Essex	Loughton	Kier London	16
Anthony Sandor	Nuthall, Notts	Tempsford	Kier Natural Resources	11
Tim Stretton	Lymington, Hants	Solent	Kier Southern	51
Nicholas Tooke	Wisbech, Cambs	Waterbeach	Kier Eastern	34
Sarah Topping	Tadcaster, North Yorkshire	Leeds	Kier Northern	21
John Wakerley	Bottesford, Notts	Rushden	Kier Marriott	43
Andrew Walton	Wakefield, West Yorkshire	Leeds	Kier Northern	24
Ian Withey	Wrenningham, Norfolk	Waterbeach	Kier Eastern	7

FIGHTBACK FUND... continued

First, a big thank you to all of those of you who have sponsored me so far, especially to the Tempsford group who raised £200 at their Christmas lunch and donated the money to my challenge.



Pictured l-r: Jerry and John

By the time you read this I hope to have completed the challenge as I have the final eight races set out and am aiming to complete the 65th race on 8 June at the Great Denham Park Run (just outside Bedford). By then I will have run 661k (410 miles). This gives me a week to spare in case something goes wrong!

I would be very grateful for any further sponsorship for this worthwhile cause.

Thank you!

Jerry Pullinger

At the time of writing this (end April), I have completed 57 of the 65 races I set out to do in my 65th year. I have covered a race distance of 602 kilometres (374 miles) which included the Seville marathon (42.2k/26.2miles). This was my first marathon for 10 years. I was pleased to get round in 3 hours 46 minutes (albeit too hot for me during the second half) and still be able to walk after to sightsee in the beautiful city.



Jerry's medals so far are pictured left... **WOW!** Scan the bar code to follow his epic journey here for 'Fightback Fund'.

Sayings from Duncan Mort

Hopefully some of these will raise a smile!

Something went wrong in jet crash, expert says:
Really?

Police begin campaign to run down jaywalkers:
Now that's taking things a bit far!

Panda mating fails; veterinarian takes over:
What a guy!

Miners refuse to work after death:
No-good-for-nothing' lazy so-and-so's!

Juvenile court to try shooting defendant:
That's taking things too far!

War dims hope for peace:
I can see where it might have that effect!

If strike isn't settled quickly, it may last awhile:
Ya' think so?!

Cold wave linked to temperatures:
Who would have thought!

New study of obesity looks for larger test group:
Weren't they fat enough?

Astronaut takes blame for gas in spacecraft:
That's what we get from eating those beans!

Kids make nutritious snacks:
Do they taste like chicken?

Hospitals are sued by seven foot doctors:
Boy, are they tall!

Typhoon rips through cemetery; hundreds dead:
Did I read that right?

Couple slain; police suspect homicide:
They may be on to something!



HEADLINES

SEEN

IN

NEWSPAPERS