

KierLink

The magazine for the Kier Fellowship Trust | Issue 44 | Autumn/Winter 2023



THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY
OF KIER CELEBRATIONS
PAGES 12, 16, 20

MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE
FIGHTBACK FUND
PAGE 23

JOHN SIMSON – A
CELEBRATION OF LIFE
PAGES 24/25



*Richard James Nash:
Contratulations on your 100th Birthday!*



Neil Meixner

Chairman's matters and Administrator's report

We are delighted to say that there has been a period of impressive engagement between Kier Group and the Fellowship since we last reported to you and we are delighted to share some of the areas where substantial progress has been made.

Kier IT has become highly active in recent weeks, assisting us to replace the now defunct website with a much more user-friendly version which hopefully by the time you read this edition of KierLink will be fully operational. The Fellowship has also been asked to get involved in other areas of the business ranging from work winning to mentoring and we look forward to working with Kier to that end. So, if you'd like to help for example with mock professional interview, one-to-one mentoring or indeed providing particular work-winning expertise do get in touch with either of us.

We know, in the absence of the website calendar, your area organisers and their committees have been trying their best to keep you informed in more traditional ways of the various events going on across the country. Please do take part and support these great events.

It is with sadness that we announce that Sharon Jenkins has decided to step down as area organiser at the end of the year and the Fellowship would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all the work over the 9 years since she took over, having shared it for an interim period, following the death of Norman England.

The Fellowship needs volunteers in order to be successful but, unfortunately, we now have two vacancies in our ranks, one in Liverpool/Manchester as a result of Sharon's decision and at Rushden following Brian Hill's retirement. Please, even if you don't want to do the area organiser role, get in touch with either of us if you'd like to help. Support with administration will be provided in local Kier offices.

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, Andrea McDaid (**email address andrea.mcdaid@outlook.com**) or Neil Meixner (**neilmeixner@gmail.com**) or Brendan O'Boyle (**email address as listed below**) and we will be pleased to assist you.

Interest in the Fellowship remains high with new members joining all 12 of our areas during the year and we currently have 1,346 members on our database.

It is fantastic that so many people still want to keep up with their former colleagues. If you know of new retirees or leavers, why not see if they'd like to join the Fellowship. The application form is hopefully available on the website by now but if not, you can get one by contacting Brendan O'Boyle.

Please make sure that you notify us of any change of address, telephone number or email either to your area organiser or Brendan O'Boyle so that our records can be updated 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 Group Fellowship Trust, please contact Brendan O'Boyle by email as shown below.

Have a splendid Christmas and New Year!

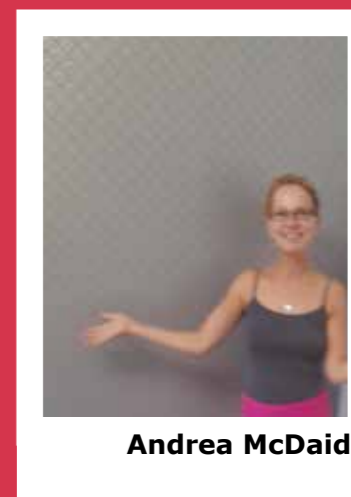
Email: brendan.o'boyle.ext@kier.co.uk

Neil Meixner & Brendan O'Boyle

Editor's note

Dear members,

This year my husband, with the help of a close friend, has installed a gorgeous new kitchen, we now have a good-sized utility room and I'm currently redecorating the dining room. There's been a lot of trials and tribulations on the way for the three of us... mine was papering a 'feature wall' in the dining room and I've never papered before.



Andrea McDaid

When I bought the paper, the checkout lady asked me if I'd checked the batch numbers were the same. There were three different numbers to look at which matched. With the guidance of my mum who has great decorating skills, I hung the paper. There is no window in the dining room, so the lighting is dreadful which made it very challenging.

To our horror we realised strips number 1 and 3 out of the 7 looked darker – obviously one roll was the wrong batch number!

Back to the store to explain my amateur skills and they kindly gave me the correct roll for free as the checkout lady should have checked them herself. Mum gently removed panels 1 and 3 (making it look so easy), I replaced them and it now looks lovely. You can see how happy I am in the photo above!

Now let's see what exciting things you've all been doing... I hope you enjoy the read.

Very best wishes, Andrea

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Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year to you all!

Copy deadline for issue 45 2024:



To be advised by Administrator

Email andrea.mcdaid@outlook.com

Obituaries

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

John Arther	01/05/2023
Dennis Bartleet	08/06/2023
Andrew Bell	11/01/2023
Joyce Blake	08/01/2023
Maureen Bleay	25/04/2023
Raymond Bond	18/09/2023
Betty Boyle	30/05/2023
Sylvia Bradbury	21/12/2022
James Broderick	19/01/2023
Stephen Brook	18/07/2023
Arline Burke	03/01/2023
Stephen Burley	02/10/2022
Kenneth Burnett	06/01/2023
Keith Bygraves	29/06/2023
Gabriel Cagliariari	08/06/2023
Alan Carr	02/02/2023
David Chilton	21/12/2022
Tony Clark	23/11/2022
Roy Clarke	07/08/2022
Winifred Clayden	15/06/2023
Barbara Coleman	18/12/2022
Patricia Collings	19/11/2022
Margaret Cotter	01/11/2022
Philip Crees	18/07/2022
Richard Dand	22/01/2023
Sidney Dean	16/09/2023
Alexander Dillon	29/01/2023
David Everitt	06/01/2023
Frederick Ford	06/03/2023
John Fuller	14/09/2022
Barbara Fulton	10/02/2023
Majorie Garland	08/09/2022
Laurence Garner	06/07/2023
George Gates	04/02/2023
Jill Gearing	09/03/2023
Graham Goddard	23/07/2022
Gillian Graham	06/01/2023

Robert Hallett	01/05/2023
Vera Harris	25/07/2023
Jean Harrison	18/12/2022
George Harvey	03/12/2022
Anthony Hibbs	27/09/2023
Anne Hildore	30/06/2023
Barry Hollowood	11/12/2022
Amy Horner	31/03/2023
Mary Hornsby	04/07/2023
Christopher Howes	12/10/2022
Robert Inglis	02/01/2023
Peter Jeff	25/04/2023
Hilda Kent	26/10/2022
Florence King	19/02/2023
John Knight	15/11/2022
Clive Kurn	05/10/2022
Malcom Lillis	20/11/2022
Frank Livermore	21/01/2023
Gillian Long	14/09/2022
Alan Loxley	17/09/2023
Alfred Mann	28/07/2023
Gary Matthews	14/02/2023
Mary McColl	06/07/2023
Thomas McGinn	04/12/2022
Dorothy McKeown	20/08/2022
David Mellon	12/10/2022
Ada Melton	28/05/2023
Cyril Merrison	12/11/2022
Thomas Middleton	04/09/2023
Brian Moisey	23/10/2022
Paul Monk	24/08/2022
John Mott	17/12/2022
Vivian Munday	16/01/2023
Colin Nightingale	09/06/2023
George Norman	23/02/2023
Margaret Normile	04/10/2022
Anthony North	19/12/2022

Reginald Pearson	17/02/2023
Dolores Pettet	03/01/2023
Heather Phillips	24/02/2023
Helen Pratt	05/08/2023
Steven Pratt	14/08/2023
Alan Price	30/06/2023
Roger Randall	08/08/2022
Denis Rhea	02/09/2022
Rita Riley	08/08/2023
Jean Roulston	03/01/2023
Gregory Savage	12/09/2022
Daphne Shepherd	02/11/2022
John Simson	16/08/2023
Roy Skingle	30/08/2022
Ian Smith	16/07/2023
Michael Sparkes	03/10/2022
Marion Stock	30/05/2023
Kevin Storey	17/03/2023
Lillian Stringer	21/04/2023
Stephen Sweatman	15/08/2023
Iris Thorpe	04/09/2023
Jennifer Towler	09/09/2023
Andrew Turner	24/05/2023
Paul Ursell	13/02/2023
Joan Waller	02/09/2022
David Weatherhead	14/05/2023
Constance Weeks	19/10/2022
Winifred White	01/12/2022
Richard Williams	13/01/2023
Joan Willsher	29/03/2023
Grace Wordley	07/07/2023

If any of your loved-ones aren't mentioned here, huge apologies. Please email Andrea who will make sure they are placed in the next issue.

Message from the Chief Executive



Andrew Davies

Hello everyone,

I would like to take this opportunity to share with Kier Group Fellowship some key reflections on the financial year to date.

In September, we released our full-year results for FY23, which continued to highlight the positive momentum behind the Group. Our order book has increased yet again, to more than £10bn, while we saw a 9% increase to our operating profit, to £132m. We also saw a significant increase in our year end cash position, to £64.1m.

This progress has given us the confidence to confirm we intend to start resuming dividend payments to shareholders as of our half-year results this year. We set out to achieve this as part of our medium-term value creation plan and is a significant milestone for the Group and our shareholders.

I would also like to update you on some operational changes from the past year which have been made to help us continue to grow. In July, we restructured our infrastructure services reporting segment, replacing the three former streams of Highways, Utilities and Infrastructure with two new divisions, Transportation and Natural Resources, Nuclear & Networks. Both divisions are thriving in their early months. More recently, we have decided to recreate two distinct business units for our London and Southern region in Construction, in order to give both the best chance to grow and win new work. We have a new strategy for Kier Places which means the business is well-placed to provide facilities management, retrofit and housing maintenance services to government departments and housing associations.

You may also have seen the news that we have acquired the rail assets of Buckingham Group. For me, this acquisition epitomises just how far we have come in the past few years. Within the space of two weeks, we became aware of, negotiated and secured an opportunity to acquire a business division in one of our key markets, hugely expanding our rail work across the country and saving 180 jobs.

High-quality work has also continued to be secured as we build and maintain relationships with our government and blue-chip clients. There are too many to list but do take a look at our new website to see news announcements across our businesses.

And finally, it's our people which continue to make Kier the organisation that it is. We have rolled out Expect Respect across the Group which sets out the behaviour standards we expect when working with us, we now have a thriving employee network for colleagues to talk openly about their experiences, we have launched an employee app to help us communicate better with all our people and, over the past year, we welcomed over 646 apprentices into Kier. We have a real focus on simplification and digitalisation over the coming year as we want to continue to help make our people's lives easier.

I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved as a Group. The position we are in now is down to our people and I would like to extend my thanks to the Fellowship for its support.

Wishing you a safe festive break.

Andrew Davies

Bowling at Writtle

On 24 May 2023, it all started as a conversation with John Jones late last year when he suggested that we might be able to enjoy a game or two of Lawn Bowls at his club at Writtle. With John's help, we were able to arrange this for Wednesday 24 May and 24 of us met at the club.

The weather was kind and we were warmly greeted by the club president, Gill Ellis, and several other members including (of course) John and, when she had finished car park duty, Jeanne.

After a short introduction to the gentle art of Lawn Bowls over tea, coffee and biscuits, we headed to the green to try our hands. Most of us had a go, although one or two preferred to watch in the morning sunshine. Just as the competitive spirit started to kick in, we were all called in for lunch.

The catering ladies at the club had prepared an excellent lunch for us and the well-stocked bar was open to purchase drinks. It would have been very easy to sit in the club house for the rest of the



Our bowlers in action



Jeanne Jones and Penny Bohannon enjoy the sunshine and the bowling



Our bowlers in action



A good turn out for the bowls day

afternoon enjoying the food, drink and the chatting, but once again the green called and we returned for another hour or so of bowling.

Shortly after 3.00pm we were, once again, called into the clubhouse for a magnificent afternoon tea after which members made

their way home. It was a splendid day and our thanks go to John and Jeanne and their friends at Writtle Bowling Club for a memorable occasion.

Hopefully we will be back!

John Abbott,
Loughton & Witham





Around the regions

Bristol/Newport

Our meal on 25 November 2022 was our first since the start of Covid and took place at the Old Barn Inn, Llanmartin, near Newport. We had a good attendance from our fairly small area of about 30 members, some have recently joined the Trust. It was good to catch up and we had an excellent meal with a relaxed happy atmosphere.

A few days after our lunch, our area organiser was privileged to be able to attend a nursing home in Cwmbran on 29 November for the occasion of the 100th birthday of member Dick Nash. At the time of this edition going to press, Dick is approaching 101 and still singing – see separate report.

On 24 March 2023 we had a further meal at the old Barn Inn and will again be lunching there in November this year. We hope to be able to welcome new members who have recently joined following retirement.

David Priddis



Pictured left column: members lunching on 25 November 2022.
Pictured right column: members lunching on 24 March 2023.

Central

It has been a busy year in the Central region as our members emerged from lockdown and were finally able to carry on with some of the previously planned visits to interesting places.



Central area walkers on the Berkshire Downs

Gloucester Waste Incinerator

In April, 20 of us visited the Gloucester Waste Incinerator – a controversial but impressive facility visible from the M5 just outside Gloucester. We were very impressed with the Visitor Centre and guided tour of the facility. We were totally amazed at the array of monitoring data and the incinerator’s ‘green credentials’. The facility’s guided tours are so popular that the next available date for a visit was in 2025. As usual, the visit was followed by a leisurely pub lunch.

We then met for a walk around the Uffington White Horse on the Berkshire Downs (followed by another pub lunch), then a friendly golf day at Oaksey in the Cotswolds.



At Dorsington with 11 2 tonnes of bronze rhinoceros

The Garden of Heroes & Villains, Dorsington

In late June we visited The Garden of Heroes & Villains at Dorsington Manor, Warwickshire, on a gloriously sunny Saturday.

The garden was created by Felix Dennis in the grounds of his home and is a collection of more than 50 life-size bronze statues of some of the most iconic figures in history. It is one of the world’s largest collections of figurative bronze sculptures, made by 28 of the world’s finest portrait sculptors. The collection started in 1989, has been added to over 25 years, and is set in a seven-acre site of landscaped gardens, specimen trees, ponds and a yew maze.

The manor and gardens are set within the Heart of England Forest – another one of Felix’s visions. We joined a guided woodland walk, in an area of the forest near the gardens, with the Head Forester. He told us about its creation and how it has now grown to an area of approximately 10,000 acres of native broadleaf trees with a vision of increasing to 30,000 acres.

A barbecue, cake stall and refreshments were available. After partaking in this at lunchtime we then wandered around the gardens, viewed the sculptures and nearly got lost in the maze! We all thoroughly enjoyed the experience on a beautiful day in wonderful surroundings.

For those of you unfamiliar with Felix Dennis, he attained infamy in the early 1970’s as one of the defendants in the controversial ‘Oz Trials’ but then went on to be an extremely successful publisher, poet and philanthropist. Felix died in 2014. There is a Kier link to this location as in the 1990’s the local Kier company (Moss Construction) constructed a luxurious swimming pool and leisure complex at Dorsington Manor for Felix.

Stratford on Avon Races

After much serious studying of form, we managed to leave a very enjoyable day at the races with just enough money for the bus fare home!

Christmas lunch

Our final event for 2023 will be our popular Christmas lunch to be held on 13 December at The Lilleybrook Golf Course, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham. All are welcome – get this in your diary as it is our ‘not to be missed’ main event of the year!

Sheila Heath

Leeds

Twenty members attended two lunches so far this year, the first on 22 January and second on 21 May at The Bridge Hotel, Walshford, near Wetherby. Our next lunch will be on 10 December.



Anne Leslie

Loughton/Witham

Christmas Lunch: 16/12/2022

Forty-eight of us braved the weather and met at Little Channels on a snowy Friday for our annual Christmas Lunch.

Unfortunately, there were some who were unable to make it due to the weather conditions but those of us who were able enjoyed a splendid three-course meal with wine, finished off with coffee and mince pies.

As always, it was good to catch up with former colleagues and enjoy their company for a few hours before Christmas, and it was a pleasure to welcome the KGFT Chairman, Neil, and his wife, Chris.



Neil and others chatting

Lunch with a Speaker: 23/02/2023



Lunch with Speaker

Thirty-one of us came together on a bright early spring day in the Courtyard Suite at the Little Channels Estate for our annual 'Lunch with a Speaker'. After we had enjoyed an excellent lunch, we welcomed our speaker, Eve Regelous, who gave her talk entitled 'The Magic of the Musicals.'

To be completely frank, I didn't find her talk as engaging as I had hoped it would be when we made the booking, but I think that we all enjoyed catching up with former colleagues and exchanging our views on what we all thought were the best musicals.

John Abbott

Spring Buffet: 20/04/2023



After dinner chat

We held our annual Spring Buffet at the Nags Head Public House, Brentwood. This was a new venue for us and we were well looked after. Forty-six people in total attended which was both members and spouses.

This was well down on numbers prior to Covid but I do believe that this will be the norm for events from now on. Everyone enjoyed the afternoon especially, as we were able to make it a free bar.



A cosy chat after lunch

Geoff Brown

Golf Day at Abridge Golf Club: 30/05/2023



Rob Henshaw was the Overall Winner

Once again we met at Abridge Golf Club in the delightful Essex countryside for the annual Kier London/Witham golf day. The course was in excellent condition as always.

A total of 12 golfers presented themselves for the competition on a lovely spring day. Unfortunately, some of our regulars could not play but guests enabled the day to go ahead.

The day began in the customary way with bacon rolls and coffee/tea, then onto the 18 holes of golf. This was followed by drinks, a superb meat pie and veg/chips which was enjoyed by all.

The prize winners were as follows:

- Overall Winner: Robert Henshaw
- Kier Trophy: Paul Goddard
- Front Nine: Chris Shurlock
- Back Nine: Mike Robinson
- Nearest the Pin: Neil Meixner
- Longest Drive: Mike Robinson.



Chris Shurlock wins the Front Nine

A good day all round with mini reunions and a chat about the past/present.

John Spray

Maidstone

On Tuesday 27 June we held our annual BBQ at the Cornwallis Suite, Maidstone, where 40 members attended. I'm pleased to say both the weather and our meal were great and everyone enjoyed the afternoon.

Ten members attended the 25th Summer Garden Party on Sunday 2 July at Pavenham Park Golf Club, Bedford. Members thought this was a very good venue and the meal was excellent.

I am currently organising a trip to Brick Lane Music Hall to see 'Jinglebell Christmas' with a three-course festive lunch on Thursday 7 December 2023. I have managed to obtain 20 tickets for this event.

Our Christmas Lunch is reserved for Wednesday 20 December 2023 at the Cornwallis Suite, Maidstone, and this event is always very well supported.

Anne Ransley

Maple Cross

St. Valentine's Day Lunch



Back to St. Albans to visit the St. Villa Restaurant on Thursday 16 February. Having managed to squeeze into a space at the Maltings car park, we found the nearest stairway to our destination. We had to walk out where the cars drive through as there didn't appear to be a pedestrian exit on this side of the multi-storey.



When we reached the restaurant, it was bright inside with 26 of our local Fellowship members enjoying a chat and a drink from the bar.

When Norman told us to take our seats the service started promptly and was pretty good!



I for one loved my food, the starter was very tasty, as was the main course, though there was a bit too

much pasta. I was also told the liver was excellent and it did look good. I enjoyed my sweet of Tiramisu though shared that with Shirley as I was really too full. Then we finished off with coffee.

I was lucky this time as one of the waiters took a photo of our table for me so for once I'm in it, just to prove I do mostly attend these events.



Fellowship 25th Anniversary

On Sunday 2 July more than 100 members came together at the Pavenham Park Golf Club in Bedfordshire to celebrate the founding of the Fellowship 25 years ago.

There was a welcome drink on arrival. The marquee set up for us was accessed directly from the bar which had The Ashes cricket on the TV – very handy for those interested!



The Maple Cross contingent had three of the 14 tables which was a good showing. The food was lovely with a starter of smoked mackerel, smoked



salmon & king prawns. The beef main course was nice though I don't remember the roast potatoes or Yorkshire puddings – maybe I was too busy eating! The sweet was a meringue with winter berries (in July) and cream which was nice to finish with. The coffee was served on a separate table which gave an opportunity to talk to others in the queue.

After dinner Neil Meixner gave a speech on the history of the Fellowship, explaining that it was set up using funds left over from the original management buyout. Inflation in the years since has reduced the buying power of the income received.

However, the Kier management team are supportive of the Fellowship and hopefully when the turnaround is complete more funds may be forthcoming.

There then followed a prize draw with an air fryer, hamper and malt whiskey amongst the prizes. The proceeds from this would help with the costs of the event.

A nice event giving a chance to chat with others from different regions.

Windsor Horse Racing



Our annual visit to Windsor came during a spell of very changeable weather and most of those attending had kept a close eye on the weather before deciding to come. As it happened it was a bit cloudy to start with but turned sunny which was very nice.

Only eight people attended with a couple of cancellations due to illness. We managed to get a good table near to the racecourse, and although it was initially in the shade as the world revolved, we soon found ourselves in a nice sunny spot.



“There were plenty of food choices, from Caribbean to Indian and burgers/hot dogs to fish & chips.”

There was also a good selection of drinks, beer, wine, champagne, gin, soft drinks and coffee, so all tastes were catered for.

The racing began at 5.40pm with races every half hour until 8.40pm making seven races in total. Some people bet using the placepot, where you bet on the first six races for your horse to be in the top three (though less for a small number of runners). Others bet individually on different races so that if one race doesn't have a winner or place, the remainder of the bets still count. It's 'horses for courses' as the saying goes. Most people in our group had some horses come in though I don't believe there were huge winnings.



After the racing was finished there was Reggae dancing by the parade ring. An enjoyable evening in good company and the weather helped.

Jeff Taylor

Solent

Portsmouth Distillery Tour: 17/12/2022

Ten of us visited the Portsmouth Distillery which is situated at Fort Cumberland, an Historic England property, located on Eastney Point at the south eastern tip of Portsea Island.



Where the magic happens

the processes involved in gin and rum making from the chief brewer. The distillery buys in the raw alcohol and then adds ingredients which are distilled to produce the various flavours. We then proceeded to the bottling and packing area. It ended with tastings of the various spirits in the Powder Magazine which was followed by a full-sized drink of your choice in the licensed bar. The 90-minute tour was thirsty work!



All ready for the tasting



A lock-in would be good!

The tour commenced with an interesting and informative history of Fort Cumberland by our host Jackie. This was followed by a technical explanation of



Breathing in the fumes

The opportunity to try different flavoured gins and rums translated into purchases from some members to stock up their drinks cabinet or bought as Christmas presents.

After a thoroughly enjoyable tour of this small but award-winning distillery we all made our way home in good spirits – me on my bicycle for the ten-mile meander along (mainly) cycle routes.

Peter Wallbank

A bracing New Year walk



With only four days into New Year, a brave band of members set off from the River Hamble following

the Solent Way towards Portsmouth. Five miles and absolutely no hills were the lure. It wasn't long before the ten walkers started to enjoy the views to the Isle of Wight on our right and the Hook Nature Reserve – a SSSI to the left.

The circular route through a wood and on frozen ground eventually returned us to the starting point at the Rising Sun pub where we had an excellent lunch.

A great way to start the year!

Graham Willoughby

New Forest Walk: 27/04/2023

Six members met at the Turfcutters Arms in East Boldre near Beaulieu in the New Forest for a gentle walk through this varied area.



The route passed through marvellously varied landscapes starting with the area around Hatchet Pond. Extensive areas of heathland are present and there is ancient & ornamental woodland in Rans Wood followed by Hawkhill's broad-leaved and coniferous enclosure woodland. There are even distant views of the rolling hills of the Isle of Wight to enjoy.

During the walk, depending on the season, it is possible to see various species of New Forest wildlife. Varied landscapes usually mean varied habitats which in turn often provide homes for a huge range of wildlife. Perhaps of particular note are:

- The mute swans and their cygnets and other water birds on Hatchet Pond
- The scarce wild flowers around the pond on the heaths and in the woods

- Heathland birds such as linnets, stonechats and Dartford warblers
- Woodpeckers, nuthatches and other woodland denizens.
- We were also fortunate to see roe deer and fallow deer.

The area also holds antiquities in the form of Bronze Age barrows and more recently the contribution to both the WW1 and WW2 in the relics of two airfields – East Boldre Airfield dates back to before WW1 while RAF Beaulieu is of WW2 vintage.

Finally after crossing Bagshot Moor we returned to the Turfcutters Arms for a well-earned drink and lunch.

Derek Ward

Bluebell walk: 04/05/2023

A small intrepid band of ageing 'trekkies' took to the wood on 'Star Wars Day' (May the 4th be with you) to visit the Bluebell Woods that surround the National Trust property at Hinton Ampner. The signed walk was diverted due to tree work which meant some areas could only be seen through the trees, however the second half was spectacular. The four-mile jaunt was finished off with the mandatory visit for lunch at the pub.

John Clayton



Fellowship 25th Anniversary: 04/2023

A record 53 members and guests enjoyed an excellent celebratory lunch in April at the Lysses Hotel in Fareham. Graham Shennan, our principal guest, cut the 25th Anniversary cake. Graham, when Kier Southern's MD, acquired Henry Jones and Brazier for the Group in the 1990s.



Phil Durigan, also our guest, later became Brazier's director.

Solent's newly 'designated Kier senior manager', Chris Lawrence, briefed the diners on the latest Kier news and progress.

Solent was formed in February 2010 and now has 100 members. Judging by the comments, this year's lunch was the best yet – the hotel ushered us out at 4pm!

Graham Willoughby

Bucklers Hard Visit: 25/05/2022

On the banks of the Beaulieu River, within the Beaulieu Estate, and in the heart of the New Forest, you will find the unspoilt haven of Buckler's Hard which remains largely untouched by the passage of time.



At the start of the 18th century, Buckler's Hard was little more than a humble landing place on the Beaulieu River. But the owner of the Beaulieu Estate, John, 2nd Duke of Montagu, had ambitious plans to develop the area as a free port named 'Montagu Town'.

Originally intended as a free port for the import of sugar, this project was abandoned when the French invaded the Duke's islands. Montagu Town was soon reborn as a shipbuilding village named Buckler's Hard. With New Forest oak on its doorstep, it was ideally situated for such a task. The wide village street was filled with logs and planks and the cottages became home to tradesmen and labourers. Over 50 wooden ships were built for the Royal Navy including the vessels Agamemnon, Euryalus and Swiftsure, all of which fought at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars, combined with the advent of iron ships, saw the decline of shipbuilding at Buckler's Hard. Industries became concentrated in towns and cities and the population of Buckler's Hard dipped as skilled workers moved away to find employment.

By the late 19th Century, the development of the steam pleasure yacht had given new life to the hamlet and the Beaulieu River became a destination for day trippers.

A group of 13 members met for the day for a guided tour of the village and adjoining museum to be shown how the village developed and its importance in contributing to the Royal Navy's victory at Trafalgar. A detailed scale replica of Nelson's favourite ship – the Agamemnon – can be seen in the museum. Some of us took advantage of the short river cruise down the Beaulieu River with additional information from the crew on the history of the village and the part played by the area in the D-Day landings.

We thought a photograph outside the Master Builder Hotel would be appropriate. The Master Builder in question was Master SHIP Builder, Henry Adams 1713-1805.

Derek Ward



Pitch and putt: 05/06/2023

After an absence of a year, six of us returned to our annual summer 9-hole par 3 golf course on the southern coast of Hayling Island for some club swinging and random walking.



Participants l-r: Phil Knetchel, Derek Ward, Gary Mackie, Roger Osgood, Colin Foskett, guest

Things got off to an indifferent start as we all hit the ball – not necessarily the first time or even in the direction of the flag. However, we improved as we moved around the course due to the number of strokes taken!

At a previous visit an older style plane flew by and this year it was a Spitfire.

As usual we had a very enjoyable time with good banter and occasional decent shots.

Peter Wallbank

Solent Annual Barbeque: 28/06/2023

The Solent barbeque was again arranged at the Royal Victoria Country Park on the banks of Southampton Water. This event has proved very popular and once again attracted 30 members with their partners (and dogs). The barbie gods were smiling on us again, blessing us with fine weather and the food was enjoyed by all.



The Country Park is on the site of the Victorian military hospital initially built in the 19th Century to treat military personnel across the Empire. It later provided care for the injured in the Boar Wars, WW1 and WW2.

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

Derek Ward



Tempsford

On 8 September 2022 eight of us were led by Ron Whitlock and Jane on a walk in the private estate at Old Warden followed by lunch at The White Horse in Southill, Bedfordshire. It was a lovely day and the walk was most enjoyable although we were challenged by a tenant when we took an interest in Queen Anne's Summerhouse. We were joined by another seven members for an excellent lunch.



Members in front of Queen Anne's Summerhouse

A revisit to Stevington for a walk and lunch led by Stephen Jarvis on 13 October was disappointing in that only four members were up for the walk with an additional member for the lunch. A change of ownership and management at the Red Lion had necessitated a change of date which obviously did not suit everyone.



Stevington walkers

On 9 November we returned to The Anchor, Great Barford, to see a presentation on The Development of Concorde at RAE Thurleigh, followed by a buffet lunch. Twenty-two attended and enjoyed the fascinating talk & illustrations which rekindled, for some, memories of the Kier contract to move a water tower that stood where the larger wind tunnel was to be built. Lunch too was lovely.



Some considered John Busby's table quiz challenging

We had 26 for our Christmas celebration at Pavenham Park Golf Club on 15 December – a bright and chilly day – where we enjoyed the customary mix of good food, wine and entertainment. Some considered John Busby's table quiz challenging.

2023 kicked off with a joint gathering on 9 January with Bedfordshire Prostate Cancer Support Group. The CEO of the Tibbs Dementia talked about their work locally to inform of the many types of dementia and to provide support to those affected.



Lunch at the Barley Mow

Sixteen of us gathered for lunch at The Barley Mow, Eaton Ford, on 9 February, where we received a very warm welcome and wonderful food. It is a rather small venue but we did squeeze on to one long table.

The visit by 14 members to The Eaton Oak, Eaton Ford, on 9 March was disappointing in that the service was extremely slow and the food portions smaller than expected. We did however have plenty of time for chatting.

In contrast our lunch at The Five Bells, Henlow, on 11 April attended by 15 members was marked by lovely food and good service.

Members have always enjoyed talks and presentations at The Anchor in Great Barford but on 10 May the planned talk on 'gardens an hour or so from Bedford' was cancelled for lack of interest. Six attended for a pay-as-you-go lunch.

On 15 June, Stephen Jarvis persuaded us to take a leap of faith and book lunch at The Three Tuns in Biddenham, Bedfordshire, where new ownership/management had taken quite some time to settle in and provide menu details. Only five of us booked and we pre-ordered food in order to assist. On arrival we were advised that the fishmonger had not arrived and the choice of several of us could not be fulfilled – we were however offered a suitable alternative fish. While some were enjoying their starter, we were advised that the alternative fish was not available either and would we please choose something else from the menu. Having done that, and while we awaited our main courses, we were told:

“Good news – the fish has arrived and we can fulfil the original choice!”

The food was delightful and we parted on good terms with the management.



National Garden Party



July 2nd saw us at the National Garden Party – our 25th Anniversary celebration and the first such event to be organised away from Tempsford Hall. The marquee at Pavenham Park Golf Club proved to be very suitable and there were 52 from Tempsford & Rushden

areas. Everyone agreed that the food, service, music and programme had been excellent.



The John Bunyan

July 26th proved to be an interesting day! Seventeen members met at Priory Marina, Bedford, to join a cruise to Great Barford on 'The John Bunyan' followed by a buffet lunch at The Anchor – a repeat of an event several years ago. On the way the boat brushed (heavily as it turned out) the overhanging willow trees and four of the starboard side glass windows were smashed showering passengers with pieces of toughened glass. Fortunately, none of our group was affected but several others needed treatment for superficial injuries. An ambulance was arranged to meet the boat on arrival at Great Barford where those affected were checked over before lunch. The lunch was excellent as usual.



Just desserts!

We returned to The Wheatsheaf at Perry for lunch on 8 August when our group of 14 enjoyed lovely food and great service. Six of us participated in the pre-lunch walk organised by John Busby – it was great to catch up with some members we had not seen for some time.

Harold Thompson



A warm welcome to the following new members

NAME	CITY/TOWN	AREA	WORKED FOR	YEARS OF SERVICE
Andrew Al-Wagga	Bath, Somerset	Central	Kier Western	1
Stuart Barkham	Calne, Wiltshire	Newport/Bristol	Kier Western & Wales	22
David Bloor	Newbury, Berkshire	Maple Cross	Kier Southern	16
Andrew Blunsdon	Winscombe, Somerset	Newport/Bristol	Kier Western & Wales	1
Greg Bushell	Okehampton, Devon	Devon & Cornwall	Kier Utilities	2
Robin Chandler	Great Barford, Beds	Tempsford	Kier Group	17
Tom Cotter	Minehead, Somerset	Maple Cross	Kier Southern	14
Eileen Dowler	Maulden, Bedford, Beds	Tempsford	Kier Build	15
Deborah Eldridge	Lincoln, Lincs	Tempsford	Kier Group	2
Lana Haque	Abbots Langley, Herts	Maple Cross	Kier Southern	19
Dane Harrop	Colby, Isle of Man	Liverpool	Kier Northern	19
Peter Hindle	Maidstone, Kent	Maidstone	Kier Utilities	8
Peter Hosier	Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham	Central	Kier Midlands	25
Richard Kershaw	Pontypridd, Rhondda	Newport/Bristol	Kier Western	4
Andrew Kingdon	Norwich, Norfolk	Tempsford	Kier Group	43
Alexander Laing	Duston, Northants	Rushden	Kier Highways	15
Stephen Lewis	Winchester, Hampshire	Solent	Kier Infrastructure	9
Edmond McCudden	Cranleigh, Surrey	Maple Cross	Kier Southern	32
Shahid Mehmood	Bedford, Beds	Tempsford	Kier Group	10
Alan Monument	Milton Keynes, Bucks	Tempsford	Kier Marriott	33
Joan Murray	Woking, Surrey	Solent	Kier Southern	5
Gordon Reid	Cumbernauld, Glasgow	Tempsford	Kier Scotland	10
Stephen Ringwood	Rayleigh, Essex	Loughton	Kier Eastern	14
Nigel Sheppard	Bromeswell, Suffolk	Loughton	Kier London	45
Satbinder Shergill	Baldock, Herts	Tempsford	Kier Ltd	6
Stephanie Taylor	Norwich, Norfolk	Waterbeach	Kier Facilities	10
Margaret Tebb	Aylesbury, Bucks	Maple Cross	Kier Southern	11
Veronica Thornton	Blackley, Manchester	Liverpool	Kier FFSC	4
Peter Young	Newton Abbot, Devon	Devon & Cornwall	Kier Regional	31

National Golf Day



St. Neots Golf Club: 01/09/2023

Nineteen members were treated to a day out at the St. Neots Golf Club organised once again by Ian Tidey, a St. Neots Golf Club member.

We all enjoyed a traditional bacon roll with coffee/tea prior to play commencing at 11am from the first tee.

The course was in great condition and the weather was kind to us following torrential rain overnight the day before. After the round we all gathered in a private room for a very tasty two-course meal consisting of 'Cow Pie' with all the trimmings and Apple Crumble with custard.

The meal was followed by prizes given as a combination of a four-ball voucher for the winner, wine, cash and Kier memorabilia. As usual, it was the memorabilia that everyone was after!

Winners and photos are as follows.

- Mark Tomlinson: most challenging score!
- Neil Meixner: Nearest the Pin on 8 and 16
- Geoff Coombes: Nearest the Pin in 2 on 18
- Paul Goddard: Longest Drive on 14
- Barry Sadler: Best Front 9-18 points
- Paul Kenworthy: Best Back 9-18 points
- Neil Meixner, last year's winner, seen here presenting the Fellowship Cup to Derek Adams who had a magnificent score of 39 points.

Colin Busby interrupted the prizegiving for the much more important task of gathering a tip for the St. Neots staff who were indeed splendid!

Congratulations to all the winners!

Later this year we will hold what is becoming an annual Christmas event at the same course. And, next year, by popular demand, we will be returning in late August/early September, so we hope to see as many members there as possible.

Watch out for further details!

Neil Meixner



Pictured r: Mark Tomlinson



Pictured r: Neil Meixner



Pictured l: Geoff Coombes



Pictured r: Paul Goddard



Pictured c: Barry Sadler



Pictured c: Paul Kenworthy



Pictured c: Derek Adams

FIGHTBACK FUND.....

The year 2020 was a year most of us would rather forget when the whole country was in lockdown.

It was also that year that 65-year-old Trust member Jerry Pullinger found out devastating news that his twin brother John was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) in that April, and nobody knew what the future held.

As the year 2021 began, John and his family were being positive and beginning their Fightback Fund to contribute to the much-needed fund raising for the MND Association. Currently there is no cure for MND and the Association funds research into a cure for MND and supports both sufferers & families so that they can live life to the full.

John invited family and friends to support them in their fund-raising efforts. Jerry has currently run 12 charity races in eight weeks covering a distance of around 100k to raise



Pictured l-r: Jerry and John

money for the MND Association and will continue organising/participating in events for years to come.

So far, the Fightback Fund has raised an incredible **£14,858.76!** CONGRATULATIONS!

Jerry would be extremely grateful if you could make a small donation towards the MND Association. If you would like to, please go to the following link:

<https://jp-fightback-fund.muchloved.com/Fundraising/Events/666997425?fbclid=IwAR2oJeTV7P1BjJzPESxvXRxo7jk8xbja7LmWp-4eY5euszVrr9XE8Fp5jFQ>

With thanks, Andrea McDaid

John Simson - A Celebration of Life



John and Lynn on an open top tram

John was born on the 4 January 1942 to Dorothy and Bill. Although a turning point in the war there were still over three years of hostilities to endure. John grew up in Stonards Hill, Loughton, and was an active member of the Cubs and the Scouts under the watchful eye of the Scoutmaster – his dad! He attended Chingford High School where he excelled academically. Summers were spent at his grandparents in Bexhill-on-Sea. So, growing up after the war was active and happy.

In 1959, he joined British Rail as a student civil engineer and in 1964 he qualified as a Fellow of the Institute which was no mean feat.

Between 1964 and 1967 John worked for Essex County Council and was involved in

highway bridge design. Lynn can recall the many happy Sundays when John would take her on the 'Bridges Wot I Designed And Are Still Standing' tour. **Yes, he knew how to woo a lady!**

Eventually, common sense caught up with John and in 1967 he joined WC French. Based in Romford and then at Witham he worked on the M3 and the M11 before becoming a director while also adding to his impressive list of qualifications FICE, FCIQB, FIHT, FEOB.

John liked cars. Aged just 19 he bought an old Austin 7 which he restored, repainted and sold for a handsome profit. He then repeated his success with a Humber 14/40. Things changed, however, with his next venture, a Mini, which he crashed and rolled. He was lucky to escape though a bit shaken.



Featherdale Wildlife Park, Sydney

John was a keen sportsman and at various times enjoyed playing rugby, racquetball, badminton and a bit of tennis, swimming, skiing and squash. Sailing was another of John's sports and Lynn recalls that in their early days together they were vying for the finishing ramp with another. Lynn was up front under John's instructions. When he shouted: "Jump", she duly did. Unfortunately, the timing was wrong and under she went. **Yes, John knew how to woo a lady!**

John was a late starter at golf. He had a few lessons in the late 1990's but really only started to play after he retired in 2003. Like most golfers it was a love/hate relationship. He particularly enjoyed the company golf days where he could play and then reminisce over old times. He also enjoyed the regular trips to Portugal to play there with Dick Side, Brian Painter and Colin Busby. Wives accompanied the golfers and some lovely meals were enjoyed together after a day on the golf course.

John had got married in 1969 and had two children,

Kay (1974) and Christopher (1976). Unfortunately, the marriage did not work out and ended in divorce. However, both children remained very much part of John's life, he assumed responsibility for them, and they lived with him. They will miss him terribly.

In 1986 Lynn returned from living in the USA. John and Lynn were friends and so met up for a drink and a catch up – the wooing began! When John was 50 in January 1992 there was a combined engagement and birthday party aboard a Thames barge at Malden. Needless to say, there was much enjoyment – the slippery slope back to the shore proved to be a major obstacle.



John and Dick Side at the Tsar Cannon in Moscow

John and Lynn were married in June 1992. They lived at Downham near Billericay in a house that John built (after a tussle with the planners). John's two children, Kay and Chris, lived with them. Lynn's two girls, Nicki and Karen, who were a bit older, shared a house not far away in Raleigh.



John with friend Steve on board the QEII

In 1995 they moved to Hutton where they stayed and enjoyed many happy times together. **All the wooing had paid off!**

After retirement John (who liked to plan things) organised lots of trips including some with their friends Liz and Dick Side to places like Dubai, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Singapore and many more places. Fantastic times!

This has been a tiny snippet of the life of John. There are loads more and everybody who knew him will have their own memories. But what sort of a person was he. According to David Bleay some 25 years ago: "He is a Saint" although the expletives have been omitted! Others describe him as being: "Happy, helpful, friendly, positive, loyal, brave, intelligent, able and hard working."

John had all of these virtues and plenty more. He was an excellent planner right to the end. He was compassionate as evidenced by the support and attention he gave to Dick Side in his last few months.

JCS was a 'special person'. He will be missed by many and remembered for a long time.

Jim McCluskey

Produced from the speech given by Colin Busby at the Celebration of Life for John Simson on 4 October 2023 with photographs provided by John's wife Lynn.

John Simson and the Fellowship Trust

John served the Kier Group Fellowship Trust for 14 years until Christmas 2017 when he stepped down as Loughton and Witham area organiser, chair of the organising committee and editor of the area newsletter. If that wasn't enough, in 2012 he teamed up with Geoff Brown to take on the task of editing KierLink when Roger Almond stood down.

John made full use of his planning and organisational skills to manage the formal merger of the Loughton/Witham areas and left the area in excellent health with:

- More than 200 members
- A full programme of interesting, varied and high-quality events/activities
- A lively/colourful newsletter and a sound financial position.

Thank you, John, for all that you did for the Fellowship. You will be missed by all of us.

Jim

A trip to Vienna to see the Saliera...

by Jeff Taylor

We'd last visited Vienna in 2008 spending a week sightseeing, after running the Marathon (me) and Shirley the Half Marathon. We'd seen all the main sights, including the Hofburg, Belvedere and the Schönbrunn Palaces, plus we saw the Vienna boys choir and went to the opera.

This time we decided to focus on the museums and art galleries of which there are many. Since

doing a 'history of art' course, Shirley had always wanted to see the golden Salt Cellar (Saliera) made by Cellini and completed in 1543 for Francis I of France. This is not any old salt shaker but an amazing symbolic representation of the earth and sea and of French political power to impress any visiting dignitaries. It is made of hand hammered gold, it's just over 10" tall and 13" wide and has bearings to enable it to be rolled around the table!



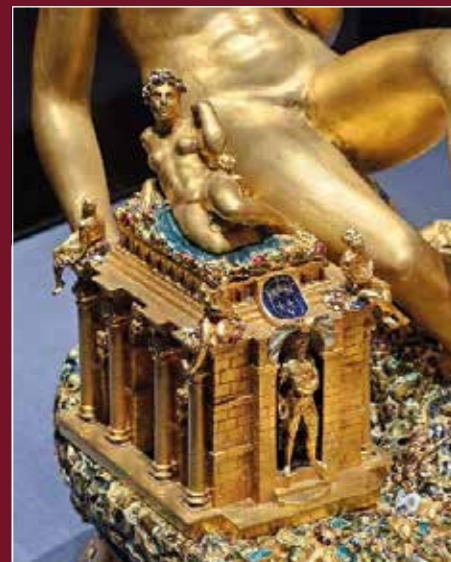
Shirley: 2008 Vienna Half Marathon



Jeff: 2008 Vienna Marathon

The male figure Neptune represents the sea and the salt was contained in the gold bowl representing a ship. The female figure, Tellus, represents the earth and pepper was placed in the temple alongside her. Around the base are figures representing night, day, dawn & dusk, and others showing youths with puffed out cheeks representing the cardinal winds. Fire is represented by a salamander under the heel of Tellus which was also the symbol of Francis I.

It is an incredible piece of artwork and the only surviving gold piece by Cellini. It was stolen in 2003 with a reward of €1m offered by the Kunsthistorisches Museum. It was recovered and the thief handed himself in after surveillance footage was released by the police where he was identified. It is insured for around \$70m.



Neptune and Tellus: pepper mill



Neptune and Tellus: salt bowl



RICHARD JAMES NASH

In late November 2022, just too late for the 2022 KierLink, Bristol & Newport were delighted to learn that one of its members, Richard James Nash (known to all as 'Dick' at work) would reach the amazing 100 years of age on 29 November 2022.

Together with Tomos Ings representing Bristol office of Kier Building, it was a great privilege to be able to take a framed card from our area to Dick on his actual birthday. The card was a photo montage of staff from Newport's G. E. Wallis and Kier Western staff on which Dick himself appears.

Although Dick has little sight now, he proudly showed me the framed letter of congratulations he had received from First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford and then brightly recounted many episodes from his long life.

Born in Tredegar in the South Wales Valleys, at 14 Dick had to become a 'breadwinner' following the death of his father. Dick left school and started work at the Elliott Colliery as a carpenter where he also served as a Union Representative until 1966 when the Colliery closed. Big Pit National Coal Museum recently visited Mr. Nash to record his memories for the National Archive.

After leaving Elliott, Dick, who never smoked or drank alcohol and was always keen to help others, became a civil defence instructor. He was at the terrible Aberfan Disaster and for one day he was in charge up there which must have been an horrific experience. Dick also became councillor in Bargoed.

It was following this that Dick commenced work with G. E. Wallis in Newport which later became an integral part of Kier Western. Dick was yard foreman for the small works department, and "An excellent one too"

added former colleague retired director David Orr.

Despite working for the Coal Authority for some 30 years, Dick did not qualify for any pension from them. Sandra, his daughter, said Dick is so grateful therefore for his Kier Pension which has meant he has been able to have a comfortable retirement.

Dick is very proud that, despite his own humble beginnings, his four children all went to university, something almost unheard of when he was young. Dick also has seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He still enjoys singing - especially the Welsh National Anthem in Welsh! He is now being well looked after in a Cwmbran care home.

We send Dick our congratulations and best wishes for many future birthdays.

David Priddis

Sayings from Duncan Mort...

Hopefully some of these will raise a giggle!

Did I read that sign right?

TOILET OUT OF ORDER. PLEASE USE FLOOR BELOW.

In a Laundromat:

AUTOMATIC WASHING MACHINES:
PLEASE REMOVE ALL YOUR CLOTHES
WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT.

In a London department store:

BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS.

In an office:

WOULD THE PERSON WHO TOOK THE STEP LADDER YESTERDAY PLEASE BRING IT BACK OR FURTHER STEPS WILL BE TAKEN.

In an office:

AFTER TEA BREAK, STAFF SHOULD EMPTY THE TEAPOT AND STAND UPSIDE DOWN ON THE DRAINING BOARD.

Outside a second-hand shop:

WE EXCHANGE ANYTHING - BICYCLES, WASHING MACHINES, ETC.
WHY NOT BRING YOUR WIFE ALONG AND GET A WONDERFUL BARGAIN?

Notice in health food shop window:

CLOSED DUE TO ILLNESS.

Spotted in a safari park:

ELEPHANTS, PLEASE STAY IN YOUR CAR.

Seen during a conference:

FOR ANYONE WHO HAS CHILDREN AND DOESN'T KNOW IT, THERE IS A DAY CARE ON THE 1ST FLOOR.

Notice in a farmer's field:

THE FARMER ALLOWS WALKERS TO CROSS THE FIELD FOR FREE, BUT THE BULL CHARGES.

Message on a leaflet:

IF YOU CANNOT READ, THIS LEAFLET WILL TELL YOU HOW TO GET LESSONS.

On a repair shop door:

WE CAN REPAIR ANYTHING. (PLEASE KNOCK HARD ON THE DOOR - THE BELL DOESN'T WORK).

Proofreading is a dying art, wouldn't you say?

RED TAPE HOLDS UP NEW BRIDGES!

