

# KierLink

The magazine for the Kier Fellowship Trust | Issue 34 | Spring/Summer 2017



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Your **new-look** KierLink

*"I'd love to hear about your experiences..."*



**Viv Chesterfield**  
*Editor*

**Hello everyone!**

Can you believe that six months have passed since the last edition? No? Neither can I! Tempus fugit is an understatement as far as I'm concerned. But they do say that time flies when you're enjoying yourself so I shan't complain.

At a recent meeting of the Fellowship trustees, the subject of senior moments arose. This was because one of the trustees had left his train ticket at home so had to make a mad dash back for it. This led to the other trustees' coming out in sympathy and relating versions of their own senior moments. Then we thought: "There must be countless (and of course, amusing) tales out there amongst our Fellowship Trust members!" And so we are hoping to populate a regular 'senior moments' column. To start you off, I've included one of my (many) senior moments and sought input from another trustee too.

This issue contains all the usual suspects as well as an article about The Fellowship Trust and how it was formed. We're keen to encourage new members and while some don't always think to join on retirement or leaving the company immediately, they may like to join at a later date. If you are in contact with any former colleagues who may like to sign up, please encourage them to do so.

I spent a few days in Wales recently and was surprised to learn that the hotel I stayed in was a stone's throw from Dinorwig Power Station in Llanberis on which construction began in 1974 by a consortium including Charles Brand. Constructed inside a mountain and involving a phenomenal amount of excavation, it took ten years to build and at the time was the largest civil engineering project ever awarded by the UK government. It's now known as 'Electric Mountain' and is a big tourist attraction. If you're interested in visiting I can recommend a very good hotel! If you were involved with the project, I'd love to hear about your experiences there.

*Viv Chesterfield*

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# Chairman's Fellowship matters



**Neil Meixner**

It was with great pleasure that we welcomed Peter Young, Kier Executive director for Building UK, to the Board of the Kier Group Fellowship Trust and I am delighted to say that Peter's positive attitude towards our further development bodes well for our future.

The Trust has always been an inclusive organisation and we will continue to reach out to leavers both in our traditional areas and the new areas created by organic growth of the company and by the acquisition of May Gurney and Mouchel.

Inevitably the Trust will have to adapt and maybe bring in new organisers and areas in order to assimilate these new entrants. BUT these changes will take time and that time will allow us to incorporate the new members without upsetting the status quo. Over the next months and years there will also be the retirements of Organisers and Board Members combined with the appointment of new and vibrant replacements who, like the current incumbents, share the common goals of a strong and vital organisation. I reiterate our thanks to Anne Ransley who after seven productive years has decided to step down as Area Organiser.

Under development and coming soon is a new website for us which we are assured will include an easy to use events calendar amongst other useful information. More on this in later notes.

We are aware that the reimbursement of expenses system is currently quite difficult to manage and the Board is working with Kier Group on a streamlined solution. Hopefully we will be able to implement that later this year but I will keep you posted.

I'd like to once again thank all the Area Organisers and their teams for the amazing array of functions and events they organise. BUT they always need help so please do contact your local organiser to offer assistance if you feel able.

I do hope you will attend as many events as possible in your area and beyond and I wish you a splendid 2017.

*Neil Meixner*

Copy deadline for Autumn/Winter 2017 issue:



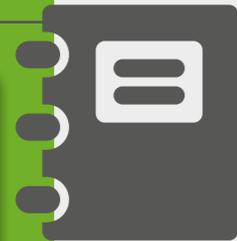
**MONDAY  
14 AUGUST**

COVER PHOTO:  
A PARTY OF 38 MEMBERS FROM LOUGHTON AND WITHAM ENJOYED A TOUR OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY AND THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!



**Brendan O'Boyle**

I would like to start my column by offering my thanks to Anne Ransley who is stepping down from her role as Area Organiser for the Maidstone area after seven successful years. During this time Anne, with the help and support of her husband Derek, organised numerous interesting events which culminated in an award for most improved area at the Tempsford Garden Party. Anne will be a hard act to follow but we are fortunate that Lesley Payne has agreed to take over from Anne and we wish her every success in her new role.



## Administrator's report

At the time of writing we are engaged in the development of a micro website for the Fellowship which will be self-sufficient for us but with a link to the main Kier website. We hope to give more information about this exciting development at forthcoming Area Organisers meetings. Many thanks to Adrian Bird for his input to our initial discussions.

From a financial point of view the new year of 2017 will provide us with some challenges to maintain income levels. We still hold 80% of our funds on the stock exchange in investment trusts and unit trusts with the remainder on short term cash deposits. These will be under review throughout the year at the Trustees' meetings.

I have been asked by the Kier HR department to remind our newer members that if they wish to join or rejoin the Kier Plus Benefits Scheme they should be aware that the Rewards Team at the Rushden service centre are unable to register them direct. Members must contact either their Area Organiser or me with their full name, date of birth, email address and National Insurance

number so that Trust records can be updated first. This information will then be passed to the Rewards Team on a monthly basis for loading on the system.

May I remind members to advise us of any change of address or circumstances so that they can continue to receive invitations to events and copies of the Trust magazine. Please send any changes to your Area Organiser or direct to me.

If you require help or information with any matters relating to the Fellowship please contact me by email or at the address shown below.

### Kier Group Fellowship Trust

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*Brendan O'Boyle*

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## Message from the Group Chief Executive



**With 2017 well under way, I'm sure many of you are interested in how Kier is performing as we approach our half-year results in March.**

You will, no doubt, have seen our financial trading update in January which we issued to our shareholders.

We reported that the Group remains in good financial shape and that we continue to look at opportunities to grow and develop the business. We have strong market leading positions in infrastructure, housing and regional building and we are further strengthening these positions by investing in systems and technology which will provide us with a robust platform for growth.

The Government is committed to improving the UK's infrastructure, particularly in transport, energy and, more generally, in the built environment. Their focus includes many of the sectors in which we operate: aviation, education, health, highways and housing.

In housing more specifically the supply/demand imbalance in the UK provides significant opportunity for our Residential business while regional building is supported by the Government's increasing focus on the growth of regional economies. The Group is well positioned to take advantage of all these areas of opportunity.

We are also focused on increasing our cross-selling activities, promoting more than one of our services to our clients. I believe we have a unique breadth of

capabilities and services that can help our clients particularly when many of them face fiscal challenges.

So, as ever, we have lots going on and much to look forward to in 2017.

Hopefully, you will have caught up with our latest trading update issued on 23 March when we announced our results for the six months to 31 December 2016.

As always, thank you for your continued interest and support in Kier.

*"I wish you all the best for 2017."*

*Haydn Mursell*

## A warm welcome to the following new members

Name	City/town	Area	Worked for	Years of service
Aaron Batten	Basingstoke	Solent	IEI (Kier Services)	14
Michelle Beattie	Rickmansworth	Maple Cross	Kier Southern Limited, Kier Construction Southern	25.5
Richard Buck	Warrington	Liverpool	Kier Construction Northern	8
John Clayton	Liss, Hampshire	Solent	Henry Jones, Kier Southern	5
John Coleman	Cambridge	Waterbeach/Wisbech	Kier Eastern, Kier International,	38
Dion Collier	Solihull	Cheltenham	Kier Build/Major Projects, Kier Construction Central	16
Sue Collier	Maidstone	Maidstone	Kier Construction Southern	11
Simon Craig	Ashford	Maidstone	Kier Construction Southern	14
Joanne Crane	St Neots	Tempsford	Kier Limited	10.5
Sally Fairhead	Gt Yarmouth	Waterbeach/Wisbech	Kier Construction Eastern	13
Angela Fowler	Hailsham	Maidstone	Kier Environmental Services	30
Geoff Goldberg	Chatham	Maidstone	Wallis	42
David Hearn	Romsey, Hants	Solent	Brazier Construction, Kier Construction Southern	41
Anthony Large	Cirencester	Cheltenham	Kier Construction Central	18
Mike Magill	Huntingdon	Tempsford	Kier Limited	12
David Manning	Sheffield	Boston Spa	Kier Construction Northern	11
Hazel Nannery	Chatham, Kent	Maidstone	Kier Construction Southern	20
Robert Paterson	Carlisle	Liverpool	Kier Regional, Infrastructure & Overseas	30
Anthony Rayment	Newport	Newport/Bristol	Kier Ltd, French Kier, Caribbean Construction, Kier Western	17
Michael Regan	Deal, Kent	Maidstone	Kier South East, Kier Southern	18.5
Paul Richmond	Cheltenham	Cheltenham	Kier Construction Central	30
David Robson	St Ives, Cambs	Tempsford	W&C French, Kier Construction, Kier Infrastructure & Overseas, Kier Mining	40
Jonathan Shillito	Leeds	Boston Spa	Kier Construction Northern	30
Gregory Smith	Portsmouth	Solent	Kier Integrated Services	29
Tom Tagg	St Neots	Tempsford	French Kier, Kier Construction, Kier International, CDK, Kier Infrastructure & Overseas, KI Hong Kong	36
David Twigg	Barnsley	Boston Spa	Kier Services	7
Christopher West	Mundesley	Waterbeach/Wisbech	French Kier Property Investment, FK Developments	12
Elizabeth Wharton	Wetherby	Boston Spa	Kier Construction Northern	14
Jonathan Wyatt	Carnforth, Lancs	Tempsford and Liverpool	W&C French, Kier International, W&C French (Malawi), Kier Mgt, Kier Construction, Kier Saudi Arabia, Kier Rail, KMI, BFK, GCR, Kier Caribbean & Industrial, Kier Infrastructure, CEK	42

## Senior moments

# OOPS

We all have them – even when we're young! This column is exclusively for the purpose of confessing those times when, for instance, you've opened your handbag to find the TV remote or cancelled your credit cards – only to find your wallet in your other jacket! Yes, we're talking about senior moments – those occasions that are a bit embarrassing at the time but funny to reflect on later. So go on – please share! [kierlinkmag@gmail.com](mailto:kierlinkmag@gmail.com)

Here are a couple to start you off.

### Wrong door...

At a recent spa day I went to a relaxation room to chill out while I waited for my treatment. Unfortunately, lulled by the soothing music and scent of lavender, I fell into a deep sleep, missing my appointment by over half an hour! Feeling rather sheepish, I was told to hurry to reception to rebook in time for the next available treatment. I scurried to reception via the changing areas but I stopped dead in my tracks as I spotted a man in the ladies' changing rooms... until it (too slowly) dawned on me that I was the impostor and had barged

through the wrong door! As you can imagine, I wasn't particularly relaxed after that!

*Viv Chesterfield*

### Wrong pocket...

I was attending a meeting of the Fellowship Trust in London and in order to save the parking cost at the station (£8.00!). I took a walk as it was a fine day. It took about 25 minutes and I arrived 15 minutes before the train was due to arrive. Perfect. Reaching for my ticket, I couldn't find my wallet in my coat pocket... no problem, it would be in my jacket. Now, where was my jacket? Oh dear, it was hanging over the back of the chair in my kitchen! I jumped into a waiting taxi and made a hasty trip home and back (£8.50!) arriving about the same

time as the train was due. (The next one would make me late for the meeting). Apparently, that morning there had been a power supply problem on the network and all trains were running 11 minutes late – so I caught my train with ten minutes to spare! There is another twist though – my wallet was in my coat all the time! Just not where I was expecting it to be!

*Harold Thompson*

*A prize for every senior moment published (and you can remain anonymous if you prefer).*

# Around the regions

## Boston Spa

A great reason for a get-together recently was to celebrate Mr U A Potter's (Alan Potter's) 85th birthday. Alan joined J L Kier in 1965 and from 1974 was employed as a contracts manager. A Kier gathering from the past 50 years joined Alan to mark the event.



Also we had a lunch at Milford Lodge Hotel on 9 December which was attended by 28. Our next lunch is booked for 19 March at the same venue.

*Katherine Leadley*

## Bristol and Newport Report

Our Autumn lunch was another most successful and enjoyable meal with a return visit to the Forester's Oaks near Newport. Both the food and company were excellent!



In January we fitted in an additional item during our previously slack winter period with a city centre walk in historic Bristol. This took in various memorials and sculptures as well as some of the important history, buildings and the much more recent Millennium Square. Much of the wealth of the city grew from trade like molasses from the West Indies and thus relied on the slave trade. It was interesting to learn that much evidence was compiled by Thomas Clarkson in Bristol which was instrumental in the eventual abolition of that iniquitous trade. Our 'guide' for the day, for the mostly local members, was our own Alan Jones. We are indebted to him and Sheila for all their research and their 'trial run'. Following the walk we enjoyed a very good meal at the

Loch Fyne Seafood and Grill, itself located within The Old Granary on one of Bristol's many waterfronts.

Our committee that plans future events was boosted by the welcome addition of Denis Lawler and Alan Key. A full 2017 programme is planned starting with a site visit in February to the new Concorde Museum at Filton being constructed by the Bristol Office and our usual March lunch when we will again be inviting 25-year service employees.

*David Priddis*



## Cheltenham

### Golf

Golf continues to be a popular opportunity to get together, and seven members attended one or both excellent events on 7 and 13 September – the national golf day at Newbury & Crookham Golf Club and a day with the Bristol Group at Thornbury Golf Club.

### Newbury Races

Peter Shuttleworth arranged an outing to Newbury Races on 8 October. Ten members went along and had a really enjoyable day with some winners, but mostly losers.



### Christmas Lunch

Moss Cheltenham's Christmas Lunch was once again held at The Cheltenham Park Hotel, where about 60 members met and enjoyed a delicious meal.

It was a very happy occasion and everyone enjoyed catching up with old friends. To start 2017 we are meeting for lunch at The Fleet Inn, Twynning on 24 January, when we will also plan the coming year's events.

*Sheila Heath*



## Devon and Cornwall



During December a number of our members were lucky enough to have a tour of Beckley Court which, once completed, will be the tallest structure in Plymouth. The contract management team gave an interesting presentation of the contract as a whole before taking us on an escorted tour of what will be particularly 'comfortable' student accommodation. Hopefully once the contract is completed and all the accommodation fitted out a return visit might be possible!

Also in December our Christmas lunch was held once more at the new Continental Hotel in Plymouth and enjoyed by over 50 members and guests again with members travelling up to 80 miles to attend. We were joined at this lunch by two new attendees who were welcomed by the rest of the membership.

Our Spring lunch will be held in April (exact date yet to be decided) when once more we shall be visiting the Marsh Mill Beefeater.

*Shirley Riddle*

## Liverpool

### Kier Construction Northern Reunion Dinner 2017

The dinner was held in the Liner Hotel Liverpool on 3 March and was attended by some 43 persons, both retired and present employees.

The number of attendees was affected by the collapse of the retaining wall that bounds the main railway lines into Liverpool which effectively cut off Liverpool from Manchester, Wigan and Warrington.

We all met in the bar at 19.30 to relax the vocal cords prior to sitting down to dinner at 20.00.

Bob Adams made a short speech outlining the workload, progress and projects being undertaken by Kier from the Manchester and Liverpool offices and refrained from mentioning the latest US president or Brexit as these had been exhausted at previous events.

The food was greatly improved from the last reunion; however one table had difficulties with their exploding tomatoes and a number of shirts bore the proof of this much to the table's hilarity.

Once again thanks were expressed to Sharon for organising the event.

At about 23.00 people relocated, some going home, others to the bar for further refreshments after enjoying a convivial evening.

*Sharon Jenkins*

## Loughton and Witham

### Ashdown Forest Explorer

On an unusually bright and sunny November day we began our tour at Heaven Farm, a few miles outside East Grinstead.

After morning coffee and biscuits, we boarded the coach with our guide to enjoy our journey through the beautiful Ashdown Forest. In spite of its name, much of the original forest was cleared of its mighty oaks to provide fuel for the iron industry, leaving the wild heathland which we see today.



We passed through East Grinstead, home of the WWII Guinea Pig Club, where allied aircrew suffering serious burn injuries underwent reconstructive surgery. Under the leadership of Archibald McIndoe, later Sir Archibald, his innovative surgical techniques were used to save many lives.

Returning to Heaven Farm, lunch was served in the restaurant before we re-boarded our coach for the short journey to Saint Hill Manor, a



fine 18th century country manor house.

Previous owners of the house included the Maharajah of Jaipur and L. Ron Hubbard, founder of the Scientology religion. Mr. Hubbard purchased the house in 1959 making it his family residence, and World Centre for the religion at that time. Restored at considerable cost, it now stands as one of the finest sandstone properties in the country, and remains the UK centre for Scientology to this day.

Our day ended with afternoon tea in the 'Monkey Room' where the walls were covered by a canvas mural depicting monkeys dressed to remind us of famous people from the mid 1940s. This amazing work of art had been carried out by John Spencer Churchill, nephew of Sir Winston.

Despite heavy traffic on the way home, everyone agreed it had been an excellent choice of venue.

*Trevor Franklin*

### Cambridge and River Cam cruise

We arrived in Cambridge on one of the hottest days of September to explore the historic city centre with all its famous university buildings dating back several hundred years. Some of us explored the numerous shops and cafes whilst others took the city tour on an open top bus. Fortunately we all arrived back at our coach in time to travel to Jesus Lock where we met other local members to embark on our river cruise along the Cam. Our two-hour cruise took us past some attractive and expensive property and some beautiful views along the river and adjacent countryside whilst enjoying our cream scone and a much needed cup of tea or coffee. The day was enjoyed by all in a fascinating city worthy of another visit to explore some of the historic buildings.

*John Simson*



### National Golf Day



*All enjoyed a lovely meal afterwards with prizes won by Colin Busby (Longest Drive)*

This was held at Newbury and Cookham Golf Course in early September and brought together 21 members from across the southern counties. Members from our area were down due to the location, but we did manage to win two of the prizes on a warm and muggy day on a course which was in magnificent condition.



*Gary Barnes (Nearest the Pin - off a tree some 30 yards behind the green)*

This year's golf day will be held at St. Neots Golf Club and hopefully many more of you will be able to make the journey to St. Neots which is the home course of Colin Busby and Ian Tidey.

*John Simson*

### Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey

In October a party of 38 members travelled to London for a conducted tour of the Houses of Parliament in the morning and a self-guided audio tour of Westminster Abbey in the afternoon. Because of very heavy traffic we were late arriving in Westminster but fortunately Neil Meixner and his wife and others who had travelled independently were able to arrange later times for our guided tours.



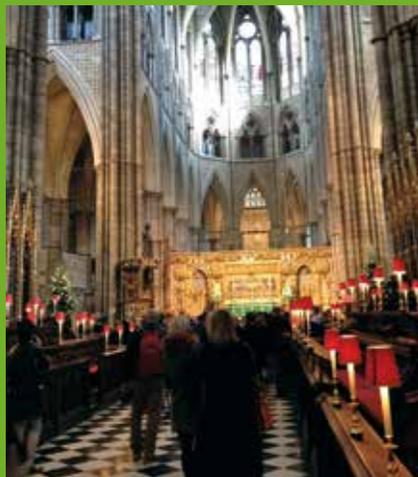
Our two groups were taken from the Westminster Hall which is nearly a thousand years old in parts through St. Stephen's Hall into the Central Lobby which is familiar to us all as the regular scene for political reporters on the TV news channels. We moved on to the House of Lords with its red upholstered seats and highly decorated throne



and décor and then to the green upholstered seats of the House of Commons and its very plain décor.

Our guides were very knowledgeable and made the tour really interesting with snippets of past goings on in the mother of all parliaments. After lunch we walked to Westminster Abbey which was founded by the Benedictine monks who first settled on the site over a thousand years ago, whilst the present building was started in 1245. We took our own time to walk around the Abbey with an audio guide which gave us an insight into the major points of interest in this magnificent building and most of us took the opportunity to visit the cloisters and the Chapter House as well as enjoy a piece of cake and tea in the Cellarium Café before our journey back to Chigwell. An interesting and enjoyable day.

*John Simson*



## Maidstone

### Royal Albert Hall – Matinee performance of the Classical Spectacular: Sunday 20 November 2016

This year we had 54 guests attending. Unfortunately, our usual venue for fish and chips in Waterloo Road was unable to accommodate us. The search was then on for another restaurant, which took me to ‘Kennedy’s of Goswell Road’ 184-186 Goswell Road, London EC1V 7DT. Everyone was served efficiently and a note was made of the restaurant details for any future event – just in case!

### Christmas Lunch: Friday 17 December 2016

Seventy-three guests accepted the invitation for our Christmas lunch. Upon entering the restaurant everyone was offered a glass of Bucks Fizz or orange juice and shortly afterwards the bar was opened for a choice of drink before lunch. Everyone enjoyed their choice of meal and once everyone was taking coffee, I was pleased to take the opportunity to thank everyone for coming along to the different outings I had arranged. For the benefit of those unable to attend, let me repeat what I said on the day:

“I have immensely enjoyed organising these trips and meeting so many different people from before I was employed by Wallis and since and have made many friends over the years. Here are some of the special trips that we went on – namely, a trip to La Coupole in France, followed by a trip to Bruges – that day was so hot that we went into cafes to keep cool.

Some of you may remember going on the Thames, when we stopped off at Windsor and had some lunch there and then on our return journey we had a cream teas on board. On another trip we boarded the ‘Lady Lee Valley’ on the River Lee where we had again, a cream tea, which was delightful.

Another memorable trip was on the Princess Pocohontas from Gravesend up the Thames to the heart of London with an excellent commentary and another trip on the same vessel was down to Southend-on-Sea, which has the longest pier in the country and bought back many memories of the glory days of the 60s and 70s.

On the Mystery Tour, I would not tell anyone, (even when we met with the other Area Officers at Tempsford) so the secret remained safe. This trip turned out to be through Ashdown Forest, a stop at Haven Farm and then on to the Bluebell Railway where we enjoyed a lovely ploughman’s lunch which was so fresh and thoroughly enjoyable, while we sat in our own reserved carriage.”

On our many trips to the Royal Albert Hall, I can remember one year that it rained so heavily, we came across a flooded road in Lewisham and had to divert around London to get to the venue, good old Trevor, he got us there. (Well done, to our driver, Trevor).

During the summer months, we enjoyed hog roasts and had lunchtime get-togethers, the last being at West Malling Golf Club.

On our latest trip to the Royal Albert Hall, Warwick, as he so often does, organised a quiz with the prize and I am pleased to tell you that we raised £50 and Warwick sent a cheque to East Kent Multiple Sclerosis Society for which we have received a lovely ‘thank you’ letter for our efforts.

Also, during this time, our theatre trips included Dirty Dancing, Dreamboats & Petticoats, Million Dollar Quartet, The Bodyguard, Miss Saigon and Sunny Afternoon and too many shows at Brick Lane to mention. Thank you everyone.

Derek then called for a special ‘thank you’ to Dick Side for all of his support and help over these years, for which there was a great ovation.

And then, to my extreme delight and completely unexpected, I was presented with a lovely bouquet, a large card, which turned out to really be a small book, containing excerpts from members’ letters thanking me/us for all of our hard work in organising our area Fellowship for the past 7.5 years in which they expressed their thanks and gratitude.

### Brick Lane Theatre, 2017 Pantomime for grown-ups... ‘Schlepping Beauty’

Our reservation is for Afternoon Tea on Thursday 2 March 2017 and at time of print is currently 33 guests, this will be my last event but I will be on hand, to help (if needed) for your new Area Organiser, Lesley Payne.

*Anne Ransley*

## Maple Cross

### London Eye and Thames River Cruise

On Thursday 22 September 14 members met at the London Eye on the South Bank of the Thames to experience a 30-minute trip around the Eye looking at all the fabulous views around London on a cloudy and damp but clear day. This was followed by a short 4D cinema experience of a fly-through on the back of a pigeon of London’s skyline and attractions. We then all went on a cruise down the Thames to Tower Bridge and returned on the top deck (in the dry) of a tourist boat. We all listened intently to a very informative commentary about the history of various buildings and structures on the Thames banks. We followed this with a good meal in All Bar One at Waterloo.



London Eye Trip 2016

### Long Service Luncheon at the Mansion House, Moor Park Golf Club

On Friday 14 October a large number of members joined existing employees who had achieved 25 years working for the Kier Group at the fabulous venue of the Mansion House at Moor Park Golf Club. The current Kier Southern managing director Jonathan Payne and operations director for Maple Cross Martin Reilly hosted a fantastic roast beef luncheon for a record 51 members. This event continues to grow with more members attending and enjoying the company of employees and their stories of the current Kier Group.





Long Service Luncheon 2016

### Christmas Luncheon at Shendish Manor Hotel

On Thursday 15 December, 62 members gathered at Shendish Manor Hotel in Hertfordshire for an excellent Christmas Luncheon with all the trimmings. This was a record attendance at a venue used many times before but the first time for Christmas. Alan Taplin brought along his latest fantastic wood carving for all to see and discuss his expertise that he enjoys following his retirement from Kier.

*Norman Elliott*



Christmas Luncheon Shendish Manor 2016

## Rushden

### Since the last issue of KierLink we have been at our usual best... busy!

October started with 28 members travelling to Dubrovnik for a six-day five-night break. Julie Stromdale reports on this separately.

On Wednesday 9 November a full coach of 48 travelled to West London to visit the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall and the British Airways Museum at Heathrow. Peter Bond reports in full.

On Saturday 12 November 43 members attended The Lord Mayor's Show in the City of London to witness the spectacular parade. Unfortunately, it was very wet and cold, resulting in a swift move to the oldest pub in London – the Cheshire Cheese – for a double brandy or two!

At the end of November a small group of eight descended on Potters Leisure Resort in Norfolk to start the Christmas festivities – a long weekend with Christmas entertainment.

On Thursday 1 December 57 members and friends attended our Annual Christmas Lunch at John White's Golf Club attended by four retired directors. Plenty of goodwill and friendly banter was enjoyed.

On Sunday 11 December a full coach of 48 travelled to Central London

to celebrate Christmas lunch at the Sanctuary House Hotel in Westminster, followed by the Annual Carol Service in the Guards Chapel, Birdcage Walk, close to Buckingham Palace. This is the real start to Christmas!

Our New Year break this year was to Papendrecht, Holland – attended by 47 members – which featured plenty of food and drink with a fancy dress with the colour blue theme. See Angie Gallear's full report.

Our 2017 schedule shows no signs of slowing with the following events planned:

Date	Event
Saturday 25 February	Medieval Banquet at Coombe Abbey, Coventry
Saturday 25 March	Massed Bands of the Royal Marines at the Royal Albert Hall
Sunday 23 April	House and gardens (yet to be decided so remains a mystery)
Sunday 21 May	City and village tours (yet to be decided so remains a mystery)
Wednesday 19 July	Picnic in the park/ concert

Date	Event
Saturday 12 August	Shrewsbury Flower Show
Sunday 10 September	Gardens (tba)
Saturday 11 November	Lord Mayor's Show, London
Sunday 10 December	London Lunch/Carol Service

Our weekend breaks include:

Dates	Event
Monday 9 October – Saturday 14 October	The Austrian Tyrol (30 booked to date)
Saturday 30 December – Tuesday 2 January	Valkenburg New Year Break (nearly full)

Book early to avoid disappointment!

*Brian Hill*

### New Year Break to Papendrecht

After a very early start it's not long before Bucks Fizz and cheese straws are doing the rounds on the coach. Then on to Folkestone for the 09.50 tunnel crossing to France. We arrive late afternoon at our hotel in Papendrecht for a three-night stay.

On Saturday morning we take a leisurely walk into the centre of Papendrecht to

explore, then take the local ferry across to Dordrecht, known as a 'City of water, history and culture'.

We celebrated New Year's Eve with a gala dinner with disco and dancing and a firework display to welcome 2017.

On New Year's Day we had a relaxing and foggy trip to Rotterdam where we stopped at the Euromast for morning coffee.

The evening was fancy dress with a blue theme. Everything from the Blues Brothers, Thunderbirds, Andy Pandy and Looby Loo to a Gospel Choir. The hotel judged the fancy dress and declared Andy Pandy, Looby Loo and Lady Penelope as winners.

We left the hotel the next morning for our journey home, stopping at Cite Europe for some last minute shopping. We arrived home late evening after another enjoyable and successful trip.

*Angie Gallear*

### Military Music and British Airways Museum

An early start from Rushden heralded the day visiting the School of Military Music at Kneller Hall at Twickenham and the British Airways Museum at Waterside adjacent to Heathrow Airport.

We were welcomed at Kneller Hall at around 10.30am and taken to the

rehearsal room to listen to a band of army musicians' pre-concert rehearsal. They were conducted in turn by two trainee bandmasters. This was followed by coffee and a guided tour around the museum.

The party then went for a pre-booked lunch at a nearby pub/restaurant before departing on a short journey to the British Airways Centre Waterside. After being greeted by the curator of the museum we enjoyed a personalised presentation detailing the history of BA, its development, types of aircraft, items of memorabilia, photos and numerous anecdotes of those who had travelled with BA.

The whole visit went well and was extremely well organised and most interesting, giving a chance for the group to visit places not normally on the tourist trail.

*Peter Bond*

### Dubrovnik and Cavtat, Croatia

Monday 10 October saw a group of 28 leave Rushden at a decidedly unsociable 2.00am and head off to Gatwick to catch a 7.10am flight to Dubrovnik.

We arrived at the new Dubrovnik airport, the old buildings evident only in piles of rubble at the side of the taxiways, having been flattened during the

1991 to 1994 war, and were transported to the hotel Albatross, on the outskirts of the small town of Cavtat, arriving just in time for lunch.

Early afternoon rain was a good excuse for an hour of sleep after unpacking and by late afternoon it had dried up and gave us time for a walk or a drink before the evening meal.

Tuesday we were taken for a half-hour ride into Dubrovnik and dropped off at the gates into the old town. We were given a tour of the town by a guide and then given free time to carry on at our own pace, find a spot for lunch and be back at the coach for 4.00pm, returning to the hotel for a drink or two before dinner.

Wednesday we were driven to the Dubrovnik Port to board a small boat for a trip to two of the Elephite Islands. After visiting the island of Lopud, on our return to the boat, we were served lunch of either grilled fish or chicken with an ample supply of wine. After visiting the second island of Sipan, we cruised back to the port. The motion of the boat and the compulsory consumption of wine meant that some of our party managed to close their eyes for a minute or two before we arrived back at the hotel.

Thursday and Friday were free days. On Thursday several of us walked along the road into Cavtat and after a coffee by the harbour we found a café for a pizza lunch and then a slow walk back along a most scenic beach path.

Friday we took a water taxi back to Dubrovnik for a further look around the Old Town. The town is surrounded by a wall on which you can walk all the way round at a height that shows the amount of repair work the buildings required post war. After taking the water taxi back to the hotel, we had come to the end of yet another holiday which I am sure had been enjoyed by all. Many thanks to Brian and all those involved in the planning of this break.

*Julie Stromdale*

## Solent

### Hampshire countryside walk

Pictured, a happy bunch of Fellowship walkers enjoying the Hampshire countryside and villages in November. They include a guest member, her friend, a new member who discovered he had legs, two brothers, someone from the Mafia, two old ex directors and a rogue dog belonging to the passing photographer.

The party was joined at lunch in the Hinton Arms pub by a retired contracts manager who used to have legs!

Those who were brave enough to continue walking in the afternoon toured the nearby grounds of the decisive 1644 Civil War's Battle of Cheriton, which the Parliamentarians won.

This was one of my gentler walks.



### South Downs winter walk

The night's frost had hardened the footpath ruts and the low winter sun dazzled us as we left the small West Sussex village of Walderton. Our seven mile route via Monarch's Way ascended Stoughton Down to Bow Hill at a mere 206m. However the views west and south were magnificent particularly with Chichester Cathedral spire peering through the morning mist.

The gentle descent past the Kingley Vale National Nature Reserve and through a pig farm lead us back to a very walker friendly pub in the village. Thirteen members and a dog can thoroughly recommend the Barley Mow: so much so that nobody wanted to join me for the afternoon walk!



*Graham Willoughby*

### Visit to Salisbury Cathedral

Six members of the Kier fellowship plus two wives attended the visit to Salisbury Cathedral in mid October 2016. The visit commenced with a tour of the stone mason's yard and workshops where all of the stones which are used in the repair programme are cut, prepared and carved, mostly by hand, prior to installation on the cathedral elevations. Gary, the clerk of works, took the party around the yard showing stones which had been removed from the elevations, one particular example is the gargoyle shown at the feet of the party in the following photograph:



Weighing in at only a third of tonne, a replacement stone had been carved to match this one and inserted on the building to replace it.

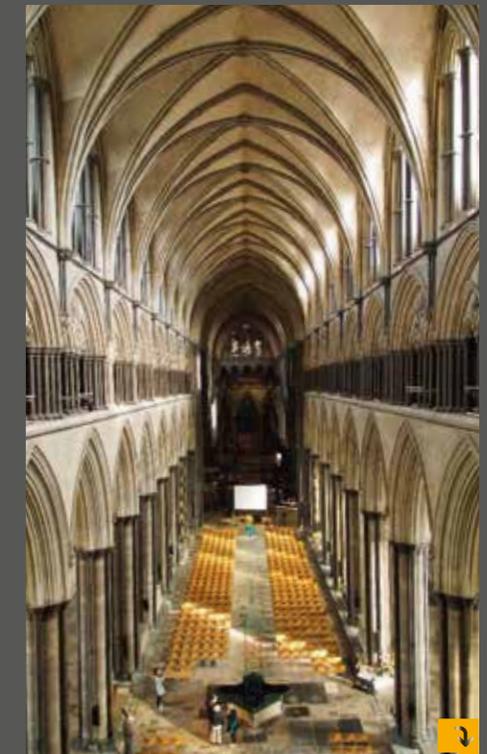
The party was then shown around the workshops where Gary went on to explain how the elevations of the Cathedral are surveyed using a calibrated digital camera and how stones to be replaced are identified. He then described the process of making templates of the existing stones, cutting the stones and the carving process, which he explained is mostly carried out by hand by the resident stone masons.



A photo of their samples cabinet is shown. Some used and some not used in the elevations!

Gary explained they are in the latter stages of a 30 year programme of works to replace damaged stonework throughout the Cathedral. There was a suggestion they were slightly behind programme!

The second part of the tour was a behind-the-scenes visit to look at the roof construction, the base of the tower and the spire above the tower. This was facilitated by Les our guide.



The first step after climbing the stone spiral staircase was to look down from the narrow balcony into the main part of the Cathedral.

A further climb up another stone spiral staircase took us above the stone arches of the cathedral into the roof space where we could see the timber roof structure. Les explained that most of the timbers forming the structure are original; it was completed in the 13th century; however some repairs have been necessary to maintain the integrity of the structure.



The visit continued through the roof space for the length of the Cathedral with stops at various locations for Les to show the group some of the more complex aspects of the structure and timber jointing methods used to connect structural members.

The next stop, after passing through the fire door (not medieval), was at the base of the tower where the bells for the clock are sited. There is no visual clock on the outside of the Cathedral, however there is a medieval clock which is thought to be the oldest working clock in existence, built in the 14th century.

This is in the main area of the Cathedral and is connected to the bells in the tower.

From this point the journey to the base of the spire is up a narrow timber spiral staircase with a stop at an internal balcony to look out of the windows within the elevations of the upper tower. The final spiral staircase took the party to the bottom of the spire. This is the striking point for the timber structure that remains in place and was used in the original construction of the spire.

Also still in place is a man sized hamster wheel which was used in the original construction for hauling materials up for the spire construction. There was no evidence to suggest it is still in use today!



The photo in column 2 is taken looking up into the spire and shows the timbers in place which were used to construct the tower in the 13th century. These are still in use to the present day to provide access for repair and maintenance.

The tour concluded at this level, 225 feet above ground, with a step outside on to the balcony for a view of the Wiltshire Countryside.



All that remained was for the enthused group to return to ground level down the 332 steps.

*Lawrie Draper*

### **Osborne House, Isle of Wight**

On 29 September seven members set sail from Southampton and Portsmouth to meet at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. The day started with heavy rain which abated during the ferry crossing and we arrived at Osborne House to meet up at around 11:15. We were met at the entrance with the news that a quarter of the house was closed off due to filming of the new film 'Victoria and Abdul' charting the relationship between Queen Victoria and her Muslim attendant, Mohammed Abdul Karim. He served the Queen during her final 15 years, teaching her Urdu and becoming



her 'Indian Secretary'. There was a buzz of excitement when we were told that Dame Judy Dench, Sir Michael Gambon, Tim Piggott-Smith and Eddie Izzard were on set but alas we only got to see a number of extras breaking for lunch, in costume but with large plastic macs to protect their finery.

Osborne House was acquired by the Queen and Prince Albert in 1845 where the Prince set about redeveloping the existing estate to create a 'family home' as an escape from the formalities of court life in Windsor and London. The Queen used Osborne House for more than 50 years entertaining visiting ministers, foreign royalty and her own extensive family.



Taking the tour around the house it is clear that this is in fact a family home, albeit a royal family, with few grand rooms in the style of Buckingham Palace and evidence of the family everywhere. The Prince was an avid art collector with many of his purchases hanging in the house.

The tour of the house completed we stepped outside to be greeted by sunshine to allow us to explore the extensive estate. Once again the Prince's eye for detail is apparent in the layout of the formal gardens. A small



house, the Swiss Cottage, was built for the young Princes and Princesses in the grounds where they could practise their various crafts along with gardening, each with their own monogrammed wheelbarrow. Products from the Swiss Cottage kitchen and gardens were often eaten in the main house. With the backdrop of the Crimean War, Prince Albert built Victoria Fort and Albert Barracks, scaled down versions, for the young Princes to practise their military prowess.



A gentle stroll down the Rhododendron Walk took us down to the beach to admire the view the Queen had from her alcove seat back to the mainland and to see Victoria's restored bathing machine. A private landing place were one of the main attractions of Osborne and a landing house and jetty were added in the 1850s although not now owned by English Heritage.



There are other areas of the estate which we didn't have time to see along with the closed areas of the house and the general consensus was we had a wonderful day and that a return visit would be needed to complete the Osborne experience.

*Derek Ward*

## Tempsford

For our boat trip on the Grand Union Canal from Cosgrove, we were immensely lucky with the weather – the hottest September day ever. Our group of 33 spent a lazy four hours, during which we had an excellent, on-board buffet lunch. We were somewhat surprised on arrival, to be told that we were on the final outing for 'Elizabeth of Glamis' as the owners were retiring and the boat had been sold. An enjoyable day and we parted after thanking the crew and wishing them a very happy retirement.

We had enjoyable lunches on 13 October and 10 November: 15 attended the Green Man, Stanford and 12 The Eaton Oak, Eaton Socon respectively. We had a record number for our Christmas Lunch at The Tavistock Pub & Carvery, Bedford when 37 squeezed in for an excellent carvery or other choices from the menu.



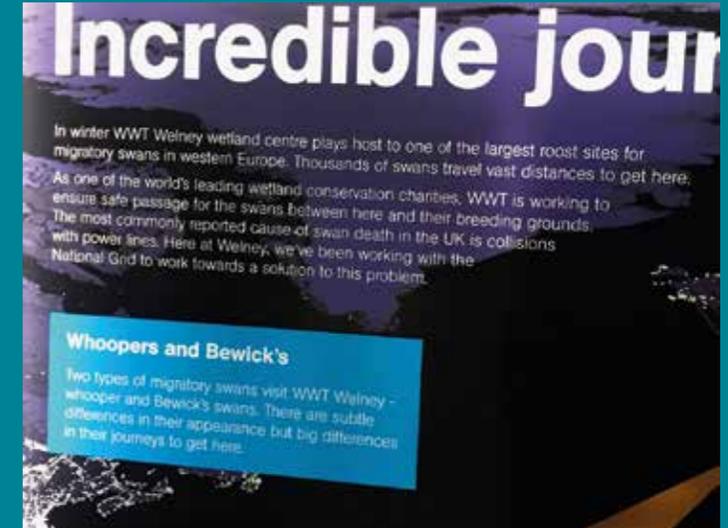
We have had two committee meetings to plan the next 12 months or so and will be having a talk on Bedford's Parks and River Heritage, another forest walk (both events to incorporate a pub lunch), and a day's outing to Norfolk with a combined steam train and river cruise.

*Harold Thompson*



## Waterbeach and Wisbech

Waterbeach area Fellowship visit to Wildfowl and Wetland Trust Welney



On 16 November 2016 24 members and guests from the Waterbeach Fellowship club attended an early evening swan-feeding session under floodlights at the Welney Wildfowl and Wetland Trust site. This twice daily event through the winter was viewed from a comfortable heated hide overlooking the flooded wash with knowledgeable commentary and answers to questions provided by a Trust Ranger.

A very informative and enjoyable evening was rounded off with a hearty meal at the nearby Lamb and Flag Inn in the village of Welney.



The visit was made all the more interesting as in 2006 Kier Eastern built the current WWT visitor centre and the access bridge to the wetland viewing areas.

*Sonia Webb*

# A South American Sojourn...

**TRUST CHAIRMAN AND LOUGHTON MEMBER, NEIL MEIXNER AND HIS WIFE CHRIS WENT ON THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME TO SOUTH AMERICA IN FEB/MAR 2016. NEIL SHARES SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE.**



Up close at the Perito Moreno

“Chris and I said we’d go to South America when I retired, but what to see and do? There is so much choice. We decided to combine a sightseeing tour with a visit to see Chris’s lifelong friend Graciela in Buenos Aires. It took us nearly three years to get around to it and four and a half weeks to do! **BUT WOW!**

Here I will try to give a flavour of our adventure. We went to four of the 12 countries and even then only scratched the surface of this vast and magnificent continent.

After a lot of research, we decided that we’d like to see the Inca’s influence, the Bariloche area, the glaciers of Southern Patagonia, Iguazu Falls and the metropolises of Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro. Twelve flights in all!

We planned and organised the whole trip ourselves and fortunately, all went to plan. There were many high points, but I will concentrate on the three sightseeing highlights: the Inca’s Machu Picchu, the glacier Perito Moreno and the Iguazu Falls.

## MACHU PICCHU – WHAT A DAY TO REMEMBER!

A 4.45am start and a walk in the rain to the station at Ollantaytambo wasn’t the best beginning to what turned out to be an incredible experience. Then by train (built by the British) along the banks of the raging Urubamba river for 1.5 hours to Machu Picchu and by bus up to 8,000 feet to the UNESCO site of Machu Picchu and by 8.00am we were entering the site. By now it had stopped raining, but there was a heavy mist. We elected to climb first to a high vantage point in anticipation of the mist lifting.

We were not disappointed; the first glimpse of Machu Picchu takes what breath you have left away! By ten o’clock we had



Machu Picchu

worked our way down into the town in beautiful sunshine. We were so lucky. Walking through the residential, industrial and religious areas you really could imagine the Incas living, working, praying and dying in this splendid setting.

## THE GLACIER PERITO MORENO WAS THE BEST EXPERIENCE!

Chris and I were completely overwhelmed by the scale of the glacier which moves down the valley at 2m per day and is 55m high and 4-5km wide depending on



Perito Moreno Glacier



whether you measure it straight across or around the face! Whilst we were standing on the walkway a little piece fell off. Then suddenly we heard the ice creak eerily! A huge piece 30m wide x 55m falls to the sea. **GOING, GOING, GONE!**

We just stood and marvelled at the glacier. All quiet again except for the sound of the moving ice flow. What a sight and sound.



Iguazu Falls from the Brazilian side

The Iguazu Falls are vast! The Falls can be viewed from both Argentina and Brazil. It really was worth doing both! The sheer volume of water flowing is mind blowing and the noise of rushing and falling water really gets to you! There are many walkways right up to the edge – not for the faint-hearted as there is a lot of walking involved. The falls are about 2.7km wide! **AWESOME.**

Well that’s the whistle-stop tour. If you’re interested in more pictures and details of the trip you can view our blog at <http://meixner.my-free.website/>

Neil and Chris Meixner

# Obituaries

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

Derek Ashpole	05.09.16
Norman Askew	17.11.16
Kenneth Bailey	25.12.16
John Bishop	01.10.16
Valerie Bowyer	16.01.17
Thomas Brook	18.08.16
Ian Care	11.09.16
Mary Colaluca	13.11.16
Joseph Crosthwaite	13.10.16
Jack Ehlen	14.01.17
John Everitt	23.12.16
Maureen Finigan	26.10.16
David Freeman	06.01.17
Leslie Friend	27.09.16
Ernest Gardner	17.12.16

George Goody	13.08.16
Dennis Griffiths	02.12.16
Stanley Hughes	18.08.16
Margaret Hurley	23.01.17
Deleon Ings	25.09.16
Cecil John	12.01.17
Derek Leaver	07.10.16
Raymond Kent	16.01.17
Barbara McKenzie	13.01.17
Heather McLay	14.09.16
Grace Michael	16.11.16
Robert Morris	03.08.16
Eileen Norman	18.12.16
Irene Oldall	25.12.16
Sandra O'Keefe	19.09.16

Shirley Peachey	30.11.16
Irene Pywell	12.12.16
David Quigley	26.12.12
Colin Riley	02.02.17
Charles Robinson	12.11.16
Neville Shaw	03.01.17
George Sturrock	04.01.17
Ralph Thompson	18.12.16
Kenneth Tillman	
Doreen Tite	26.12.16
George Wordley	28.01.17
Frederick Wyvill	11.09.16
Frank (Paul) Zimmerman	24.11.16

## Charity support for ex-employees of William Moss Builders

The Kier Group Fellowship Trust has recently learnt of a charity based in Loughborough that is able to offer financial support to ex-employees of William Moss & Sons Ltd. Many of you will be aware that William Moss was a leading building firm which was founded in Loughborough in 1820. The firm was subsequently taken over by French Kier in 1984. A feature on the history of William Moss appeared in the Spring 2015 edition Kierlink.

The clerk of the charity, known as the Robert Moss Charity, recently contacted the Kier Group Fellowship Trust and has asked that we raise awareness of charity's work and the funding that is available.

The primary purpose of the Robert Moss Charity is to help alleviate hardship from any individual (or their family) who used to work for William Moss. Typically, the charity looks to support those who are of limited financial means or those

who are suffering with ill health or a combination of the two.

If you wish to find out more about the support offered by the Robert Moss Charity or if you wish to apply to be considered for support then please contact the charity's clerk Anthony Benskin of Moss Solicitors, 80-81 Woodgate, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 2XE, telephone: 01509 217770, email: [a.benskin@moss-solicitors.co.uk](mailto:a.benskin@moss-solicitors.co.uk)

## Now spring's sprung, it's time to spring into action!

### More sound advice from our gardening guru Warwick Stevens

Once again, spring is upon us – time to get those lawns ready. You can have two kinds of lawn – one to look at and one to let the children on. The first thing is to get the scarifier out and get rid of worm casts and rotted grass, give the lawn a cut – keeping the blades high. Next spread your seed and sharp sand. If your lawn is for children or other heavy wear use a mixture of grass containing rye and cheaper seeds. If you want a lawn to admire use a finer quality seed. After the seed has taken give it a second mowing, don't forget the edges – cut them nice and neat – then you're set for the coming year with a good lawn. Use fertilizer from time to time. Good luck.

By now all of your bulbs will be up and looking good. You should also be planting your plants – get your dahlias ready for planting out, also gladioli, lilies, cosmos and zinnias. Don't be too quick with the soft plants like marigolds, wait until the frosts have gone.

In the allotment it's time for potatoes, runner beans, peas, parsnips and all brassicas. Don't forget all your squashes, pumpkins and runner beans like fresh soil or old fertilizer to old ground. Wait until May for tomatoes in open ground although they are OK in a greenhouse. It is time to give your greenhouse a good clean and make sure you spray all your fruit trees before and during blossom. A bit of Growmore around the base of trees helps with feed to the roots.

All your fruit trees should be pruned by now – cut back old branches on blackberries and cut out all of last year's branches which had fruit on. Also old wood on redcurrants and blackcurrants and tidy up gooseberry bushes and thin them out – there should be enough room for a blackbird to fly through the branches. Cut back grapevines to bare stems.

Email [warwickstevens1942@gmail.com](mailto:warwickstevens1942@gmail.com)



**Warwick Stevens**

Are your spring raspberries tied up? Your autumn raspberries which you cut down in the winter should now be growing – make sure they get plenty of water to enhance the fruit.

Any queries please email.

*“Happy gardening!”*  
Warwick Stevens



# The Trust's got talent!

Singing is good for you – and singing with a choir is even better according to Bob and Peter from the Loughton and Witham area...

Bob Maybanks has been a member of the Braintree Male Voice Choir for five years and sings in the bass section. The Choir was formed in 1971 by members of staff from Braintree College following a Christmas concert.

Bob says: "I was talked into going to a rehearsal by a fellow member. Although I'd never been in a choir before I was surprised how much I enjoyed singing.

The membership numbers average out at about 40. Rehearsals are held once a week preparing for our two major fundraising concerts held bi-annually in May and December together with various other charitable events throughout the year.

The choir does not only rely on the normal repertoire of male voice choirs, but has spread its wings to take in all kinds of different music and languages. I have sung in German, Hungarian,

Swahili and Welsh during overseas visits to France, Austria, Hungary and Italy! We have shared programmes with other male voice choirs, ladies choirs and many different soloists as well as two appearances at the Royal Albert Hall in the festival of massed English Voices. It's a hobby that I never knew I would enjoy so much."

Peter Ricketts first joined a choir while still at school aged about 16. He says; "We were led by a 6th former and, I suspect, were not very good musically! Later I joined a church choir in Harlow where I was a member and it was through them that I came into contact with All Souls Church, Langham Place (next to BBC Broadcasting House).

I became part of their extended choir for concerts at the Royal Albert Hall and other London Venues. About 13 years ago I was invited to join the All Souls Choir itself where I was made to feel



welcome but very inadequate. Under the guidance and leadership of Professor of Music, Noel Tredinnick, my confidence and ability has grown hugely.

The choir takes part in regular Sunday services at All Souls as well as concerts there and elsewhere in London and further afield. Our greatest honour is perhaps, forming part of the chorus for the annual Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. Here we perform in front of Her Majesty the Queen, the Royal Family, the Prime Minister, other political leaders and other famous names including Andrea Bocelli, Katherine Jenkins and Rod Stewart. If you watched the last One Show of 2016 when they went 'next door' to church then that was me and the All Souls Choir live on TV."



## The Long Distance Walkers Association

If you're a keen walker, you might want to consider joining the Long Distance Walkers Association (LDWA). It's aimed at people with the common interest of walking long distances in rural, mountainous or moorland areas. By joining, you will meet other like-minded long distance walkers and gain access

to information on walking events and long distance walking routes all over the UK.

Membership of the LDWA is open to all, with individual members paying just £13 a year. As well as gaining access to the members' website, members also receive the LDWA magazine 'Strider'.

You can join online by visiting: [ldwa.org.uk](http://ldwa.org.uk).

There are over 40 local groups and being a member of one of these is great fun. Local groups host regular group walks led by one of their members and some also organise social events and longer trips.

### Recommended links

Graham Willoughby from the Solent area has recommended some really useful downloads to access free magazines and OS maps.

#### Free magazines

Zinio for Libraries: This website (<http://zinio.com>) invites you to download an app to your phone or tablet. To register you put in your local library number and pin. You then have an amazing choice of magazines to download from Hello, National Geographic, Yachting Monthly, the Economist to Amateur Photographic **ALL FREE**. You will also be reminded when the next issue is available. This will save you ££££s on subscriptions.

#### Free Ordnance Survey maps and route planning

This website gives you access to all the mainland 1:50,000 OS maps free of charge. It has the ability to plan a route, giving its cumulative length, ascent, descent and duration. You can also print out the map and your route. The gpx file of all the waypoints can also be sent to your phone, Google Earth and friends.

It's not as good as the OS on line service that uses 1:25,000 maps but that costs £23/year. Worth a look. <http://maps.the-hug.net>

If you know of any useful links or downloads that you'd be happy to share, this is the place to do it! Email: [kierlinkmag@gmail.com](mailto:kierlinkmag@gmail.com)

### Staying safe on line

Whether we use the internet to stay in touch with friends and family, for shopping or as a valuable information resource, we'd all like to be sure we and our computers are protected from the not-so-useful elements. The article below, produced by Andrew Southard, director at 2 Sided, provides some useful advice for doing just that.

#### The right attitude and three steps to staying safe on line.

There are lots of security threats on the internet and it would be easy to feel intimidated if you tried to consider them all. However, there is no need to worry about any of it if you take a few relatively simple precautions. Many people don't take all these precautions for one reason or another, which leaves them potentially vulnerable and keeps the crooks in business.

The right attitude really is common sense. Treat anything that you are not sure of with a healthy dose of scepticism! Some of the online

scams are so obvious that they are laughable, but people do fall for them; no long lost relative you have never heard of is going to ask a man in Nigeria to track you down and leave you their fortune! But some are more sophisticated and might catch any of us out, even tech-savvy veterans, which is why I advocate the following set of rules.

1) Have a good anti-virus and internet security suite installed, and keep it up to date. There are many to choose from: some premium brands which you pay an annual subscription for, and surprisingly some full featured ones which are free (although they will nag you to buy the premium version). They will have the following features:

- a. Antivirus, which protects you from malicious software programs which are distributed around the internet, on websites and in unsolicited 'spam' email
- b. A firewall, which helps to stop hackers – either humans or more often software 'robots' – from gaining remote access to your computer. Good enough in most cases, but not infallible (see the final paragraph of this article).

The purpose here is not to recommend one brand over another, but many businesses rely on 'McAfee' and a very good free product with optional premium features is 'Avast', which also has a password manager (premium) mentioned next.

2) Use secure passwords. Any website where you exchange personal information or make a financial transaction should require that you create an account with a password. This also has the advantage that when you return to your favourite sites you don't have to fill in information again. Many people try to use memorable names or phrases which they can recall easily, and then use the same password, or a few at best, for every website they visit. If you do this and just one site has a security breach you become vulnerable everywhere.

The answer is to use a password manager. A good password manager will generate very strong passwords which you could never guess or remember, and will fill in the password field for you. Often, they will also have a facility for securely holding bank card details or any information that you want to keep secure. When you fill in password fields or forms you don't type them (which some hackers can read), the software does it for you, and when your computer sends the information to the website it is encrypted first, so if a crook 'steals' it they won't be able to read it. Secure passwords look something like:

**PXc)/m8(G|-dVxk;\***, in other words unmemorable, random gobbledygook. I have just one quite strong password which I remember, the master password to access my password manager.

Again, no specific recommendations but 'Dashlane' and 'Sticky Password' have

free versions which are very good, with premium features which many people won't need.

Please note that a password manager is not the same as allowing your browser to store your passwords, which is not good practice.

3) Many people use an internet email service such as 'Google' or 'Yahoo' and these may also offer online or 'cloud' storage. This is very convenient for storing information and documents which you can access wherever you are, on computer, smartphone or tablet. They are so convenient that people end up storing many important, personal details there. This is fine, but must be super-secure.

- a. First, use a strong, unique password from step 2) above
- b. Enable two-factor authentication. Any time you try to access your account from a new computer, you will be asked to validate the request by one of several means. The best method is by a request sent to your phone, as unless a hacker has also already stolen your phone, they can't get into your information.

The final step I would recommend for total peace of mind would be to use a 'virtual private network' (VPN) which encrypts everything you do on line, but I think that's for another time...

*Andrew Southard*