

Fellowship matters – report from our chairman Dick Side

This is the last edition of KierLink that Roger Almond has edited since he took over from John Stamford to produce the third edition in April 2002. I would like to express the thanks and appreciation of the Trust's directors and members for the time and effort he has freely given to editing the Trust's main means of communication over the last nine years. Finding Roger's replacement was proving to be a daunting task until John Simson and Geoff Brown, the area organisers from Witham and Loughton, volunteered to take over the publishing of KierLink as joint editors. I am confident that they will build on the firm foundations laid down by John and Roger and the excellent work they have done on their own Fellowship magazines over the last three years.

Our total membership now exceeds 1,195 and I am very pleased to be able to report that the number of functions staged across all areas has, for the second year, exceeded 80, with almost 2,300 attendees. This has been achieved despite the reduced budgets our area organisers have had to work within due to the continuing relatively low earnings we are receiving on our cash and unit trust investments. It should be recognised that our ability to subsidise the cost of the Fellowship events has been largely made possible by the financial support we continue to receive from Kier companies.

In addition, the practical support that is being given to the Trust by Kier has recently been highlighted by the enrolment of over 300 Fellowship Trust members into the KierPlus discount retail purchasing scheme. In another example, two of the regional businesses have become directly involved in the organisation of the Fellowship Trust functions due to the disappointing lack of volunteers from local membership to assist in organising events. I would like to take this opportunity to urge any members who are aware of these difficulties and would like to offer their help, to please contact their local designated Fellowship liaison director or Brendan O'Boyle, Fellowship Trustee director, who runs our central administration (telephone 0208 954 2965; email brendan.o'boyleext@kier.co.uk). It has become evident from conversations I have had with Brendan and some of the area organisers that our administration throughout the Trust would be made much easier and effective if as many members as possible could use email. Please give your email address to your area organiser if you are happy to receive and send messages.

On a lighter note – those members who attended the spring luncheon at Chigwell in early April, or the annual luncheon at Tempsford Hall, will be aware of the celebrations surrounding the 100th birthday of Len Hills, our first centenarian member. I was delighted to be able to make a presentation to Len at Chigwell when he gave a short impromptu response stating how much he had enjoyed working for a company that felt like family, which are

Editor's note

This edition acts as my 'signing off' as editor, an experience which has been mainly enjoyable, occasionally frustrating, but always interesting.

My thanks to all the regional organisers, past and present, for their enthusiasm and support in providing reports of events held and encouraging their members to supply information on hobbies etc.

Particular thanks to Viv Chesterfield and her team at Tempsford for managing to translate a very rough draft into the final publication.

Last date for copy for spring 2012 edition is 13 February 2012. Please send to either:

John Simson

5 Gainsborough Place
Hutton, Essex CM13 2RF
Tel: 01277 233688
johnsimson@live.co.uk

or

Geoff Brown

44 Cramswell Close
Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 9QL
Tel: 01440 705058
Geoffbrown13@sky.com

Roger Almond

sentiments that I like to think would resonate with us all. Len was accompanied by his son, John, who is also a member in his own right, having retired after being a third generation company employee for part of his working life, which gives added meaning to Len's comments about working for a 'family' firm!

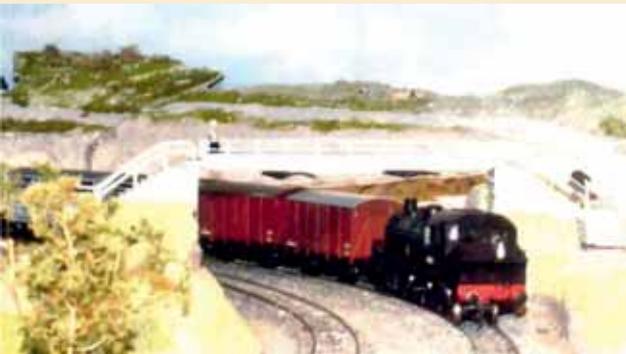
Whichway a

Harold Thompson keeps us on track with progress at his model railway development.



Much has happened since our first visit to Whichway. The shed area now has services for the supply of coal, water and diesel and a loco washing plant. The industrial complex has been completed with raised sidings to accommodate coal and iron ore drops for the nearby steelworks which, owing to a planning lapse, does not have its own sidings so the last leg of the journey for the raw material has to be by road – no wonder the steelworks is in financial difficulty.

Warmer and Holmes sell domestic coal and Tiptoe and Son run a scrap yard and steel fabrication shop with its own siding. A small steam loco shuffles the wagons between the iron ore mine and The Yonders station (both of which have yet to be created). The Cleavage Hills are now clad and the tunnel faces and portals have been completed. Close inspection reveals that some walkers have made it to the top of Raspberry Topping, following the popular route along the saddle back from Cook's Mount.



Struggleup is the name of my inclined route from the fiddle yard to the layout ('fiddle yard' being the name given to the area where the operator is permitted to handle the rolling stock). Because it was an

afterthought rather than part of the original plan, I was unable to make the gradient within the recommended limits. My research showed there were almost as many opinions as to what the maximum gradient should be, as there were modellers. As I had to go down about seven inches in a maximum distance of nine feet I could only achieve 1:15 but once below the layout I was able to reduce the gradient and there is a further distance of 15 feet at 1:20 (which is the maximum recommended by Hornby) giving me good headroom at the fiddle yard. This is far steeper than the prototype and my locos do struggle somewhat but some can haul five coaches up, albeit with a lot of wheel-spin. Double-heading is very successful but, so far, I have been unable to match the speeds to the two locos in order to ensure that they do not strain against each other as well as the incline.



The Eckerslake area is nearly complete. There is a low viaduct across River Eck which snakes through the valley, separated by a hillock from Whichway where there is now a goods yard and a couple of (prestigious) railwaymen's cottages. The peaty water of the river has quite a gentle flow and I will be installing a fisherman and a rowing boat or two. I have made the hill and the river bank removable so that I can, if necessary, remove



gain

the river bed to give me access to the track under Eckridge Tunnel. A level crossing permits road vehicles to cross the main line nearer to the river mouth (where the line again crosses the river) and a footbridge gives pedestrians access to Eckerslake. Someone seems to be in a hurry to cross the bridge to Eckerslake Halt and there is a very suspicious looking individual lurking at the foot of the steps near the holt. The trees are made of natural sea moss covered in synthetic scatter materials.

Some months ago I purchased some second-hand Triang horsebox wagons. They were made in the 1950-60s with plastic wheels. Unfortunately, the wheels were no longer round and the wagons wobbled alarmingly. It is possible to buy new wheel sets complete with axles but, as they had cast metal frames, I didn't know how to put them in, so I asked the questions on the RMWeb forum, calling the query 'Hornby R123 Horsebox' with the subtitle 'Cure for a Limp'. I was given lots of advice and soon made up my mind 'whichway' to go! However I did get some ribald comments before I realised I had misspelled the heading of my query – I had omitted the 's' from 'horsebox' (you may need to say it to yourself in order to get the point).

I am still waiting for my son to complete the backscenes. Until he does, I cannot start on the Yonders but, apart from completing the Eckerslake area, there is much to be done with Whichway Junction itself and Whatby. I plan to leave Hatch End Terminus until last as that area also needs a backscene to be painted.

Harold Thompson

Just how wasteful was our former generation?

In the line at the store, the cashier told the older woman that she should bring her own grocery bags because plastic bags weren't good for the environment.

The woman apologised to him and explained: "We didn't have the green thing back in our day."

The cashier responded: "That's our problem today. The former generation did not care enough to save our environment."

He was right, that generation didn't have the green thing in its day.

Back then, they returned their milk, soda and beer bottles to the store. The store sent them back to the plant to be washed and sterilized and refilled, so it could use the same bottle over and over. So they really were recycled.

But they didn't have the green thing back in that customer's day.

In her day, they walked up stairs, because they didn't have an escalator in every store and office building. They walked to the grocery store and didn't climb into a 30-horsepower machine every time they had to go two streets.

But she was right. They didn't have the green thing back in her day.

Back then, they washed the baby's nappies because they didn't have the throw-away kind. They dried clothes on a line, not in an energy gobbling machine burning up 240 volts – wind and solar power really did dry clothes. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand new clothing.

But that old lady is right, they didn't have the green thing back in her day.

Back then they had one TV, or radio, in the house – not a TV in every room. And the TV had a small screen the size of a handkerchief, not a screen the size of a dining table. In the kitchen, they blended and stirred by hand because they didn't use electric machines to do everything for you. When they packaged a fragile item to send in the mail, they used a wadded up old newspaper to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap.

Back then they didn't start up an engine and burn petrol just to cut the lawn. They used a hand mower that ran on human power. They exercised by working so they didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity.

But she's right, they didn't have the green thing back then.

They drank from a fountain when they were thirsty instead of using a cup or plastic bottle every time they have a drink of water. They refilled their writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and they replaced the razor blades in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor because the blade got dull.

But they didn't have the green thing back then.

Back then people took the tram or bus and kids rode their bikes to school or took the school bus instead of turning their mums into a 24-hour taxi service. They had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And they didn't need computerised gadgets to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles away out in space in order to find the nearest pizza joint.

But isn't it sad the current generation laments how wasteful the old folks were just because they didn't have the green thing back then?

Around the regions

Boston Spa: Katherine Leadley

Membership of the Boston Spa branch now stands at 46.

Since the last edition we have held one lunch at the Milford Hotel on 13 March and another on 25 September. The members have suggested that they would like to go to back again at Christmas so this will be arranged as soon as information is available.

Revie Morris, former regional organiser, and his wife Wendy went on long weekends away with tours of Yorkshire, visits to Bath and Stratford-upon-Avon, and Longleat Safari Park on the proceeds of the collection made by Boston Spa members as a thank you for all his work as regional organiser.

Jean Gratton, wife of former Kier Northern estimator George Gratton, completed a five-day sponsored walk just days after starting chemotherapy treatment for the second time in two years.

Jean, of Burn, near Selby, and her merry band of family and friends hobbled into Filey after covering more than 50 miles on the coastal path from Saltburn. They were greeted in Filey by actress Jean Alexander (Coronation Street's Hilda Ogden), who is honorary Mayoress of Burn and had travelled from her home in Southport to be at the finishing line. She also joined them in a Filey pub for a victory pint. With cash from previous fundraising events, Jean hopes the walk will have raised almost £5,000 for Yorkshire Cancer Research.

Jean was treated for ovarian cancer two years ago and was given the all clear months later. She was so impressed with the work of doctors and nurses at St James's Hospital, Leeds, she immediately started raising money for Yorkshire Cancer Research. But a few weeks ago she was told the cancer had returned and began a new treatment of chemotherapy days before the trek. With relatives and friends, she went ahead with the walk despite her condition.

"Because of the chemotherapy I was exhausted, but I made it, even though we had to take a rest day in the middle," said Jean, aged 61.

Loughton/Witham: Geoff Brown and John Simson

Since the last issue of KierLink we have had seven events starting on 24 March when 91 members went on a tour of the Olympic Village.

On 7 April we had our annual spring buffet when 109 members attended. At this event we also celebrated the 100th birthday of Len Hills who was presented with two cakes and £100 of gift vouchers.

On 3 May we held our area golf day at the Three Rivers Golf and Country Club where 20 members took part. Friday 13 May saw 46 members pay a visit to the Royal Albert Hall to hear the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Matthew Freeman, recreating the ABBA sounds of the seventies.

On Wednesday 15 June, 28 members spent a day at the National Trust's Wimpole Hall Estate in Royston Cambridgeshire and Sunday 26 June was the day of the Tempsford Garden Party. Forty-seven members enjoyed a very good meal and some fine wines and the opportunity to meet fellow members from other areas.

Last but not least, on Thursday 21 July, 39 members enjoyed a trip down to the Hop Farm at Paddock Wood to visit the largest military vehicle spectacular in the world, known as the War and Peace Show, when a very good and enjoyable day was had by all.

We have a further nine days out planned before Christmas.

We currently have 241 members.



Len Hills.

Cheltenham: Hugh Sweet

Twenty-five members took part in a visit to Eastnor Castle, Ledbury on 5 July. The castle is an imposing Norman style edifice, ostensibly built to protect inhabitants of the borders against the marauding Welsh. However, it was actually built in the early 19th century as a symbol of the owner's wealth and influence.



Members from Cheltenham visited Eastnor Castle in Ledbury.

A wet morning was brightened by an excellent lunch at Corse Lawn, a nearby restaurant. The weather improved to a fine and sunny afternoon, and the group was able to enjoy a tour of the house and the extensive grounds at the foot of the Malvern Hills.

Thanks are due to Janet Ballinger and Marianne Irwin-Boers for their excellent organisation of the event.

Wisbech: Andrew Pallant

Since the last issue of KierLink lunches have been held at King of Hearts, West Walton and the Red Lion in Wisbech while an evening meal of Indian cuisine was held at Alishan Tandoori. The occasional get-together at Wetherspoons in Wisbech is still very popular among a certain group of pensioners who over a period of two hours or so manage to put years of reminiscences and forthright comment on current events – long may it continue.

Proposed events to be arranged by Wisbech providing there's sufficient interest - Fellowship members from other regions welcome.

Wednesday 19 October

Visit to Cadbury World

Friday 9 December

Christmas lunch, The Crown Lodge, Outwell

Saturday 10 December

Christmas party, Wisbech St Mary Community Centre

For further info please contact Mrs Sonia Webb, Kier Eastern Wisbech office or email sonia.webb@kier.co.uk

Rushden: Brian Hill

Since the last publication the group has been very busy; 25 members spent five days and four nights at the Ramla Bay Resort in Malta with free bar and cocktails all day long, it was obviously enjoyed by all – so much so that we have booked to return in March 2012 – any takers?

On our return home we then attended the Mountbatten Festival of Music at the Royal Albert Hall – the annual pilgrimage attracted 45 members for this ceremonial pageantry and concert by the Massed Bands of Her Majesty's Royal Marines.

By May the weather was improving and we attended The Malvern Spring Gardening Show – 37 members attended.

In June 35 passengers went to London – with our Blue Badge Guide, Jan, we explored 'hidden London' and the Regent's Canal, before rain sent us scurrying for cover in the local hostelry.

Several of us then had the opportunity to attend the Founders' Day parade at The Royal Chelsea Hospital.



Founders' Day parade.

Waterperry Gardens near Oxford was the venue for our next event – a guided tour of the gardens was enjoyed by 25 members.

At the end of June 59 members attended the annual garden party at Tempsford Hall, it was a great success and enjoyed by all – why change a winning formula!

Weather during the month of July should be warm and sunny, unfortunately the day we chose for our mystery trip to Brighton was very wet – the bar on the coach kept us wet inside.

Unfortunately our August trip was also a wet day complicated by road closures and roadworks in central London. Thirty-seven members travelled to ceremonial London for a look at life ‘under the bearskin – scarlet and gold’ – which did not quite go to plan, and for the first time ever we mislaid a member, ‘the pink panther’ – even the Met Police had to get involved, but it ended happily.

We have a busy schedule leading up to Christmas:

Friday 14 October

Peterborough dogs

Wednesday 19 October

Four days and three nights in Austria

Saturday 19 November

Birmingham Christmas shopping

Sunday 4 December

Christmas mystery day trip

Sunday 11 December

Christmas in London – carol service

Friday 16 December

Christmas strictly dancing with dinner

Friday 30 December

New Year break at Redworth Hall

The date for our return to Malta is Saturday 24 March 2012 for five days – if you are interested please ring Rushden on 01933 311023 for details.

Since the last newsletter several long service members have retired and joined the ever-growing list of ‘old gits’, namely Mike Stedmen, Leon Mitton, Peter Swinger, Paul Martin, Brian Hill, Richard Paragreen, Peter Brown, Kevin Travill, Geoff Collier, Robin West and Dermont Smallman.

Malta

On Friday 8 April 2011 at 5.30am a group of 25 left Rushden heading for Heathrow Airport ready to fly out to Malta for a five-day break arriving at the hotel at approximately 5.00pm.

The hotel was excellent and all inclusive so plenty of food and drink was consumed by all. As our hotel was close to the ferry that takes you to Gozo, the next day we all decided to visit the island and tour it by open bus. The bus was full to capacity and struggled to reach the top of one particular steep hill but the driver soon solved the problem by asking most of our men to get

off the bus thus allowing us to cruise up to the top of the hill while the men had to walk (we had a good laugh at this). The following day we visited the capital Valletta on the local yellow bus which on its own is an experience well worth the journey.

On the Monday a few of us took a speed boat across to the small island of Comino spending a couple of hours walking around the island and paddling in the blue lagoon. On our return journey we were taken through the caves before opening up the throttle and speeding back to the hotel among all the giggles.

Unfortunately Tuesday was our final day and after a pleasant morning and barbeque lunch it was time to head back to the airport arriving home at 10.30pm. A very good time was had by all.



Relaxing in the sun in Malta.

Tempsford Hall: Harold Thompson

Our monthly lunches are thoroughly enjoyed by those who attend. It is not usually necessary for us to book but a check with the hostelry a couple of days beforehand is considered a wise precaution. In June, however, I was somewhat fazed to be told that the chosen venue could not accommodate us as they were expecting two parties of forty. After the initial panic I found an alternative through the internet in the same area although, as it had to be tried out, I had to rely on unidentified user comments. The task of letting the nucleus of 20 or so potential attendees know the change of venue proved worrying as several were not at home but, in the end, our usual attendance of about a dozen, managed to find the new place and gave it high marks for food and service. I did not receive any reports of members turning up at the original venue. The lesson from that event is that 48 hours is not really enough time to rearrange things so I now give our chosen hostelry a call a week in advance.

On 1 June 2011, a joint golf day with Rushden area was organised by John Stamford at Pavenham Golf Club with nine players attending.

Sixty-seven members from the Tempsford area booked for the garden party on 26 June and weren't we lucky with the weather? We had a wonderful time – many thanks to all those involved.

Maidstone: Ann Ransley

On 25 May we took the shuttle to Calais at 9.20am and visited Bruges for the day. We were not disappointed; Bruges is absolutely beautiful and extremely interesting. We were lucky to have one of those lovely sunny days when it was so warm and our trip was extremely enjoyable. Several of us took a boat trip through the town and then went for lunch. We couldn't all get into the same boat so our friends waved to us from the boat in front. The day was so enjoyable and went so quickly, I may have to organise another trip. During our journey home we stopped to buy a few bottles of wine and have a coffee.

Twenty-nine members took advantage of our Tempsford garden party, held on 26 June at Tempsford Hall, where again we had another beautiful sunny day with plenty of fun along the way. I was extremely delighted to receive a bottle of Champagne from our chairman, Dick Side for best attendance of Fellowship members over the past year.

Unfortunately, for any late comers, our coach is fully reserved when we go along and see Million Dollar Quartet at the Noel Coward Theatre for the matinee performance on Thursday 13 October. Sorry folks, no spare seats. We currently have a total of 62 people attending.

Members will be invited to our Christmas lunch at the Wealden Hall on Thursday 15 December as this venue proved so very popular last year. More details will follow nearer the time.

Maple Cross: Terry Delany

Twenty-two members attended a St George's Day luncheon at Blue Check Restaurant in Bushey on Friday 15 April.

A number of members travelled up to Harrogate, Yorkshire, staying at the Warner Hotel for a four-day break.

Thirty-three members attended the garden party at Tempsford on Sunday 26 June and 22 members enjoyed a Thames cruise and lunch. After the cruise many of the members went on a guided London walk.

A number of members went on an eight-day coach tour of Austria on 24 July, staying two nights in Germany one night on the outward journey and one night on the homeward journey.

We have a current membership of 87 and would like to welcome our new member Mr Alan Taplin.

Up-and-coming events

Friday 14 October

K.L. long service luncheon, Aldenham

Friday 11 November

Winter warmer luncheon, Bushey

Saturday 3 December

Winchester Christmas market

Friday 9 December

Christmas luncheon, Aldenham

Newport/Bristol: Samantha Allen

We held an event in June at St Pierre Country Club in Chepstow. The event was chaired by Dick Side and attended by 30 people including Fellowship Trust members, their partners and friends as well as several long serving Kier personnel. This event served as a great way to kick start the group's events in Newport and Bristol and was enjoyed by all who attended. Kier personnel were delighted to be given the opportunity to meet with some old friends and colleagues and to share their stories and updates over lunch. The Newport/Bristol branch is looking forward to holding more successful events over the coming months.

Fellowship membership ties

A limited supply of the now rare examples are still available, priced at only £5. Please contact Brendan O'Boyle if you would like one.

I wish to contact...

Fellowship members who wish to contact former colleagues, please write to: Brendan O'Boyle, 7 Chestnut Drive, Harrow Weald, Middlesex HA3 7DL. Letters will be forwarded.

Obituaries

Audrey Field	9 March 2011
Kenneth Carter	11 April 2011
Patricia Grimstead	13 May 2011
Doreen Peat	16 May 2011
Cyril Hackett	22 May 2011
Pauline Tancock	27 May 2011
Harry Clover	29 May 2011
Alan Bradbury	31 May 2011
Kenneth King	1 June 2011
Leslie Whitehouse	13 June 2011
Wendy Parr	26 June 2011
Marilyn Cooper	29 June 2011
Johanna Raper	4 July 2011

An ode of English Plural

We'll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes,
 But the plural of ox becomes oxen, not oxes.
 One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese
 Yet the plural of moose should never be meese.
 You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice,
 Yet the plural of house is houses, not hice.

If the plural of man is always called men,
 Why shouldn't the plural of pan be pen?
 If I speak of my foot and show you my feet
 And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?
 If one is a tooth and whole set is teeth,
 Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?

Then one may be that, and there would be those,
 Yet hat in the plural would never be hose,
 And the plural of cat is cats, not cose.
 We speak of a brother and also of brethren,
 But though we say mother, we never say methren.
 Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him,
 But imagine the feminine: she, shis and shim!

Let's face it – English is a crazy language. There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England. We take English for granted, but if we explore the paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square, and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write, but fingers don't fing,
 grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? Doesn't
 it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one
 amend? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get
 rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?
 If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a
 humanitarian eat?
 Sometimes I think all the folks who grew up speaking
 English should be committed to an asylum for the
 verbally insane.

In what other language do people recite at a play
 and play at a recital?
 We ship by truck but send cargo by ship...
 We have noses that run and feet that smell.
 We have a driveway and a drive in a parkway.
 And how can a slim chance and a fat chance be
 the same,
 While a wise man and a wise guy are opposite?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language
 in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in
 which you fill in a form by filling it out, and in which an
 alarm goes off by going on.

And in closing, if Father is Pop, how come Mother
 isn't Mop?

Welcome to our new members

Name	City/town	Area	Worked for	Length of service (years)
John Boddington	Kettering	Rushden	Kier Marriott	18
Susan Bridger	Waterlooville	Southampton/Havant	Kier Southern	4
Graham Bullen	Warminster	Southampton/Havant	Kier Southern	23
Robert Burnie	Kettering	Loughton	Kier London	33
Brian Hill	Rushden	Rushden	Kier Marriott	48
Elizabeth Blackwood	Stilton	Tempsford	Kier Construction	3
Marilyn Hills	Little Paxton	Tempsford	Kier Group Services, Kier Facilities Services	17
Susan Peacock	Bristol	Bristol	Kier Western	11
David Pike	Didcot	Basingstoke	IEI, Kier Building Services Engineers, Kier Facilities Services	12
Anthony Rainsley	Romsey	Southampton	Kier Southern	7
Martin Scarth	Buckhurst Hill	Loughton/Witham	Kier Group, Regional and Services	40
Alan Taplin	Sherfield-on-Loddon	Maple Cross	Kier Southern	39
Jonathan Tassell	Kettering	Rushden	Kier Marriott	6
Terence Tatham	Chingford	London	Kier Building Services Engineers, Kier Support Services	35