Let’s hang on to the old values

Well, few of my generation have witnessed such social and financial unrest as experienced throughout Britain during the past month. It sometimes feels like we are moving further and further away from the wonderful days when people left their back doors open and bikes unchained, safe in the knowledge that people would not take advantage of what is now all too often seen as ‘an opportunity’.

To me it is largely about the work ethic. The retirees I know, including my parents, worked hard all their lives, brought up families – in many cases – and were looking forward to a relaxing retirement. However, that has not meant many of them have stopped working.

It was amazing how many people I chatted to at this year’s President’s Day Summer Outings who are providing childcare for their grandchildren. I have seen it at my daughters’ school, more grandparents than parents doing the school run. This is shown in the latest job figures, with nearly 1 million people over the retirement age taking up full and part time jobs.

It is also about the way we communicate with each other. Two Laing retirees who worked long hours on the M1 project both told me: “Thank goodness we didn’t have mobile phones in those days or we would never have got home.”

Back then people dealt with each other face-to-face and there was far more community-based interaction.

Nowadays people can spend years in contact with their friends or family using the internet or texting messages without ever meeting them. You may be interested in the feature on page 6 concerning a new scheme which aims to reinject traditional community values into our young people.

There’s plenty more in this issue including reports from the summer outings and last calls for photo competition entries and also missing names from the 1955 pupils picture. Remember we always love to hear from you. Two stories from social and financial unrest stood out to me. One concerned two young men caught by the police, one of whom was holding a firework and the other had a flat battery. The police charged one and let the other one off.

Meanwhile, in Greece, the government announced it is stopping all exports of humus and taramasalata forthwith. This was apparently because of the double dip recession.

At this year’s Edinburgh Festival comedian Andrew Lawrence said he admired ‘phone hackers for their patience as he can’t even be bothered to check his OWN voice-mails.” Until next time...

Alex Finkenrath
The SA Health Partnership (SAHP) consortium has achieved financial close on the AUS$1.85 billion new Royal Adelaide Hospital (nRAH).

The consortium, which includes John Laing, Hansen Yuncken, Leighton Contractors, Macquarie Capital and Spotless, will finance, design, build and operate the hospital under a 35-year concession.

SA Health Partnership’s Chairman, Peter Hicks said: “The new Royal Adelaide Hospital is the single largest infrastructure project in the State’s history and the largest hospital project ever undertaken in Australia.”

The new Royal Adelaide Hospital will contain 700 single bedrooms and 100 same-day beds, and have the capacity to admit over 80,000 patients per year. It will use advanced technologies and innovative care to enable the use of state-of-the-art equipment that will provide the highest-quality treatment and care to the people of South Australia.

Hi-tech facilities throughout the hospital will include patient weighing beds and intelligent information systems such as wireless technology, equipment tracking capability and bedside entertainment and meal ordering for patients.

Rooms are designed as a private healing environment, making the most of natural light, fresh air and views. Patients will have the opportunity to display artwork, with access to outdoor areas and a place for visiting family to stay.

Green initiatives include rooftop rainwater and storm water recycling, solar boosted hot water, high efficiency water fittings throughout, water sensitive landscaping, natural light, a tri-generation system (with absorption chillers) to utilise waste heat from energy generators to provide heating and cooling to the building and the use of environmentally-friendly materials.

With financial close complete, the design work can be finalised and ground on the 12 hectare site is likely to be broken within months.

Mr Hicks added that the project had attracted significant interest and strong support from investors in Australia and internationally.

Private equity investment in the project totals more than A$300m and is provided by InfraRed Capital Partners Limited, Leighton Infrastructure Investments Pty Limited, John Laing Investments Limited, Lloyds Bank Corporate Markets and Macquarie Capital Group Limited.

SAHP raised over A$2.5 billion in long term debt from a diverse group of Australian and international banks to help finance the project.

The group of investors includes some of the strongest names in international project finance.

Laing part of a gold standard

John Laing scooped Gold in Business in the Community’s (BITC) 2011 Corporate Responsibility Index (CRI).

David Micciche, John Laing Health Safety Environment & Sustainability Director, said: “We are very pleased to receive this award, which demonstrates our commitment to corporate responsibility. We are particularly proud of our community engagement strategy and the positive impact it is having on disadvantaged young people.”

Stephen Howard, Chief Executive, Business in the Community said: “I congratulate John Laing on achieving Gold in the 2011 BITC Corporate Responsibility Index. It is a challenging time, but the results of this year’s Index demonstrate that companies are still focused on transforming their businesses in order to have a positive impact on society. All the companies who participated this year are at different stages in their responsible business journey, but they are all taking these issues seriously and are prepared to lead by example.”

The full results of the 2011 CRI, including commentary and analysis, were published in the Financial Times Responsible Business supplement (8 June).
John Laing won a prestigious RoSPA Occupational Health and Safety Gold Award at a ceremony at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole Hotel, at the National Exhibition Centre, in May.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), launched its awards programme 55 years ago. The scheme looks not only at accident records, but also entrants’ overarching health and safety management systems, including important practices such as strong leadership and workforce involvement.

David Rawlins, RoSPA’s awards manager, said: “RoSPA firmly believes that organisations that have demonstrated their commitment to continuous improvement in accident and ill health prevention deserve recognition. John Laing has shown that it is committed to striving for such continuous improvement and we are delighted to honour it through the presentation of an award.”

Robin Phayre, the John Laing Health, Safety, Environment and Quality (HSEQ) & Business Continuity (BC) Manager, said: “We are delighted to have received this prestigious award for the second year running that is testimony to John Laing’s hard work in providing safe and healthy conditions for our employees and the communities with which we work.

Positive news from the Croydon project report

The Croydon Council Urban Regeneration Vehicle (CCURV) published its Annual Report for the last financial year on August 1.

The report shows that the joint venture between John Laing and Croydon Council has proved to be successful both through physical delivery of assets and through the benefits being delivered to the local community in terms of creating jobs, providing work for local businesses and involvement with local schools and Croydon College.

Work on the Public Service Delivery Hub (PSDH), which is now called Bernard Weatherill House, commenced in March 2010, with demolition and excavation now complete; the development is achieving 99.98% of waste recycling and adheres to strict health and safety procedures with no reportable site based incidents. Work also commenced on the Waddon leisure and housing project in December 2010 and is progressing on schedule.

Significant progress has been made on the Taberner House development with an outline scheme being worked up by renowned architects, Make and Gehl.

CCURV is looking to consult the public on the development plans in the Autumn of 2011. Furthermore, Make and Gehl Architects have been outlining future plans for the College Green Masterplan, which are expected to be completed by the end of this year.

CCURV is looking at other council owned sites across the borough in order to establish what values and regeneration benefits can be achieved.

The average percentage of locally employed people on the Bernard Weatherill House site was 18%, exceeding the set target of 10%. For the Waddon housing and leisure scheme, 21% of the workforce is locally employed, exceeding the target of 20%.

Jamie Kerr, Director of Strategic Partnerships at John Laing said: “The proven success of CCURV is testimony to all the hard work carried out by the staff from Croydon Council and John Laing as well as our partners.

A copy of the Annual Report can be downloaded from www.CCURV.com. Then just click on the CCURV, and then CCURV Annual Reports.

n The site was not hit by the recent rioting in Croydon although, work was disrupted briefly during the clean up.
Fired up by top awards

An ambitious building programme involving three north east fire and rescue services has won two national awards.

Representatives from the three authorities of Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and Durham and Darlington fire and rescue services, making up the North East Fire and Rescue Authority (NEFRA), were the biggest winners at the Partnerships Bulletin Awards in May.

During the awards ceremony hosted by Partnerships Bulletin in London, NEFRA scooped the ‘Best Accommodation’ category before going on to win the ‘Projects Grand Prix’ award.

The Partnerships Bulletin Awards, formerly the Public Private Finance Awards, is now in its 13th year and is the biggest night in the partnerships calendar.

The evening was hosted by former BBC political editor John Sergeant who presented the awards to Neil Cook, project leader for NEFRA and Northumberland Fire and Rescue, and Michael Butcher, general manager for John Laing.

Other projects on the shortlist for ‘Best Accommodation’ included Belmarsh Prisons, Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Two Counties Police Investigation Centres, Luton New Homes and Forest Gate – Newham Housing. In a unanimous decision by the judges, NEFRA topped a strong shortlist of international projects including the Lisbon to Madrid TGV High Speed Rail Link, Long Beach Court Building USA, Peninsula Link, Australia and the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital, Bermuda to win the ‘Grand Prix’ award, for delivering outstanding improvement in public service for the benefit of communities.

Five new community fire stations for County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

John Laing Investments provided project management of the construction and operational phases and national contractor Shepherd Construction, which has offices in Darlington and York, built the five new stations. Mouchel Ltd was the technical adviser to the project and John Laing Integrated Services is providing facilities management for the 25-year contract.

The stations became operational, as follows: Bishop Auckland, May 2010; Pegswood, near Morpeth, June 2010; North Tyneside East, North Shields, June 2010; Spenymoor, June 2010 and West Hartford, Northumberland headquarters, August 2010.

The design and construction of all five stations is environmentally friendly achieving BREEAM (energy efficiency rating) of between ‘very good’ and ‘excellent’.

As well as providing emergency fire and rescue cover, each community station provides state-of-the-art facilities, free internet access and meeting rooms, which are available for local organisations and members of the public to book.

Building began in 2009 and each station took about a year to complete. As construction progressed each fire service sought to involve local communities; time capsule events with school children and open days to mark the completion of projects were among the events that took place. HRH The Prince of Wales opened Northumberland’s headquarters at West Hartford in November last year.

Chief fire officer for Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, Alex Bennett, said: “All of those who were involved in the building projects from conception to completion are to be congratulated for their hard work in making these fantastic projects a success. These awards recognise the quality of the work that was carried out between all of the partners involved. All five fire stations are now integral parts of the communities they serve.”

Regional Operations Director for John Laing, Joe Linney, said: “We are delighted that the project has won not one but an astounding two awards, which is testimony to all the hard work that was put into not only ensuring the provision of efficient, state-of-the-art emergency facilities for the benefit and safety of communities, but also doing it with a real partnership spirit.”
Bridging generations

The Government is currently piloting the National Citizens Service (NCS) aimed at giving young people a better sense and appreciation of community. It will also bring older and younger generations together through mentoring.

National Citizens Service (NCS) is a prestigious, challenging and adventurous programme for 16-year-olds to take part in over the summer months, following the completion of their GCSE exams. It is a Big Society initiative being piloted by 12 provider organisations in almost 200 locations across England.

Thousands of young people have taken part this summer alone and another pilot will be run next summer with places available for up to 30,000 young people. The Government intends that in the future, every 16-year-old will have access to a place on the programme.

A major aspect of NCS, launched last July by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, is to provide a constructive experience for teenagers from different backgrounds to work together for the benefit of their communities.

NCS starts with two weeks of away-from-home residential experiences. These two weeks will require young people to take part in outdoor, team building challenges as well as engage with the community to develop a social action project which they feel will make a difference. Following this, the young people will deliver their self-designed social action project in their home communities.

There are many ways in which volunteers can support young people as they take on the challenges that NCS presents. For example, older people, such as retirees, could volunteer as mentors for the young participants, sharing their knowledge and experience and bringing the different generations closer together.

Grandparents’ efforts in providing free help and childcare for families have been well documented. Research by Aviva in March this year suggested that 7 million grandparents help out with grandchildren while their parents go to work.

However, scheme organiser Paul Oginsky believes the younger and older generations often lose touch when these children reach adolescence. He said: “NCS is all about people understanding the value and importance of communities.

“While the scheme is aimed at giving teenagers a valuable opportunity at this formative age, we believe it also provides a special chance for intergenerational understanding and bonding.”

Paul added: “Lives have changed and young people can communicate in ways that previous generations could not have imagined. At the same time, perhaps many of us are lacking the in-depth, face-to-face interactions which previous generations had.

“Many young people already have very rewarding experience by contributing to their communities in all sorts of ways. NCS seeks to give that same rewarding opportunity to every 16-year-old in the country. I believe giving young people a chance to really understand, appreciate and help their communities through NCS will become an important part of shaping their values and bring them closer to everyone with whom they share that community.”

David Micciche, John Laing Health Safety Environment & Sustainability Director, said: “This is a very interesting scheme and could provide long-term benefits for society as a whole. If any John Laing retirees are interested in being involved in their area, during the 2012 pilot, they can register their interest with Teresa Pettican by emailing tere-sa.pettican@laing.com or by telephoning 020 7901 3231.”

Young people taking part in one of the NCS challenges
Memory plea for research project

Laing retirees’ memories are being sought for an exciting research project being undertaken by the University of Westminster.

Constructing post-war Britain: building workers’ stories 1950-70 is a project, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, which aims to collect the stories and memories of people who worked on the construction of important examples of post-war architecture and civil engineering.

The case studies chosen include major civil engineering projects (M1 motorway), schemes offering new perspectives for future living and working (Barbican development), iconic projects of the early Welfare State (Stevenage New Town, South Bank Arts Complex), and large industrial sites associated with newly nationalised industries (Sizewell A Power Station).

All the schemes reflect the importance of large projects in shifting entrenched attitudes and traditional social, technical and industrial relations in the construction industry.

The project addresses key factors of change, including: social relations on site; trade unions; training and apprenticeships; the working environment; industrial techniques; design conceptions; wage relations; work and family life; housing and living conditions. Its objectives are to:

- Find and record the working and living experiences of over 50 building workers engaged on case-study sites;
- Evaluate these in the light of documentary evidence, related literature and research;
- Identify key changes in post-war social relations of building production and assess their significance for the sector and for the built environment;
- Create a sustainable archive of oral histories of building workers;
- Reveal the role and experiences of building workers in the creation of the post-war built environment.

If you, or anyone you know, worked on the sites mentioned and are interested in participating in the project please contact Dr Charlie McGuire: Email c.mcguire@westminster.ac.uk or telephone him on 01522 529327 or 07826 255555.

Photographic competition

There is still a chance to submit pictures for this year’s Laing retirees’ photo competition.

It does not have to be a picture taken this year, you can send in any picture taken by yourself from the past, but you must ensure that it is clear and easy to see.

You can post or email your pictures, but please ensure you provide details about the photographer, the name of the picture, a return address (if posting) and any other interesting information about the picture itself.

Please ensure that posted entries are carefully packed and if you are emailing, make sure the picture is at least 1mb in size. Emailed entries should be sent to: info@retirementmedia.com.

Class of 1955 pupils conference picture

Thank you to everyone who sent in names to go with the wonderful 1955 Pupils Conference picture. We have the majority of them now and plan to publish next issue. However, there are still a few names missing, so please send in any of the people you recognise before October 28.

Your retirement news

Don’t forget, we are always delighted to receive your correspondence, whether it is news of something interesting you have done in retirement, comments on articles contained within the magazine or even just to pass on your ideas of what might be done to improve the magazine. Our address details are in the inside front cover.
The CIS/CWS Insurance offices in Manchester was attracting a lot of attention as one of the country’s tallest buildings. Dr Billy Graham the American Evangelist speaker arrived on site on June 12 with only a few hours’ notice and addressed staff during their lunchbreak alongside passers-by. Team Spirit highlighted two site staff ‘literally on top of the job’, 450ft crane drivers Peter McDermott and Bill Whelan. Bill said that the two-way radio kept him in constant touch with those on site and that he ‘did not have time to get lonely’.

Two other big projects in Manchester were well underway including the Simon Engineering Laboratories at Manchester University which had just been topped out. Meanwhile at the Ringway Airport in the city, an auto-mixing concrete machine, designed by Laing’s R&D centre was being used in the construction of a 2,600ft long concrete taxi run and 1,500ft of widening work elsewhere. The machine had been specifically designed for high quality concrete and had a capacity of 80 cu yards per hour.

Meanwhile in Northern Rhodesia, the famous Lake Nyasa steamer was being used to transport materials on the Northern Province contract in Nyasaland.

Construction work began on the first complete brewery to be undertaken in Britain since before the war. Constructed on a six acre site at Alton, Hampshire, the brewery was being developed by a joint committee of two companies. The engineering and architectural design, including M&E services had been carried out by John Laing and Son Limited in cooperation with engineers seconded by Arthur Guinness Son and Company Limited.

The brewery would have a total floor area of 116,000sq ft and comprise six sections with provision for future expansion. There would be a four-storey office block, three storey brew house, refrigeration plant and a five-storey fermentation and storage block.

Photographer John Sulman was featured. He was a founder member of the photographic section 12 years earlier and had previously worked on Fleet Street at the Daily Sketch. He was described as ‘extremely reserved’ but the article added ‘he is broad-shouldered and over six feet tall... there is something about him which discourages argument.’

Steel and formwork on giant Allscott sugar silos.

The Minister of Housing the Rt Hon Henry Brooke visited Leverstock Green in Hemel Hempstead to present The Laing Housing Company with the 150,000th certificate of Good House Construction. The certificate awarded by the National- Housebuilders Registration Council was received by Mr DP Marriott. The new owners of the three-bed semi, called an Ashton were Mr and Mrs K Allen.

The four-mile Maidenhead bypass built by the Company had ‘made mile-long traffic queues a thing of the past’ according to Team Spirit.

Among those receiving their long service awards was none other than Maurice Laing. There was plenty of laughter as his brother Kirby Laing made the presentation in the Mill Hill canteen.

In Rochdale, the Company was building a £400,000 extension to Arrow Mill, for yarn spinning.

The Company welcomed its first female civil engineer Miss Kik Hong Ong. The 21-year-old London University student was working on M6 sections C/D during her summer holidays. She had won a scholarship to study from her native Malaysia.

A particularly challenging concrete pour took place on the sugar silos at Allscott for British Sugar. Agent DC Thompson’s team had to ‘slide’ 1,250cu yards of concrete for the walls of each silo carried out continuously over the days and nights until the operation was finished. It required a massive amount of preparation including 60 climbing jacks for each silo and a 180-ft scaffolding tower to carry the concrete hoist. There also had to be two mixers, each capable of being fed by two 30-tonne cement silos.
Site agent Dave Scott and his team were ‘coming across historical artefacts on an almost daily basis’ at the Clerkenwell Green housing project. Start of the £1.6million contract had been delayed for nearly two years for various reasons including the historical finds on the former priory site including an ancient tunnel leading to the well from which Clerkenwell gets its name.

In Dumfries work was getting underway for the 109th Littlewoods store in a Northern Region contract worth £2.2million.

The new Millburngate II shopping precinct in Durham was on target to be finished in time for the beginning of the Christmas season. John Laing Developments and the Teesdale Group were responsible for lettings on the £5.5million contract.

Laing Management Contracting were working on separate contracts at opposite ends of Kensington High Street. While one team worked on the £27.2million prestige refurbishment of the world famous Barker’s store, the other was creating a new development intended to attract shoppers to the other end. As well as seven ground floor shops, the development would provide five levels of luxury flats, plus two penthouses, three floors of offices, basement parking for 60 vehicles and a loading bay.

Team Spirit marked the first anniversary of John Laing Homes Inc in California. Staff had grown from three to 22 and they had successfully opened three major sites in a year.

Two of only ten Heritage Awards were given to HWA for ‘works considered of outstanding merit in the City of Westminster’ as part of the area’s 400th anniversary celebrations. Paul Errington director of HWA Building Refurbishment and Fitting out received a certificate for the £10million Civil Service Stores contract ‘Dickens House’. HWA Management director Peter Scott received a certificate in the Restoration category for a ‘splendid refurbishment’ of the Grade I listed Clermont Club in Berkeley Square.

A £9million contract to extend the Mater Hospital in Northern Ireland was Laing’s first in the province. Irish Region were to in-fill between existing blocks, a seven-storey structure on the Crumlin Road site. The super structure was completed after initial demolition began in March.

Scottish Region had to hand back the keys to the largest military fortification in Europe during the official re-inauguration of Fort George near Inverness. JLC took possession of the keys in 1983 ahead of a multi-million pound refurbishment contract to make the listed ancient monument a suitable base for a modern infantry battalion.

Eastern Region had to make quick adjustments to its Epping Civic Offices contract when protected species of crested newts were found in a stagnant pool on the site which was about to be filled in to make way for part of a car park. The team, after consultation with the Nature Conservancy Council, designed a pond surrounded by a one metre high wall, with holes beneath the ground to allow the newts access to nearby gardens. They also built a newt tunnel beneath a nearby road.

North West Region began work on the £18million contract to build the second phase of the Manchester Royal Infirmary, the largest ever contract awarded by the North West Regional Health Authority.

Four men from EPL got coveted passes to attend the Royal Wedding of Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson. Harry Barber, Jim Matheson and Terry Jesse (pictured above) were operating the platforms supplied by the company for television cameras covering the event. They were also joined by colleague Ian ‘Slim’ Playford.

Laing Retirement Homes was featured after recently moving from Mill Hill to Borehamwood. The team, pictured from left, top: Joe Hyams, John Streak, Ken Bickley, Doug Adams, John Horne, Paul Boys, Dave Margetts, Bob Bidder and Ed Briscoe. Seated: Robin Sherwood, Ros Howell, Anne Jackson, Pauline Hanson, Judith Foster, Caroline Marden and Bill Patrickson.

OC Summers Wales Region had won two major contracts worth £6.5m in total. These were mains and service laying (plus associated works) for British Gas and also mains water laying for the Welsh Water Authority. team, from left: Peter Cowlin, George Bowden, Sami Metti, Gwyneth Jenkins, Sandra Bowden, John Bibey, Hugh Christopher and Ron Evans.
Two readers enjoy 100th birthdays

Two Laing pensioners celebrated their 100th birthdays in July this year.

Retiree Margery Turner celebrated her 100th birthday on July 6 and Doris Wilson on July 9. Both received a card from Her Majesty the Queen.

We managed to speak with Margery at the nursing home where she lives in Worthing.

She recalled working as a secretary at Mill Hill on a couple of occasions for about 15 years. She was married to Ken Turner who spent 49 years working for the Company at Holloways. He retired in 1978.

Everyone you speak to about Margery will say what a lively and interesting person she is.

She moved into the home at Worthing 5-7 months ago and was playing golf, bowls and dancing regularly until then.

Margery celebrated her birthday with a party for friends and was insistent upon buying a ‘new frock’ for the occasion.

70th birthday is a piece of cake

Margaret Niland was rather surprised to receive this cake on her 70th birthday organised by husband Colin.

When asked why Colin had gone to the trouble of getting such an excellent representation of Tesco’s for the cake, he joked: “It’s because she spends all her time there!”

Margaret just said: “I think he’s being sarcastic.”

Margaret enjoyed a lovely birthday and the cake has made a great talking point since.

Classic projects for next issue

We like to feature great Laing projects over the years and in the next issue we will be looking at two significant Laing achievements.

Following the loan of some wonderful pictures and associated memories, we will be looking at Thermalite and also a later John Laing International project: the Oresund Tunnel which was part of a project to link Sweden to Denmark by road.

Recently retired Mike Hopper has kindly provided some great pictures and information from the project. But we would also love to hear from anyone else who was involved in either of these parts of Laing’s history.

Just contact us using the details on the inside front cover if you have any memories, stories or pictures that you would like to share with the readers.

We will need to hear from you before October 28 if you wish to be included.

SWEET SURPRISE: The Tesco’s cake

CENTENARIAN: Margery on her birthday in July
Engineers’ reunion history

This year’s engineers and architects reunion article prompted various correspondence.
John Wehrle wrote to provide clearer detail regarding the history of the ‘Engineers Nite-Out’. These were organised by a committee of people from the engineers department: John Wehrle (organiser), Jim Wiffin (costings), Judy Pollard (secretary) and Bill Murry (artist – menu cards etc).
John added: “The first nite-out was in 1968 and continued to run through to 1973 and was held at the Waterend Barn in St Albans with an average of 250 attending. The last occasion was in 1974 and was held in the restaurant at Mill Hill.
“Many themes were introduced over these years such as: Engineers Nite-Out – In Transylvania... In Tahiti... In Bavaria...etc.”
Phil Rendle also wrote to say that he was delighted to see so many pictures of his retired engineering friends. He could not attend the March event due to holiday commitments, although he is looking forward to the 20th anniversary reunion in 2012. In 1952 he was working in the Engineers Design Office at Mill Hill when current and past members had regular reunions at a pub in Whitehall followed by a dinner. It was Phil’s job to telephone everyone to remind them. He added: “In March 1991 at my retirement party I suggested that we all met again in 1992 for a buffet lunch – and so the Engineers’ Reunion became an annual event!”

Benghazi correspondence

I was very interested to read the article about Benghazi in the last magazine. I think I mentioned to you at the Presidents Lunch that I had been based in Malta during my National Service in 1948. I was in the Royal Engineers and was attached to the Chief Engineer’s Office, Malta & Cyrenaica. We were engaged in rebuilding the airport at Benina, Benghazi and when all the design work was complete our CO said we would have to go across to Benghazi. As the Laing team found two years later, you could not get in to Benghazi Harbour and so our advance party went via Tripoli and then along the coast by road. The main party followed via Tobruk and then by road. We passed through all the places we had heard of during the war and it was quite an adventure. I then spent just under a year in Benghazi arranging tenders for the building contracts and bills of quantities. Our offices were in the Berenice Hotel which was, and probably still is, right next to the Mae West Cathedral. Your article brought back many memories and I am rather proud of the fact that without my little contribution in 1948/9 the Laing Team would not have been able to fly in.
From: Roger Mountford

Out of Africa

Following a conversation with former Laing archivist Alan Thorpe, it has been pointed out that the picture we published in our Spring 2011 issue featuring a James Laing & Son sign in the Sudan was not connected to John Laing and Son. Alan confirmed that he had no knowledge of either the company or any projects carried out in the Sudan. We are happy to clarify this matter.
New members join in the fun

2011 summer outings details

Yet more new members came along to the 2011 President’s day Summer Outings. From the first event at LNER at Bailbrook House near Newcastle to the final event with Solare at Ockendon Manor near Crawley, the venues and events provided a great backdrop for friends and former colleagues to chat and exchange news and stories. Lady Laing spoke at each event to thank Margaret Staines and her team of welfare officers who continue to provide help and support for Company retirees. She also thanked those who had helped to organise the events and the staff at each venue who had ensured that everything ran smoothly. On the right are some of the new members attending their first events. I should say that, having taken soundings from many club members, it was almost unanimous that each club should have its own page. Due to the varying numbers of members at the clubs, the pictures and names take up different amounts of space. Quite a few members asked for details of the venues around the country, in case they would like to try them out. For this reason, where there is extra space, I have included information about some of the venues visited this year. However, they were all excellent.

NEWCASTLE

Diane and Andy Cutler were attending their first summer event. Andy was a planner having first worked with the Company between 1968 and 1973, then again from 1990-2010. He spent virtually all his time in the North East region, with a tiny bit in Yorkshire. His favourite contract was around 1989-1991 when they knocked down the famous giant golf balls at Filingdales, the US listening post. They replaced it with an equally bold shape, this time a pyramid with a solid concrete bunker beneath to protect the computers.

SALTIRE

Jack Allardice worked 34 years with Laing, starting out on Glasgow Airport and moving on to do mainly shopping centres including the St James Centre in Edinburgh. Other memorable projects included the Scotsman Newspaper building and the futuristic Dynamic Earth Centre also in the city.

CARLISLE

Steven Holt spent 15 years with Laing from 1961-1976 starting out as an estimator working his way through cost surveyor and production control. He loved his time at Laing, but was lured away by another local building company where he carried on until 2003. One of his favourite projects was a £6-7m project for Roche Products at Dalry in Ayrshire and also the West Cumberland Hospital.

REAL

Lorna Glide worked at Mill Hill during the 70s as secretary ending up working for Jim Wiffin. Lorna really enjoyed her time keeping in touch with colleagues including Judy Pollard and Betty Gower. In a strange way Lorna has never left Mill Hill as she now lives in housing built on the massive site. It was also at Laing that she met her husband to be. She

Jack’s favourite project, on reflection, was the Stirling Thistle Marches shopping centre and also John Lewis in Glasgow.
said: “It was very strange, when I lived with my parents he used to deliver our mail and just by chance his round was changed to cover Mill Hill Page Street just as I started there. I recognised him when he was delivering mail, we got talking and ended up getting married. It was lovely, the Company gave me £10 when they discovered I was getting married, it was a generous sum of money to get in those days.”

Judy and Derek Pollard also met while working for Laing. Derek was a graduate engineer who worked at the Company from 1965-1970. Mrs Pollard worked for Denis Mitchell during her 13 years and ended up working for chief engineer Jack Megit. She was very happy and would have worked longer for the Company had it not been for her husband going away sailing. Mr Pollard was also involved in politics and had suddenly realised that he would not be able to do a speech which Lord Wigg had asked him to write. He called Lord Wigg’s office to explain the situation and left his wife’s number at Laing in case there were any queries. When Derek returned from his week away, he asked Judy if she had heard from Lord Wigg’s office. To his surprise Lord Wigg had called personally and been so impressed by Judy that he had taken her out for lunch and offered her a job as his own secretary, which she took.

Gordon and Christine Foster are yet another couple who met while both working for Laing. Gordon was a chauffeur with the Company between 1980 and 2002 and very much enjoyed his time there. He started out driving John Renshaw and ended up driving Derrick Ardern among others. Christine worked at Laing Technology Group at Mill Hill between 1969 and 1995. They met across a ‘crowded canteen’ according to Gordon and were married after she left Laing.

Annie and Brian Burrin are yet another Midlands couple who met through the Company. Brian spent 46 years with Laing as stationery manager based at Mill Hill. Few will know that the Laing stationery dept supplied ALL the Falklands stationery at one time and also had a big contract to supply stationery to Poland. Anne worked at various parts of the Company including Retirement Housing in Borehamwood from 1984-1990. Anne said it was exciting being part of a completely new business sector. It was ahead of its time really, just Laing and McArthy and Stone.

SOLARE
John and Monica Tuck were attending their first Summer Luncheon. John worked at Laing for 36 years starting out as a carpenter joiner and ending up as a site foreman by retirement in August 2000. His penultimate project, the £30million Brighton Hospital stood out among his favourites, along with the Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC). John worked on the central core of the stunning project which includes reception, conference and dining rooms.

Michael Farragher spent 45 years working with Laing as a joiner and construction manager. He worked on a host of important projects throughout his long career. Among those which stood out for him was the Pinter Hotel in Gloucester Road and the Barbican in London on which he spent eight years.
High winds and heavy rain could not dampen the spirits of retirees as we kicked off the outings near Newcastle.

A number of members had made the trip from Yorkshire to attend the event including Harold and Barbara Hulse who had driven more than 70 miles from the charmingly named village of Wombleton. Apparently, years ago when he had fallen from a scaffold and was in hospital, the police came and asked him where he was from, so he told them. He said: “They came back 20 minutes later saying they couldn’t find it.”

When it comes to long distances Brian and Sandra Coppen had just returned from six months on the other side of the world visiting their son in Queensland (who started out as a joiner with Laing many years ago) before stopping off to see her brother in Tasmania on the way home.

Closer to home Joe and Sylvia Crozier were celebrating the arrival of their first great grandchild, Mitchell.

Diane Cutler was struck by the curse of the new arrival, asking for prizes to be put back in the raffle as her tickets scooped no less than five of them.

There were two 94-year-old guests present: Dorothea Mitchell and Betty Walton.

LNER May 23 Beamish Hall, Co Durham

Beamish Hall is a luxury 42 bedroom country house hotel. Privately owned since 2004 it is surrounded by 24 acres of wooded parkland in the heart of the countryside between Newcastle-Upon-Tyne and Durham City.

There are a range of outdoor activities on the doorstep including their own Beamish Wild and Beamish Museum.

There is a restaurant and the Stables Bar eatery and Beamish has its own micro-brewery on site with a range of ales.

Albert Clark, Shirley and Alistair Thompson, Alwyn Whitley, Diane and Andy Cutler, Stephen Buckle

SECOND: Jim and Brenda Watson, John and Monica Bell, Paul and Cyril Wallace, Tony Blackwell, Sue and Malcom Reid

THIRD: Dorothea and Jack Mitchell, Hilda and George Storey, Bill and Mavis Jackson, Betty Hope and Bryon Taylor

FOURTH: Margaret and Alf Owen, Bob and Mary Kelly, Mavis and Fred Ramsay, Jack and Eileen Henderson

FIFTH: Syd and Hilda Foster, Sarah Fitzpatrick, Anne Foster and Betty Walton, Joe and Sylvia Crozier, Pauline and Aidan Kelly

SIXTH: First aiders, John and Pat Crosby, Brenda Seed, Jean and Bill Fergusson

SEVENTH: Harrold and Barbara Hulse, Brian and Sandra Coppen, Geoff Smith (welfare officer) George Beazeley Matty Ovington
Today’s environmental conditions included a threatening dust cloud from Iceland and a hail storm.

Hugh and Rita McGeoch made an appearance as they have done for many years and met with new welfare officer Geoff Smith.

Meanwhile Tom McVeigh announced that he was going to contact the Guinness Book of Records to find out if he was the world’s oldest toy boy. He recently had to escort a woman from his village to a dance. Having had six dances he discovered she was 102 years old, compared with his lean 83 years. She complained afterwards that he had not twirled her.

Stan and Mona Karbownicki were attending Saltire for the first summer luncheon after moving north from the Solare area, where they have been club members since the early days. The free bus pass came up again as it transpired they were able to use it to get from Edinburgh and walk the last part of the way.

Dorrie Gordon was also present, she told Sir Martin that at one stage she had seen her care notes and was surprised to see that she had been put down as being a former builder.

Chairman Maurice Lone thanked all the guests for coming and made a special mention of Hugh McGeoch, saying how much his welfare work had been appreciated over the years as he hands over to Geoff Smith.

Saltire May 24 Cringletie House, nr Peebles

Cringletie House is a country house hotel in the Scottish Borders, 30 minutes (20 miles south) from the centre of Edinburgh. It is situated in an idyllic rural setting. It boasts four red stars and claims to be the only AA Top Hotel (Inspector’s Choice) in the Scottish Borders. It has also been awarded four gold stars by Visit Scotland.

TOP: Joyce and Walker Hodgson, Mona and Stan Karbownikii, Margaret and Maurice Lone, Marie Cullen.

SECOND: Joyce Tullet, Helen and Jim McFadden, Lady Stephanie Laing, Tom McVeigh, Jack Allardice, Andy Waring and coach driver Dennis Connelly.

THIRD: Nan and Maurice Ashbridge, Bob Curran, Jean and Ian Beckwith, John Dixon, Anna and David Thomson.

FOURTH: Sam and Susan Fergusson, Carer and Dorrie Gordon, George Harris, Margaret Evans, Doris and Jim Saunders.
Willie McMillan is into his second decade of retirement following 43 years in the joinery shop at Carlisle. A fellow retiree said to Willie recently ‘you must be older than me, I was your apprentice’. Willie, 86, replied: “I think virtually every joiner here was my apprentice at some stage!”

Chairman John Barrow thanked Hugh McGeoch for all his welfare support over the years for club members. He also thanked hard working secretary Margaret Levin and all the other committee members.

Diners Evelyn Crowther and Norma Johnston were at Caldewgate Primary together all those years ago. In fact, Evelyn also recalled teaching Carlisle’s new Welfare Officer Geoff Smith in her first assignment at Carlisle secondary school where she pointed out that she was a young teacher and he was an old pupil.

Carlisle May 25 Gibbon Bridge Hotel, Lancs

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North West May 26 Gibbon Bridge Hotel, Lancs

Gibbon Bridge Hotel is run by Janet Simpson who was brought up on the site when it was a family farm. It is now a leading hotel famed for its beautifully landscaped gardens and high quality restaurant. It is hidden away in the Lancashire countryside and especially popular with older guests as a retreat from the bustle of daily life.

North West members were slightly delayed by an impromptu sight-seeing tour of Lancaster, but they arrived safe and sound.

For Dick Underwood, times have changed since he first took up sea fishing while working on the St Matthews development in Leicester 1965.

He and friends including Brian Gregory, Bob Burton and David Jones were all part of the Laing Sea Fishing Club at various times. He netted 100lb of cod on his first ever outing and the club only finished last year.

Bill and Pat Fergusson were contacted by an old friend he had served his apprenticeship with after their picture appeared in the last issue of the REN.

Bill, who seemed keen to point out that he was a good year younger than his old pal (Dick Bromley), was contacted after the former colleague managed to get his number from Bill’s sister who works in a MoT garage owned by her husband near Carlisle. They were apprentice plant fitters up in Carlisle together.

Welfare Officer Dave Markall was present with his wife Sue.
Ron and Vi Selway had a bit of luck when five Lottery numbers came up just after their Diamond Anniversary. It was enough to have another break in Tenerife – virtually straightaway – so they could celebrate their friends’ anniversary there.

Phyllis Sturgeon wondering if she should put her model Laing lorries together with Charlie Laing’s for some sort of exhibition?

Rosaleen Norris almost didn’t make the lunch because of her new front door. The new lock was very stiff and she was reduced to knocking on her new window – from the inside – to attract the attention of Freda Kearny who had come to pick her up. She resorted to passing the keys through the letterbox and eventually they managed to get it open.

After lunch chairman David Barnes thanked all who had made the luncheon such a success.

**TOP:** Anne and Bob Warren, Peter Duggan and Freda Kearney, Geoff and Lucy Hall, Mary Higgins, Ren and Jim Coxon, Phyllis Sturgeon.

**SECOND:** Tony and Sue Pott, John Eburah, Joan Street, Kitty Ainsley and daughter, Betty Johnson, Phil Nunn (Welfare) Paula Mariner, Ron and Vi Selway.

**THIRD:** Elizabeth and Tommy Hughes, Beryl Sutcliffe, Alan and Barbara Swindell, Eric Andrews, Barbara Reacord and Barbara Higginson, David and Jane Barnes, John and Sheila Parry.

**FOURTH:** Michael Blakemore, Richard and Janet Broadbent, Brian and Ann Burrin, Allan Cannan, Pauline and Tom Featherstone, Robina Eburah and Rosaleen Norris.

**FIFTH:** Elsie Turner and Frank Samuel, June and Chig Gibson, Sheila and John Goodenough, Phil Price, Bob Homer, Charlie Laing, Stan and Janet Utting.

**SIXTH:** Ken and Margaret Hughes, Audrey and Alan Sloan, Barry and Margaret Hughes, Sir Martin Laing, Janet Price, Betty King, Annette Homer.

**SEVENTH:** Trevor and Eileen Manning, Richard and Sue Pike, Maureen Ford, Jan Hemlin, David and Ruth Saunders, David Hemlin, Alan and Marian Vining.

**EIGHTH:** Tommy and Sheila Pye, Ian Rennie, Ray Ritchie, Ann and Gil Roberts, Kathleen Woodcock, Roland and Pamela Seymour, Connie and Brian Wheller.
South West, June 6, Bailbrook House, Bath

Among the members making a welcome return to the luncheon was Anna Tulodziecki, whose husband was a foreman with Laing working on contracts including Berkeley Power Station and houses in the centre of Bristol during his 25 years with the Company.

Anna made us promise to report her comment that “Lady Laing is wonderful, does excellent work for the pensioners.”

Illtyd Hughes is not among the many who collect every issue of Team Spirit, but he does possess a copy of the first issue from November 1946, which came out at the same time as he started with the Company himself.

As the club approaches its 25th anniversary, chairman John Tite joked that he was considering a calendar girls celebration for the event having heard that Realm are planning a calendar for their silver anniversary, also this year.

Eddie Goodman and Pat Mead discovered that they had been brought up on the same Southmead Estate and had both attended Fonthill Road school some decades earlier.

Bailbrook House is another beautiful setting, even though quite a few people (including yours truly) accidentally popped into neighbouring Bailbrook Lodge by mistake at first.

Set in large gardens, five minutes’ drive from the centre of Bath, this Georgian mansion has 78 rooms, a gym, tennis court, free parking, a sauna and a jacuzzi for guests, plus mountain bikes to hire. The Grade-II mansion overlooks the Avon Valley and is 10 minutes’ drive from the M4.

The restaurant with terrace has an AA Rosette for its cuisine, and lunch is available in the bar.
Elstree, June 7, Five Arrows, Waddesdon

With memories of the latest royal wedding fresh in everyone’s minds, Don Dexter recalled being a mounted escort for Queen Elizabeth II during his six years as part of the Royal Horse Guards.

When he first started he had no idea about riding a horse. He was also made a freeman of the city of London for his 50 years’ service in the Royal Life Saving Society and that was in 1989. He still swims every day. Elsie Roberts had everyone in stitches with her traditional speech from the chair.

After thanking guests and hotel staff for making the luncheon such a success, she said that she had recently made some jam for a Women’s Institute competition and had neglected to label it. When asked about the jars filled with motor cars she allegedly replied it is a traffic jam of course.

Following on from an office wind up revealed in our last issue, Anne Foster shared a couple played on her. Once she found a note on her desk to call Mr R Madillo, and on April Fool’s day another year, ‘some wags’ had meticulously undone all the screws on her typewriter. When she hit carriage return, it flew off onto the floor.

The Five Arrows Hotel and Restaurant stands at the gates of Waddesdon Manor, which houses one of the finest collections of French decorative arts in the world. The Hotel has 11 bedrooms, a varied and exciting menu to suit all tastes, and a wine list that encompasses everyday and rare wines from both New and Old World vineyards. It sports a host of quality marques including AA**** (Restaurant With Rooms) and mentions in the Tourism Excellence awards for 2009 and 2010. There are formal gardens and Waddesdon Manor is only a pleasant walk away. The whole hotel can be hired out for families who are either holding events there or at neighbouring Waddesdon Manor.

Joan Smedley, Doris Wright, Anne Smith, Sid and Florrie Bull.

SECOND: Doreen and Bill Butterworth, Christine Allenby, Gay Southgate, Pauline Andrews, Doris Reilly.

THIRD: Don Dexter, Elsie Roberts, Margaret Adams, Rose and Harry Snell, Lynne Ewers.

FOURTH: Josie Shingles, Charles Nelson, Maggie Putman, Malcolm and Marion Smith, Ted and Doris Neale.

FIFTH: Mike and Eve Glover, First aider, Pat and Stuart Stamp, Margaret Staines and Ginny Dean (Welfare).
REAL, June 8, Offley Place, nr Hitchin

New member Hazel Steedon was celebrating her birthday on the day of the luncheon while Peter and Margaret Allcroft had recently celebrated their Ruby Anniversary.

Chairman Alan Chaney was unable to attend due to a previous golfing engagement, but his wife was there.

Pauline Bryant thanked the guests, staff at Offley Place and all those who had made the lunch possible for a lovely day.

Despite poor eyesight Mir Shafi, with the help of REAL committee member John Davis and other friends, keep the Laing rambling club going. Most recently they travelled to Derbyshire for an enjoyable walking break.

TOP: Margaret and Peter Allcroft, Eddie Blackburn and sister, Bill Bowden, Jasmin Brown, Pauline and Tony Bryant, Jane Chaney. SECOND: Cecil Cherns, Vic and Jennifer Israel, Mir Shafi, Helen Porter, Brian Cider, Nigel Clark, Lal Dias, Vic and Christine Allen. THIRD: Anne and Mike Corlett, Doug and Edna Jury, Anne and Peter Coles, Bill and Peggy Cutmore, Ron and Cora Field, Audrey Maynard. FOURTH: John Davis, Marion and Peter Donaldson, Shirley Frost, Margaret Steer, John Hockley, Frank and Dorothy Hearn. FIFTH: Jerry and Jean De Vries, Lorna Glide, Lew and June Gambrill, Allan and Jean Martin, Ken and Joyce Martin, Valerie Wiltshire. SIXTH: Gordon and Christine Foster, Moira Hanniffy, Pauline and Frank Willcocks, Ann Lyons, Doreen Smee, Roger and Maureen Mountford, David Toynbee, Jean Breslin. SEVENTH: Ron and Eileen Norton, Ron and Lynne Pierce, Judy and Derek Pollard, Donald and Jean Ridley, Fay and Bill Malcolm. EIGHTH: John and Margaret Trounce, Helen Jacobs, Fred Potter, Barry and Barbara Whitaker, Margaret and Peter Worth, Alan and Mimi Walton.
Solare, June 9, Ockenden Manor, Cuckfield

It was the first time in anyone’s memory when the ‘sunshine club’ did not have a blisteringly hot day for their luncheon, but, as chairman Ken Jones said ‘one out of 17’ was still great.

Among those who have delved into their family histories was Carole Walden who discovered that her grandfather’s niece had been involved in running today’s venue when it was a school. During her 15 years of research she traced her family back hundreds of years. It has become much easier lately with many details available on the internet, whereas Carole has had to traipse around the country sifting through local and church records.

Ken Fisher is lucky enough to have a cousin ‘Intrepid Linda’ who has been looking into their family history on everyone’s behalf. Again she has seemed to hit brick wall at the 1600s. After lunch club chairman Ken Jones thanked those who had made it all possible.

TOP: Brian Aitken, Alex Gregory, Doreen Aitken, Brian and Barbara Blight, Eric and Jean Childs, George and Sandra Edwards. SECOND: Leighton and Wendy Davies, Monica and Trevor Berry, Mike Webb, Roy and Dorothy Graham, Tony Hale, Bill Blamire, Mike Farragher. THIRD: Ken and Shirley Fisher, Margaret and Jim Glynn, Beryl Henry, Betty Hagart, Deanne and Les Hilman, Laurie Hodgkinson. FOURTH: Joyce and Mike Lemonier, Ken and Roberta Jones, John McGuinness, Pat and Stan Jarman, Mike and Marion James. FIFTH: John and Monica Tuck, Anne and John May, Betty and Gil Lumley, Jerry and Monica Lewis, Maureen Rice. SIXTH: Jan and Dave Constable, Ray and Rena Phillips, Teresa Pierkarski, Pam Peed, Pam and Roger Stride, Margaret and Ron Richards. SEVENTH: Peter and Barbara Watson, Vivianne and Frank Sinnock, John and Pat Tully, Ian and Carole Walden, Lynne Wilkins and Hazel Watson.
## CLUB CONTACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
<td>Margaret Levin 01228-526374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elstree</td>
<td>Shirley Napier 020 8207 5110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNER (North East)</td>
<td>John Crosby 0191 262 4978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>Jack Stokes 01204 491004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REAL (Nth London)</td>
<td>Pauline Bryant 020 8907 2166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REALM (Midlands)</td>
<td>Jane Barnes 01827 61267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saltire (Scotland)</td>
<td>Jim Saunders 01324 638896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solare (SW London)</td>
<td>Bill Blamire 01737 553174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>Geoff Luckett 01934 843077</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CLUB EVENTS

### CUMBRIA
- Weekly meetings at Wigton Methodist Hall
- *Talk on the work of The Samaritans by John Cooper.*
- *Tour of St. Pancras International Station.*
- *Coach trip to Windsor and Eton.*

### ELSTREE
- Weekly meetings at St Michael and All Angels Church Hall, Tuesday 2.30pm.
- *Talk on Ghosts.*

### REAL
- Meetings at Allum Hall, Borehamwood
- *Talk on the work of The Samaritans by John Cooper.*
- *Tour of St. Pancras International Station.*
- *Coach trip to Windsor and Eton.*

### LNER
- Trip to Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle lunch and a conducted tour

### SALTIRE
- A coach trip and conducted tour of Edinburgh with a fish lunch at the historic ‘Peacock Inn’.

### SOLARE
- Social & AGM at Antoinette Hotel, Kingston.
- *Autumn lunch at the Toby Carvery, Cheam Road, Ewell.*

### SOUTH WEST
- 25th Anniversary lunch at Brent House, near Weston Super Mare.
- *Skittles event at the Woodborough Inn.*

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Clubs celebrating their anniversaries

The new Carlisle club chairman John Barrow decided against taking out a superinjunction to prevent the publication of the image shown here. It was passed on by his ‘friends’ on the committee and features him wearing the prize he won in a dancing competition during the club’s holiday to Tenby in May.

Meanwhile, north of the border club secretary Jim Saunders points out that the ‘10th Anniversary of the formation of the club, had passed some time ago without acknowledgement’. They are putting the situation right with a special trip to the Scottish capital in September.

South West and Realm are both celebrating their 25th anniversaries this year, with various events and activities.

The clubs provided details of many enjoyable trips, two of them on the river, Realm from Conway Castle to Tewkesbury and Solare on the Medway.
Diamonds are forever

DIAMOND WEDDING, BILL AND DOREEN BUTTERFIELD, JULY 21, 2011

They met as members of the same social club where Bill used to box, a year later they were married.

Bill was also the Middlesex regional athletics champion, nicking the title by one point against his best friend Maurice Staff.

He spent 14 years working with Laing as a plumber and enjoyed every minute.

He said: “I loved my time with Laing, it was one of the best jobs I ever had in my whole career.”

Previously he had run his parents green grocer shop in Burnt Oak. The couple have a son and a daughter and two grandsons.

M1 led to happiness

GOLDEN WEDDING, ALAN AND DORA TYERS, JUNE 24, 2011

The couple met while Alan was working on the M1 as a Plant Fitter, and were married in the village of Naseby Near Northampton.

They travelled the country on different sites and worked at a non mechanical plant depot in Selcey Forest for four years where the Depot Manager was Jack Ogbourne.

Alan then spent around two years working in the Larkhill/Bulford area on the ‘Jesperson’ buildings, before ending up at the South West Plant Depot in Frampton Cotterell near Bristol. He was a mobile plant fitter there for 32 years and has many happy memories.

He retired in 2000 after 42 happy years with John Laing and the couple still live in the Bristol area with their two sons and three grandchildren living in the same town.

Dora and Alan celebrated their Golden Wedding on a Mediterranean cruise.

We love to publish your anniversary pictures and details. If you wish to be included, please send your Golden and Diamond anniversary details to Pensioner Publishing or the Laing Welfare Department at the addresses on the inside front cover of this magazine.
Couple travelled the world

JENNY AND NEVILLE SEMPLE, GOLDEN WEDDING, 31 July, 2011

The couple were married in Hebburn-on-Tyne and immediately moved to Dublin.
After six years, along with two children, they moved to Belfast where Neville joined the Company as a QS.
In 1983 he joined Civils in Baghdad, at which point the war with Iran promptly started. He came back and joined construction in London, and then Surbiton from 1985 until he retired in 1992. He continued working part time elsewhere in construction until he was 70; and is still helping with various voluntary organisations.
Their eldest child, Michael, is well known internationally for his work, trying to negotiate help and peace (www.talkforpeace.org) particularly now in Afghanistan.
His introduction to this sort of activity came when, as a young child, Neville took Michael and his sister Alison with him on Saturday mornings when he was going on site to inspect client’s buildings which had been bomb damaged the night before.
He added: “Laing have always helped a lot of people in many areas and it’s interesting to see where these policies have encouraged people to keep going and be positive.”

Ritz Ballroom dance is Golden

EDWARD AND MARGARET GARAWAY GOLDEN WEDDING, JULY 14, 2011

The couple met at the Ritz Ballroom in Irvine, Ayrshire in Autumn 1959 while Eddie was Lance Bombardier in the Royal Artillery stationed at Dundonald Camp before a posting to Germany and demob in 1960.
They were married at St Andrews Church, Irvine and had a one-night honeymoon at the Railway Hotel in Ayr before heading to their first flat at the Quadrant, Redland, Bristol when Eddie recalls they ‘had £3 between us until the next payday!’
He first worked for JLC in early 1958 on the Metal Bridge over the River Esk on the English/Scottish border.
Following a spell with the Port of Bristol Authority, Eddie rejoined Laing in Spring 1961 as a steel fixer. Going on to be a foreman steel fixer he worked on ‘a vast number of projects in the south west’ before being transferred to Management in 1983/83.
Major contracts included one-and-a-half years in the Falkland Islands. Most of Margaret’s working life was spent as a nursing auxiliary and later as a carer. They have three children, seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren.
Having been set up last year, the Legal Ombudsman published its first report in July and Chief Ombudsman Adam Sampson said that the majority of his work concerned complaints surrounding the drawing up of wills.

Based on research carried out by the Legal Services Consumer Panel Mr Sampson said that up to 33% of wills drawn up by will writers and nearly 25% of wills drawn up by solicitors had been shown to be deficient.

You should shop around and take professional advice on finding the best value and most reliable service, but here we outline some of the points discussed by the Legal Ombudsman (contact details below and further sources of independent help and advice feature left).

The Legal Ombudsman's office only has the power to investigate complaints pertaining to members of the legal profession.

Currently the writing of wills is not regulated and most people involved with badly drawn up wills only find out when it is time to execute the will. During an appearance on the Jeremy Vine Show on Radio 2 on July 22, Mr Sampson said that he felt a professional should be involved in the execution of a will if it involved complex financial arrangements, or trusts.

However, a spokesman from the Institute of Professional Will Writers felt there was no need for solicitors to be appointed as sole executors generally for straightforward wills.

He also said that the institute's members worked to a code of practise aimed at ensuring the wills they drew up were valid and reliable.

Mr Sampson added that a 'will' written on a piece of paper by benefactors themselves and witnessed by two signatories who were not beneficiaries of the will can be perfectly legitimate, if stored safely and made available after the death of the benefactor. Do not attempt this before seeking professional independent advice.

The legal ombudsman's website is: www.legalombudsman.org.uk or you can call them on 0300 555 0333 if you think you may have any legitimate complaint against a lawyer.

Make sure your will is fit for purpose

An Age UK forum on improving essential healthcare of older people held this summer revealed that many retirees have found themselves dealing with problems concerning the healthcare of their elderly parents.

Earlier this year the Office of the Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman published a report highlighting harrowing stories of the experiences of some older patients.

The two overall findings of the report were:

1) The NHS failing to respond to needs of older people with care and compassion and (in some cases) failing to provide most basic standards of care

2) An attitude – both personal and institutional – which fails to recognise the humanity and individual humanity of people concerned and to respond to them with sensitivity, compassion and professionalism

You can also complain direct to the health ombudsman's office if you feel that yourself or a relative has been poorly treated.

n The Partnership on Dignity in Care is a new initiative made up of The NHS Confederation, Local Government Group (LG Group) and Age UK. The commission is also asking for individuals and organisations working across the health and social care sectors to submit their input. You can contact them at their website: www.dignityincare.org.uk

Retirees coping with elderly parents’ health
IN MEMORIAM

Alan Adamson, formerly a Regional Checker with John Laing Construction, Yorkshire region, died on Tuesday 19 July 2011. He was 82 and retired in 1991 after 25 years’ service.

Frank Awin, formerly a Foreman Plasterer, with John Laing Construction, London region, died on Sunday 21 August 2011. He was 87 and retired in 1984 after 14 years’ service.

John Bowles, formerly Admin Services Manager with Civil Engineering, Mill Hill, died on Thursday 23 June 2011. He was 85 and retired in 1986 after 35 years’ service.

Bruce Boys, formerly Chairman of JLI, died on Sunday 14 August 2011. He was 69 and retired in 1998 after 39 years’ service.

Stephen (Steve) Buckle, formerly a Section Engineer with John Laing Construction, Northern region, died on Saturday 11 June 2011. He was 59 and retired in 2001 after 22 years’ service.

Peter Colley, formerly a Foreman Ganger with John Laing Construction, Northern region, died on Saturday 23 April 2011 (late notification). He was 72 and retired in 1999 after 19 years’ service.

Jack Dixon, formerly a Checker with John Laing Construction, Northern region, died on Friday 29 July 2011. He was 82 and retired in 1991 after 23 years’ service.

Dave Ely, formerly a Finishing Manager with Laing Limited, Northern region, died on Tuesday 16 August 2011. He was 67 and retired in 2001 after 26 years’ service.

Arthur Hird, formerly a Quantity Surveyor Clerk with John Laing Construction, Southern region, died on Saturday 21 May 2011. He was 88 and retired in 1986 after 17 years’ service.

Jack Mitchell, formerly a Section Manager with John Laing Construction, Northern region, died on Monday 20 June 2011. He was 83 and retired in 1984 after 22 years’ service.

Roy Mitchell, formerly an Operations Manager, with I.S.D, died on Wednesday 27 July 2011. He was 84 and retired in 1988 after 23 years’ service.

Roy Port, formerly a Group Materials Controller with John Laing Construction, Southern region, died on Wednesday 22 June 2011. He was 83 and retired in 1992 after 19 years’ service.

John Rooney, formerly a Ganger with John Laing Construction, North west region, died on Sunday 24 July 2011. He was 76 and retired in 1996 after 27 years’ service.

Sam Samuels, formerly a General Operative with John Laing Construction, South west region, died on Tuesday 21 June 2011. He was 87 and retired in 1988 after 26 years’ service.

Peter Taylor, formerly a Hire Controller with EPL, Staffordshire, died on Thursday 28 July 2011. He was 85 and retired in 1990 after 34 years’ service.

Herbert Wragg, formerly a Plant Driver with Thermalite, died on Friday 1 July 2011. He was 94 and retired in 1981 after 13 years’ service.