Latest Company news
Major rail news, a library contract and giant JLIF investment.

Useful news
Social care changes, unclaimed benefits and much more.

Summer Outings
Words and pictures from this year’s events.
A time of change, but there is help available

This is certainly a time of change, most noticeably for pensioners and politicians in this country.

Pensioners make up 16.4% of the UK population according to the 2011 census figures, and hold an even higher proportion of the vote. It is pensioners who are most likely to exercise their votes. Youngsters may not feel the that they are represented by our slim selection of parties, or just can’t be bothered. Alongside this is the fact that people are living a lot longer. When the state pension was introduced in 1948, people were only expected to live about another five years after they finished work.

For some time Governments have accepted that there just isn’t the money to continue paying for social care in its current form. Some of our readers will be people who are looking at sorting out care for themselves, others may be struggling to cope with looking after children and grandchildren while at the same time making sure elderly parents are OK – the so-called sandwich generation.

In either position, it may feel as if there are few options other than trusting to the prevailing tides of state help and charity.

The good news is that there is help out there (see page 23) but those lucky enough to be part of a company which has an active welfare department, such as retirees of John Laing, can always contact welfare for help and advice.

I hope you have thrived in the hot summer and that you enjoy catching up with former friends and colleagues at the retirement club summer luncheons (pages 12-18).

Now, on a completely different subject, I must thank Dave Hemlin, Realm club chairman, for this joke he told at the summer lunch this year.

A flash looking chap was queuing at the Pearly Gates wearing sunglasses on his forehead and seemed to wink at people a lot. He breezed up to St Peter, who said: “Who is it that wishes to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?”

“Chuck Tempest, helicopter pilot,” replied the man. St Peter consulted his list and found the name: “Ah yes,” he said. “Take this golden staff and silken robe and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”

A priest was next: “And who are you that wishes to enter the Kingdom of Heaven,” asked St Peter. “Father O’Malley, All Saints and the Blessed Virgin Church in Kempston,” replied the priest.

St Peter said: “Ah yes, take this golden robe and silken robe and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”

“Hold on a minute,” said the priest, “I have devoted all my working life to God and his works and you give me cotton and wood against the gold and silk for flying a helicopter?”

St Peter said: “We go on results here. When you preached people slept, when he flew, they prayed.”

Alex Finkenrath
Government confirms follow-on order for major trains project

Agility Trains Ltd, a consortium comprising Hitachi Ltd and John Laing, welcomed Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin’s confirmation of a £1.2 billion follow-on order for more state-of-the-art trains for the East Coast Main Line as part of the Intercity Express Programme (IEP).

The order will see an additional 30 nine-car electric trains replace the Intercity 225 trains currently in operation on the Line. They will be built in the factory Agility Trains’ main stakeholder, Hitachi Rail Europe, is constructing in Newton Aycliffe in the North East of England.

The IEP, which achieved financial close for phase 1 of the project in July last year, is worth some £4.5bn and comprises trains, maintenance depots, and route upgrades, with Network Rail undertaking the infrastructure upgrades to allow the new trains to operate on the network. Martin Garrett, Chief Executive Officer, Agility Trains Ltd. said: “Agility Trains is delighted by the Secretary of State’s commitment to the IEP, which will represent a step change in train performance and passenger experience on the East Coast and Great Western Main Lines. Our next step is to raise the finance for East Coast in the same way we have done previously for the trains destined for the Great Western Main Line. We have already had strong interest from international financial institutions and aim to achieve the best value for money for UK taxpayers.”

Agility Trains is a consortium formed to deliver the UK Intercity Express Programme. The company shareholders are Hitachi Ltd (70%) and specialist investor and manager of infrastructure assets, John Laing (30%).

Hitachi Rail Europe Ltd., is a wholly owned subsidiary of Hitachi Europe, Ltd. and is headquartered in London, UK.

Hitachi Rail Europe is a total railway system supplier offering rolling stock, traction equipment, signalling, traffic management systems, and maintenance depots. Hitachi draws on many years of experience as a leading supplier of high-speed trains such as the Shinkansen (bullet train) in Japan.

Another new chapter for John Laing

John Laing Integrated Services (JLIS) has signed an eight-year contract to deliver library services on behalf of the London Borough of Croydon.

The contract starts on 1 October 2013 and incorporates 13 libraries as well as the home library service.

As a result of the new arrangements Croydon’s libraries will soon undergo a significant modernisation programme. This will include the introduction of new technology for the benefit of both staff and customers, including self-service, wi-fi and the very latest innovations in online resources and e-books.

The new contract will ensure that all 13 libraries remain open and continue to provide high levels of professional services. JLIS will work closely with local communities to improve the way these services are delivered. There will also be new local business opportunities and good prospects for employment, volunteering and apprenticeships.

Tim Grier, JLIS Managing Director, said: “I’m delighted that JLIS has secured its second London library contract. This is a fantastic milestone in developing our presence in the library services market and brings the number of library sites managed by JLIS to 24. We look forward to working with the council, and local organisations to provide an excellent library service for the benefit of the Croydon community.”

“This is a fantastic milestone in developing our presence in the library services market and brings the number of library sites managed by JLIS to 24.”

– Tim Grier, JLIS Managing Director
A new Scottish onshore wind project announced

John Laing has completed the acquisition of Carscreugh Wind Farm situated in Dumfries and Galloway, South West Scotland.

John Laing is 100% investor in the facility after acquiring the project from Gamesa Energia SAU.

The plans for the onshore wind farm have been developed by Gamesa Energia SAU and once completed the facility will have an installed capacity of 15.3MW and will consist of 18 Gamesa G52 turbines. It is anticipated that the facility will generate enough renewable energy to power over 9,500 homes*.

Ross McArthur, Managing Director, Renewable Energy for John Laing, said: “We are delighted to have completed the acquisition of Carscreugh Wind Farm from Gamesa. The facility is John Laing’s fourth investment in the onshore wind sector since our initial investment in August 2012, further reinforcing John Laing’s position in the renewable energy market.”

Operations and maintenance for the facility will also be provided by Gamesa UK.

Work on the supporting site infrastructure will start immediately and the turbines are scheduled to be installed towards the end of this year. It is anticipated that the project will be fully operational in spring 2014.


Planning decision gives Northants go-ahead

In June, John Laing completed the purchase of a 14.4MW wind farm to be constructed near Kettering in Northamptonshire. The asset was acquired from First Renewable, which will remain responsible for the delivery of the project through to operational completion. On completion, the asset will be held by John Laing as part of its renewable energy portfolio.

The plans for the proposed wind farm have been brought forward by developer, First Renewable following a successful planning determination in November 2012. Once complete, the facility will have an installed capacity of 14.4MW and it is anticipated that the facility will generate enough renewable energy to power over 11,000 homes*.

Ross McArthur, Managing Director of Renewable Energy for John Laing, said: “Our acquisition of this asset is an exciting addition to the John Laing portfolio of investments in the onshore wind sector, and is our second wind farm investment this month, further reinforcing John Laing’s position in the renewable energy market.”

Matthew Byrom, President of First Renewable, said: “We have been very impressed with the professionalism and quality of the John Laing team and are looking forward to working with them through to operational completion”.

John Laing and First Renewable will now focus on finalising the site infrastructure, arranging turbine supply and completing the operations and maintenance contracts. Financial close of the debt package is scheduled for August 2013, although work on site infrastructure is expected to start beforehand. The turbines are planned for installation in early 2014 and it is anticipated that the project will be fully operational in April 2014.

John Laing Regional Operations Director Richard Groome attended the North West summer outing and gave guests a summary of current Company activity.

Richard told diners that John Laing had won a RoSPA gold medal for safety. One site he is working on had clocked up 5,000,000 accident-free hours.

The Company had also recently completed North Staffs Hospital (not the Mid Staffs which had been in the headlines).

Also 11 new secondary schools had been completed in Barnsley in under three years. He described them as ‘wonderful places for children to learn and develop’ and added that he was very proud.

His ‘new baby’ is the massive Alder Hey hospital contract worth £170m. Everything will be built off site, including the mechanical and electrical engineering.

John Laing has also been appointed preferred bidder for a big project at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridgeshire.

Since the last summer lunch, Private Finance Initiative has changed and new projects come under PF2 which potentially has higher risk and lower rewards for companies in the UK. So the Company is investing in new renewable projects, and looking at opportunities abroad in the US, Canada and New Zealand.

As well as the big rail project (see page 3) there are major housing projects underway at Lambeth, Oldham and Huddersfield.

JLIF buys £123m of investments

Investment company John Laing Infrastructure Fund (JLIF) has made its largest portfolio acquisition since it was launched on the stock exchange after buying £123m in new assets.

According to an announcement made in July, an acquisition has been agreed to take on a portfolio of 11 operational and yielding assets.

The portfolio consists mainly of social infrastructure assets including Leeds Combined Secondary Schools, Bexley Schools and Northampton Mental Health.

The projects are currently managed by public–private partnership infrastructure manager Mill Asset Management Group (MAMG) and will continue to be so after completion.

The projects are all fully operational and are also supported by Government-backed, inflation-linked revenue streams, the investment trust says.

The transaction is expected to be completed over the coming month, as the customary consent process has still to be concluded.

JLIF says that the total consideration “is consistent with the current valuations of similar projects” in the trust’s portfolio.

The acquisition will be satisfied either wholly or partly in cash and also partly by the issue of new ordinary shares in the trust, the Company added.

JLIF Fund manager David Marshall said: “JLIF’s success in acquiring this high quality portfolio reflects our strong understanding of the infrastructure sector, and demonstrates the strength of our relationships with key market participants.

“JLIF remains confident about our future acquisition opportunities in what is a buoyant secondary market.”

Mystery project images’ identities are revealed...

The mystery pictures from the John Laing photographic archive published last issue drew a massive response from readers, most with stories about the Empress Tower at Earls Court.

John Gilkinson also identified the Gower Street project on which he was an apprentice joiner back in around 1954.

John said: “I remember climbing the scaffold to the eighth floor, where the cranes were, with my tools.”

It was pointed out to us by Peter Thompson that the project was featured in the newsletter last year, although we did not recognise it from those images.

He also recalled that the giant Laing sign on top of it required special planning permission.

Sadly the building is no longer there, although the site is put to good use as a hospital.

Phil Clark’s name came up as being involved with the contract and – as if by magic – he also called, having worked on all three phases of Gower Street before moving on to the Empress Tower.

The Empress Tower, built for the MoD, was the first project in which John Laing was employed as a sub-contractor. The architects decided that John Laing would be the best bet for building the frame, due to the Company’s unrivalled experience in the field. It was not an easy job, the site engineer was very strict about any rust or black oxidization on the steel supports. Phil recalled carrying these giant reinforcing rods in with Peter Donaldson and waiting to see if the engineer would allow them.

The building has a striking design with three legs extending out from the central core.

Phil said: “I remember that we had three tower cranes, one on each leg of the project building.”

At least two retirees called in to say that they had visited the project in the very early days of their Laing careers.

Brian Murray recalled going to the Empress Tower on a works study group. He was ‘stuck up on the asphalt roof for three days in the freezing cold’, but was more terrified about having to speak on the subject afterwards. However, he got through it well.

Another view of the Empress Tower was provided by Mrs Freda Jefferson, whose husband Barry worked at John Laing for around 40 years. By sheer coincidence Mrs Jefferson ended up working in the tower as the civil servant overseeing catering in the giant building. She occupied the 26th and 27th floors of the tower, at the time, the tallest in London as the GPO tower had not yet been built.

One day the Ministry of Works representative was concerned that these floors may not be strong enough to handle all the heavy catering equipment. Freda told her husband Barry who was able to find all the relevant testing documentation and confirm that it was fine.

Freda also recalled some other quirks of the building. All the loos were situated in the farthest extremities of the building at the ends of the three spokes. Strangely the women’s toilets were situated on every third floor. Also, half the lifts only went up to the 14th floor.

Thanks to everyone who called, wrote or emailed information about the project.

The ‘modern’ style house pictured top left turned out to belong to an architect and was not part of the Laing collection.
Memories of Sir John

The legacy of Sir John Laing lives on, not just in the businesses, buildings and charities created in his name, but in the memories of those who met him. So many Laing retirees speak fondly of times when they met Sir John and we are looking to compile some of these memories with your help.

Bill Eaton recalled meeting Sir John Laing on his first day, but did not realise who he was. As he waited for an interview, a man wandered into the Mill Hill office and wiped his feet on the carpet. He noticed Bill and came and asked him what he was about. Bill told him and the man put him in a side room with a copy of Team Spirit and a cup of tea while he went and found someone. This down-to-earth approach, from a man at the head of one of Britain’s biggest companies at the time, summed up Sir John. He would often go out on site and talk to people in every trade. One retiree told Team Spirit that Sir John rolled up his sleeves and sat down with canteen staff to demonstrate how to peel potatoes ‘properly’, taking off just the skin.

We look forward to receiving your recollections of the great man.

Philip tells of an Irish reel with a difference

Thank you to Philip Harris for these great photos. He wrote: “We recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the visit of President Kennedy to Ireland in 1963. My late wife Ann and I were there on the day in New Ross County Wexford and we took a photo (inset). Only last year I discovered a photographer opposite us had taken a photo and we were in it (circled). We were sitting on top of a stone gate pier and we were winding our Kodak Brownie camera to get another photo. Our little claim to fame.”

Mill Hill before Laing

Thank you to the Elstree Retirement Club member for this lovely picture of Mill Hill Broadway from 1912. She hastened to add that she did not take it herself.

Foremen at forefront

More and more readers are submitting their photographic images of times spent with John Laing. Our thanks to John Gilkison who submitted a disk of wonderful images including this one from 1975 of a foreman’s course. He is sitting fourth from the right at the front. Let us know if you are in this picture.

Snap to it!

Don’t forget to send in your entries for the 2013 Laing Retirees’ Photographic Competition. We have already received some lovely entries.

The picture does not have to be recent, as long as it was taken by yourself, you can submit any snap from your collection.

You can submit your image by email (make sure it is at least a 1mb file) or by post. Please ensure that posted images are safely packaged and do not write on them. Please include your contact details with the image.
New Company head offices were constructed at Mill Hill using the latest processes and systems. The six-storey block was of Laingwall construction, the 320 units being cast in Lytag by John Laing Concrete Limited. This was the first time that Lytag was used structurally in a multi-storey building. There were 9.5inch roofing slabs supplied by Thermalite Ytong Limited providing exceptionally high standards of insulation.

It was designed to be the first stage of new development at Mill Hill by the Company’s Chief Architect.

The Milk Marketing Board’s new creamery at Kendal was opened on June 12 by Harold Woolley CBE, President of the National Farmer’s Union. It would have a daily intake of 60-70,000 gallons of milk at peak. Between 16 and 40,000 of these would be delivered direct by pipeline from Glaxo’s adjoining factory. The buttery had two stainless steel churns capable of churning 2.5 tonnes of butter from 1,000 gallons of milk in just two-and-a-half hours.

There was a real productivity push in the house-building aspects of Laing’s work. A new record was set at the four tower blocks being built at Barton Hill in Bristol. [See workers above]. Tenants were due to move into the first 15-storey block less than a year after work commenced, despite a nine week hold up during the winter months. Peter Stephenson was in charge of the scheme. The article also pointed out that ‘Flash’ Williams was ‘guaranteed to produce a cup of tea for visitors within 30 seconds’.

Meanwhile, on an estate in Chepstow, ‘improvement, streamlining and industrialisation of Easiform housing’ led to a house being erected and handed over in seven weeks. [see picture on next page].

The Lytag factory at Northfleet was welcoming many visitors – a lot of them from overseas – who wanted to learn more about the new lightweight aggregates. Team Spirit reported that Lytag sales had doubled in the past 12 months as the material was used increasingly for structural work. During May orders for Thermalite saw a 120% increase on the same period a year earlier.

Laing Development Limited sent three men to New Zealand where the company had been invited by the city authorities of Auckland to submit proposals for the redevelopment of the city and surrounding area. They were JS Calvert, GA Anderson and architect Z Sawicki.

Admiral of the Fleet, The Earl Mountbatten of Burma KG officially opened the Harp Lager brewery at Alton on June 28.
Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh visited the Bull Ring Shopping Centre in May. Those working on the site enjoyed a grandstand view of the visit. In the same month, Her Majesty also toured the practical block and classrooms at Russell Schools in Croydon, where she officially opened the new extension buildings.

In a separate visit a high-powered team of city officials and councilors from Utrecht in Holland made a visit to the Bull Ring in July.

As the contract neared completion there was much excitement in the press and the site was featured on various TV programmes.

There were 43 long service awards and 30 people retiring at the Company’s AGM – adding up to a total of 1,942 years. Among them was a 25 year service award for Maurice Laing, presented by his brother Kirby. After receiving their awards, all recipients had a word and a handshake from Sir John Laing. The prognosis for the Company was optimistic, however the Company had considered it wise to withdraw from Africa because of the ‘political circumstances’. In Canada, the Company had been going through ‘very difficult years’ but 1963 would be a year of ‘consolidation and of increased turnover’.

He ‘inaugurated’ a special brew of lager samples to be sent to 1,000 guests in October once the brewing process was completed.

Lord Mountbatten announced that there had been just 20 months between the first sod being turned and the first brew being mashed. The output of the brewery was the equivalent of half a million half-pint bottles per day.

The first Sectra flat was opened at Heywood in Lancashire, 11 months after the Company acquired the rights to use the construction system. It was one of 51 two-bedroom and 12-bed-sits in each block on the site.
Two employees from Yorkshire Region acted far above and beyond the call of duty when they helped rescue a baby from a burning house and put out the fire. Ron Sheen and Les O’Brien noticed a fire in a house four doors up the street where they were working on the PRC housing site at Rotherwood Crescent, Rotherham. They rushed to the scene where a 22 month old baby was still trapped inside and her father had been overcome with smoke whilst trying to save her. Ron and Les organized buckets of water and fought the fire while a neighbour managed to get the baby out. Despite their brave efforts the girl later died of her injuries.

It was announced that John Laing ETE won the £14million contract to build a concrete gravity substructure for the Ravenspurn North gas project. The field lay 60 km off the east coast of England and was one of the largest under development in the UK. It would take 16 months to build the 29,000 tonne substructure, employing 250 people at peak. It meant the reopening of Graythorpe Dry Dock which had been heavily used during the 70s for construction of steel jackets for offshore oil production platforms. Laing Civil Engineering would also be involved in the contract which required continuous slipforming of three towers and complexed pre-stressing arrangements for walls of the base structure.

Civil engineering was having to have stone delivered from Sweden for the A55 contract at Penmaenmawr. Local quarries could not cope with the order for 120,000 tonnes of high quality granite. Each block weighed about 4.5tons.

There was a turf-cutting ceremony with a difference at Dudley to mark the start of work on Stourbridge Leisure Centre – there was no turf, only mud. The £6.5million project was the ‘biggest enterprise ever undertaken by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council’. It would be built on a the site of an 86-year-old swimming pool.

London Region prestigious £60million Royal Mint project was topped out by HRH Prince Michael of Kent. The event included a fanfare from the trumpeters of the Life Guards followed by a champagne reception in a marquee. Prince Michael said it was the most ambitious project taken on by the Crown Estate. Royal Mint Court is four buildings set around a central courtyard. The whole development comprised 434,000 sq ft of office space in four different buildings, 82 flats, 18 maisonettes, 11 shops, a community centre, sports facilities and a museum.

Scottish Region was flying high having won £5million worth of construction projects including Glasgow’s first McDonalds (£1million) and sheltered housing for Hanover Housing Association (nearly £1million). The region had recently launched its own refurbishment business.
There was a big item marking Luton Town FC’s success in the League Cup, having beaten Arsenal 3-2 in the final at Wembley. Chiltern Region maintained close links with the club and was based at Collingdon Street in the town and staff were ‘well represented’ at the celebrations.

Sir Maurice Laing announced his retirement at the AGM on May 26.

ETE Division acquired a small stake in System Design for Micros Ltd, a small software house specializing in computer programmes for the construction industry as computers were increasingly used in the design/construction process. Elstree Computing Limited announced that it was now an authorized dealer for AutoCAD (the world’s most widely used computer aided design software). They made the announcement at the fifth Construction Industry Computer Exhibition at the Barbican.

Delegates attended a course on Temporary Works Appreciation. The course had been opened up to delegates from outside Laing for the first time. Pictured, back, from left: Terry Broomhall Midlands Region, Charles Coughlin Ove Arup, Surinder Sharma Southern Region, Mark Goodeve and Richard Thorpe Eastern Region, Mark Lancaster, Alistair Forsyth and Mark Cuzner Civil Engineering, Lewis Jones London Region, Tim Richardson Civil Engineering. Middle: Paul Tanner and Ian Lyon Eastern Region, Jim Farquarson Civil Engineering, Bob Greenaway Southern Region, Patrick McAuliffe ETE, Ian Thompson Ove Arup, Martin Tiffin Wesselex Region, Duncan Round Chiltern Region, Jeff Lacey Southern Region. Front: Malcolm Smith Southern Region, Jane Thorning Ove Arup, Mark Wiltshire Mill Hill, Mick Green Yorkshire Region and Neville Webb Mill Hill.

**SUMMER OUTINGS 2013**

**NEW MEMBERS**

**SOUTH WEST**

Phil Rendle spent 40 years with Laing, starting as apprentice in 1950 at Fawley and various housing projects. He had spells on many projects including the M6 before he landed in Temporary Works where he stayed for 25 years. His fondest memory was designing the scaffolding for the Graythorpe Oil rigs. Phil said: “I thought it was about time I came along to the summer outings!”

Mike Doell started as a pupil with Laing in 1960. He worked at Mill Hill but mainly in the South West. He worked on Fred Hubbard’s team in Bristol (cost and bonus) before joining the estimating department where his training during those 13 years ‘was like a passport’ for a successful career in construction. He never forgot his time or friends from John Laing.

**LNER**

Bob joined Laing in 1988 and stayed until January this year. He was Quality Engineer on Sizewell and ended up as senior quality engineer. He would look at quality of processes, systems and engineering generally. His favourite job was the Second Severn Crossing, but he also worked on the Midland Metro, Pfizer in Kent and Terminal five.

Michael Evans joined Laing in 1982 staying until 2001. He was a joiner and started out at the Sava Centre in Washington. They used to see lots of celebrities there around the time, including Jimmy Nail and Paul Eddington who all used to ask about quality of processes, systems and engineering generally. His favourite job was the Second Severn Crossing, but he also worked on the Midland Metro, Pfizer in Kent and Terminal five.

**NORTH WEST**

Roy worked in purchasing from around 1979 until 2000. He loved his time with Laing. His favourite project was the Mormon Temple (Preston). It was a massive project including a teaching block, accommodation and various other aspects. It was a purchasing manager’s dream. Quality was all that mattered and money was no object. Among the items he had to come up with was a stainless steel font, which he ended up having made. The project was ‘nothing short of wonderful’.

Barrie spent around 27 years with Laing in two spells. He started out as a Productivity Controller in the North West in around 1972 and spent 15 years there. Laing invited him back where he stayed until 1998ish ending up in Civils.

He recalled the wonderful camaraderie of the site staff but also going through the ‘terrible times’ of the unionism in the 70s. His son Darren is still with the Company.

**REALM**

Bill spent 33 years with Laing starting out as a joiner and becoming a site manager. He worked on the residesences at Leicester Royal Infirmary but his favourite projects were prisons. They are different from traditional projects from a construction point of view and because of the working environment.

**2013 summer outings**

As always, it was a wonderful series of events as Laing retirees gathered with friends and former colleagues for the President’s Day Summer Outings. Sadly the President herself was unable to attend on the advice of her doctor and Sir Martin Laing stepped up to the mark to host the events, describing himself as ‘understudy’.

Great food and company at beautiful venues around the country, organised by Sue Hendin – back by popular demand, but definitely stepping down this year.

Sir Martin thanked the welfare staff for their unstaunching support for retirees. He also thanked the committee members who keep the clubs going – and staff at the venues who made the events so enjoyable. New JLCT Secretary Jenny Impey attended many lunches to meet up with retirees. Other attendees included members of the Laing family.

Stephanie Laing said: “I am delighted that everyone had a good time and I look forward to catching up with the clubs and members soon.”
South West
Leigh Park Hotel, Bradford on Avon
May 20, 2013

Tony Edwardes
Welfare Officer

REAL
Grovefield House Hotel, nr Slough
May 21, 2013

Christopher and
Diana Laing

Paula Blacker
nee Laing

John Laing Retired Employees’ NEWS 13
REAL CONT‘D

There was a rousing chorus of Happy Birthday for Cecil Cherns on the day. It seemed that fellow member Michael Shaffi would be marking his birthday, the following Tuesday, by leading a 4.5-mile walk in St Albans.

ELSTREE
Bedford Arms Hotel, Chenies
May 22, 2013

Solare
Ockenden Manor, Cuckfield
May 23, 2013
We promised a special mention for Sid ‘Sharron’ Bishop who has never had a write up! He spent 34 years with Laing starting as a carpenter and becoming project manager at Ealing – not the big shopping centre but a smaller project down the road. He said his real name is Sharron because he thinks his mum wanted a girl!

LNER
Judges Country House Hotel, Kirk Levington
June 3, 2013

Anne Foster recalled the day that Sir John Laing popped in to the Monument Project in Newcastle city centre. She was organising catering and poor old Sir John was starving when he arrived at 10am. Rather than just give him a cup of tea and biscuit, she popped across the road and bought him a sandwich.
Saltire
Murrayshall House Hotel, nr Scone
June 4, 2013

Former club chairman George Harris was delighted to find that his son’s picture was still up on the wall of the prestigious golf course at the Saltire luncheon venue. He was a former club captain, although the 63-year-old does not play the course so much now as he finds the hills a bit difficult.

Carlisle
Leeming House Hotel, Ullswater
June 5, 2013

We could not resist mentioning Maureen Peat who was lucky enough to get a front row seat when the Dancing on Ice show came to Carlisle. The male lead even came over and gave her a kiss. She recalled being a lot more worried when, some years earlier, she was singled out by a Chippendale at another event. Thankfully he just held her hand and sang her a song. ‘I think they just miss their nans’ she said.
Robin Goodeve recalled the day when the caravan site he was running had a surprise arrival – a national newspaper journalist in a hot air balloon. Robin was the perfect host, although he felt it only right to try and sell the hack a caravan. He did not succeed, but the caravan site got a very favourable write up.

North West
Nunsmere Hall, Tarporeley
June 6, 2013

Margaret Staines
Welfare Manager

Lennox, Stacy and Ben Laing

Richard and Janet Groome

Sue and Roy Woodham
Pat Gowlett
Bill Eaton
Colin and Margaret Niland
Barbara and Steve Moss
Maureen and Bill McGarrie

Lillian James
Iris Commons
Cliff and Joyce Holmes
Steve and Jean Hewitt
Ken and Hilary Bentley with daughter Phillipa

Patricia and Bill Ferguson
Malachy and Ann Concannon
Ken Cole
Finbar and Sue Carroll
Norma and Barrie Waddington
Club REALM
Alveston Manor, Stratford on Avon
June 7, 2013

Sheila and John Parry
Maureen and Brian Murphy
Jan and Dave Hemlin
Tom and Pauline Featherstone
Peter and Daphne Cusden

Patricia Horton and Frank Samuel
Trevor and Eileen Manning
Brian and Connie Weller
Pat and Rose Mortimer
Annette and Bob Homer

Brian and Anne Burrin
Steve and Anna Maxie
Janet and Phil Price
Maureen Ford
Rowland and Pamela Seymour
Maggie and Peter Rand

Joan Street
Tony and Sue Pott
Alan Cannan
Marion and Alan Vining
Chig and June Gibson
Vi and Roy Selway

Barrie and Margaret Hughes
Geoff and Lucy Hall
Kittie Ainsley and Cathie Bennett
Ruth and David Saunders
Carlee and John Leftly

Barbara Taylor and Beryl Sutcliffe
Gil and Ann Roberts
Elizabeth Hughes + daughter Sarah
Jim and Ren Coxon
John and Jill Gandy

Freda Kearney and Peter Duggan
Maria Kijowski
Paula Mariner and carer
Barbara and Alan Swindell
Bill and Anna Meadows

Richard and Janet Broadbent
Margaret and Ken Hughes
Mohinder and Tom Jutla
Eric Andrews
Rosaleen Norris
Sheila Pye

The President’s Day Summer Outings is just one of the events organised by clubs around the country for former John Laing employees. Members also raise a lot of money for good causes through raffles and other means. The sterling work of volunteer committee members ensures this work continues. Find out more about the clubs and how to join on the facing page.
Retirement club news update

Carlisle’s trip to Muncaster Castle was a great success. Patrick Duff Pennington ‘the grand old man of the castle’ chatted with members in the cafe and then jumped on board the coach as it was about to leave and gave a funny and impromptu talk about the running of the place. Flower-lovers were especially thrilled with the gardens and the owl centre is one of the finest in the world.

In Scotland we would like to thank Andy Waring for sending a great collage of images from the club’s July trip to the Union Inn in Falkirk for lunch followed by a boat trip along the Union Canal.

We will put this up on the Laingpastandpresent website.

Club events

CUMBRIA
Monthly meetings at Wigton Methodist Hall.
October 20-26
Autumn holiday in Coventry area, picking up the Cotswolds.

ELSTREE
Weekly meetings
St Michael and All Angels Church Hall, Tuesday 2.30pm.

LNER
September 12
Visit to Hartlepool Historic Quayside, which is a replica of things as they were in the 18th century, plus lunch.

REAL
Monthly meetings at Allum Hall, Borehamwood.
September 4
Sing along with Edna Jury.
September 18
Pub Lunch with walk afterwards.
October 2
Fish and Chip Lunch plus a quiz.
October 23
Coach trip to Warwick Castle.
November 6
Films from the Laing archive.

REALM
October 16
Trip to the Navigation Inn, lunch and skittles.

SALTIRE (SCOTLAND)
Monthly meetings at St. Stephen’s Church, Glasgow.
October 8
AGM at Hamilton.
November 12
Illustrated Talk on ‘Glasgow Cathedral’.

SOLARE
September 25
Social and AGM at the Hotel Antoinette, Beaufort Road, Kingston. Contact the club for lunch details.
November 6
Autumn lunch at the Toby Carvery, 45 Cheam Rd, Ewell KT7 1QZ.

SOUTH WEST
October 10
Skittles and Lunch at the Woodborough Inn, Winscombe.
November 21
AGM and Lunch at Cameley Lodge.
December 12
Skittles and lunch at the Woodborough Inn, Winscombe.

Contacts

Contact the clubs direct if you are interested in joining. For general enquiries contact:
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33 Bunns Lane
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NORTH WEST
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SOLARE (SW LONDON)
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SOUTH WEST
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MAJOR BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Platinum Anniversary
10 June
Philip and Evelyn Jones

Golden Anniversary
15 May
Shangara & Bjaigankur Singh
1 June
Andy & Jean Allan

Diamond Anniversary
23 May
George & Margaret Peart
6 June
Stan & Doreen Brown
13 June
Harvey & Janet Sutcliff
11 July
Maurice & Elizabeth Daniels
18 July
John & Alma Cockerton
Alan & Laura Rose
25 July
Ken & Margaret Gower

If you would like your anniversary pictures and details published, please send or email them to Pensioner Publishing or the Laing Welfare Department at the addresses on the inside front cover of this magazine. Ideally include details on how you met and your career with the Company.

A Diamond day for the Wilsons
Derek and Joan Wilson
Diamond Anniversary
June 25, 2013

Derek and Joan met at a dance in Carlisle somewhere around 1948.

She was going out with his best mate until Derek butted in and ‘took over’.

He started out as an apprentice in Carlisle around 1948 and went into the RAF for three years.

When he came back things weren’t so good for Laing and he was paid off after two years. However, he came back not long afterwards and did another 37 years unbroken service in the joinery shop at Dalston Road.

As an apprentice he had worked on housing and construction sites, picking up the trade.

Now he was in the joinery shop building all sorts of things for various contracts.

“There were an awful lot of stairs, but everything from counters to doors and various other things,” recalled Derek.

He added: “It was a very happy place with lots of good friends.”

He worked alongside Les Barlow for many years and Derek Niven. He did have to leave the joinery shop at one stage to help out at the Nestles creamery once when they were short of men.

The couple have two boys two girls 9 grand children 14 great grandchildren.

They marked their anniversary with a get-together for family and friends.

Smitten by the best of the NHS
Derek and Marion Simpson
Golden Anniversary
June 29, 2013

He was in the army and she was a nurse in Hereford when Derek and Marion met.

He had been admitted with an appendicitis. She did not talk to him however, there was absolutely no fraternising with the patients back then.

“I wouldn’t talk to him because I was on duty,” she said. However, he seemed interested and got the low down on her from another chap on the ward who knew her.

He left her his address on a piece of card from a box of quality street, but she did not write to him. Then he started writing to her, but she would not write back. Finally he called the ward when she was working and got through. She was mortified to get a personal call while on duty and just kept saying ‘yes, now go away’. They met up for a coffee the next evening and it went from there.

They have a son and daughter and six grandchildren. He worked with Laing for 27 years in the stores, joiners shops and then ended up with the stonesmasons. They will be celebrating with a family meal.
Goldsmiths marking an ‘eastern’ promise

**Rex and Jean Goldsmith**

**Golden wedding**

**June 1, 2013**

The couple met at a Dance in Ufford, a small village near Ipswich.

They were courting for four years before getting married in 1963.

Rex has always worked in the building trade. He joined Laing Eastern as a construction manager and worked on various sites for 14 years until taking early retirement in 2002, having suffered ill health.

The green, white and Golden couple

**Denis and May Gill**

**Golden wedding**

**June 26, 2013**

Denis met May at an Irish dancehall in Hammersmith in the early sixties.

Denis worked 40 years with John Laing, starting out as a tower crane driver and continuing with the heavy plant division/EPL until his retirement.

He enjoyed his time with the Company and worked on many interesting and demanding projects, but one that stuck in his mind was the HMS Warrior project in Harrow for the Ministry of Defence.

He has worked with some real characters along the way and still talks about several of them when he is reminiscing about his time with Laing.

Upon retirement the couple moved home to Ireland, now living by the coast in Inishowen, Co. Donegal.

They have two sons, a daughter, and six grandchildren.

Going right back to where it all began

**John and Monica Tuck**

**Golden Wedding**

**July 6, 2013**

John and Monica met at a dance hall, AWRE Aldermaston.

To mark their anniversary they had a blessing in the same church they were married followed by a reception in the same place – the Old Mill.

Guests from their original wedding will be attending the celebration at Aldermaston.

People travelled from all over the world to attend, including America and Cyprus,

John worked for Laing from 1964 until 2000. Projects included site manager at Surbiton and also Shrivenham where he was in charge of central building for JSCSC.

The couple have two children and six grandchildren and were expecting the arrival of their first great grandchild.

Birthday greetings

95th

3 July

Danny Marner

90th

6 May

Jim Mackison

25 May

Frank Ballard

7 June

Dennis Owen

28 July

Maurice Kelly

Eryk Koziel’s family threw a surprise 90th party for the former Laing welder. Here he is with his 7th great grandchild, also named Eryk.
Preparing for social care changes

When or if the time comes to move into sheltered accommodation, most people will be expected to pay something towards the costs of their accommodation and personal care from their income and capital.

If the local authority is involved in arranging your placement, the amount you will have to pay will be worked out via a means test, which is based on nationally set guidelines.

Regardless of whether you end up in a care home on a temporary or permanent basis, your local authority will need to carry out a means test. The amount of money you have is irrelevant at this point.

Once the means test has been carried out and you have been told the level of your needs, your income and assets are taken into account. Currently, if you have assets of more than £23,250, you will need to pay the full cost of your care. However, this is scheduled to change in April 2017 when the means test threshold will go up from £23,250 to £123,000 (including the value of your home). At this point care costs will be capped at £75,000.

AgeUK provides lots of specific information on this issue at their website (www.ageuk.org.uk). You could also pop into one of their local offices or call them on: 0800 169 6565.

A not-for-profit company called Paying For Care has developed a ‘care cap calculator’ which might help people to assess how much they might have to pay for their care. Costs and prices vary according to where you live. Always compare prices. Their website: www.payingforcare.org.

Info on Attendance Allowance claims

Attendance Allowance is the benefit that many pensioners can claim, if you need help with your personal care because of an illness or disability. It can be worth up to £79.15 a week.

If you are a pension and need help looking after yourself because you have a disability or illness, you may be able to get Attendance Allowance (AA). It’s not means-tested and receiving it won’t affect any other benefits you claim.

How much do I get?

There are two weekly rates, depending on the level of help you need:

- £79.15 if you need help both in the day and at night
- £53 if you need help in the day or at night

You can download a form or start a claim online on the GOV.UK website, or get a claim form by calling the Attendance Allowance helpline on 0845 712 3456 (textphone: 0845 722 4433).

Help if fuel bills are getting out of hand

The Homeheat helpline provides free information and advice for people who are struggling with the cost of utility bills. They have recently introduced a new online chat service.

Visit their website for more information (www.homeheathelpline.org.uk) or call their free helpline on 0800 336699.

So many benefits still unclaimed

New figures suggest that pensioners are missing out on a staggering £3 billion in unclaimed benefits. These range from Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance, Council Tax Credit, health benefits, winter fuel allowances, free TV licences and even the Warm Home discount scheme.
John Bell, formerly a Quantity Surveyor with Civil Engineering died on Saturday 18 May 2013. He was 77 and retired in 1993 after 19 years’ service.

Lawrence Bredbury, formerly a Scaffolder with Laing North West died on Tuesday 9 April 2013. He was 92 and retired in 1981 after 18 years’ service.

Colin Brown, formerly a Site Manager with Laing Management Contracting died on Saturday 1 June 2013. He was 70 and retired in 2007 after 27 years’ service.

Murray Brown, formerly a Senior Quantity Surveyor with Holloway White Allom, died on Thursday 23 May 2013. He was 89 and retired in 1988 after 11 years’ service.

Cecilia Burton, formerly an Assistant Cook at Plant and Transport died on Sunday 16 June 2013. She was 93 and retired in 1980 after 19 years’ service.

Gerry Groom, formerly a Site Manager with Laing Homes died on Monday 20 May 2013. He was 71 and retired in 1999 after 11 years’ service.

Vernon Hinds, formerly a Trade Supervisor with Laing London died on Friday 17 May 2013. He was 72 and retired in 1998 after 28 years’ service.

Frank McGill, formerly a Labourer with Laing Scotland died on Tuesday, 14 May 2013. He was 80 and retired in 1996 after 30 years’ service.

Stan Southern, formerly an Accounts Supervisor with Laing Scotland died on Sunday 2 June 2013. He was 86 and retired in 1991 after 17 years’ service.

Gerry Tansey, formerly a Senior Hire Controller with EPL died on Friday 31 May 2013. He was 85 and retired in 1991 after 41 years’ service.