I AM sitting here with the rain beating down on the window wondering whether there is any truth in the old story about St Swithin’s Day. It has been said that if it rains on that day (July 15) then there will be another 40 days of rain and if it is fair, it will not rain for the next 40 days. So far it looks like the saying is true, but thankfully the President’s Day Summer Outings are finished before then. Anyway, on the odd occasions when we have had poor weather it has never dampened the occasion. This year was no exception and in fact it was wonderful to see so many new faces.

The Company’s approach to training and welfare was second to none which is probably why these events have such a family feel to them. So many fine characters came out of this amazing family - which was 18,000 strong at one stage - who in turn created some of this country’s most memorable construction feats. I have said it before, but Laing retirees put my generation to shame. Take for example REN reader Doreen Jewell who only gave up ice skating at the age of 80. Anyway, there are reports from the events on pages 17-23. Another thing that many of you will be interested in is the special event being held in Northamptonshire to mark the 50th anniversary of the M1. Limited tickets are available for Laing retirees so read the story on page 5 to find out how to get them. I don’t know whether this is good news or bad news, but I have managed to find two clean jokes for you this issue.

Firstly there was the man who looked on in wonder at two council workers. One was digging a hole and the other would then fill it in again. They did this a few times before the onlooker asked: “Excuse me, what exactly are you doing?” One of the workmen replied: “Well, usually there are three of us, but the chap who plants the trees is off today.” Finally a young boy asked his mother: “Why do brides dress up in a big white dress for their weddings?” His mother replied: “Well, Johnny, it is a special and happy day so the bride dresses in white.” The boy thinks for a while and then asks: “Why does the groom dress in black then?”

Please enjoy what is left of the summer and look forward to hearing from you.

Alex Finkenrath

JOHN LAING and Shepherd Construction have reached financial close on a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) project to provide five community fire stations in the North East of England.

The North East Fire and Rescue Authorities (NEFRA) collaborative project will involve the design, construction, finance and operation of fire stations for the Tyne and Wear, Durham and Darlington and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Authorities, as well as a headquarter based in West Hartford.

The contract term is 25 years with a total funding requirement of £30m. John Laing is providing 80% of the equity and Shepherd Construction will provide the remaining 20% and build the new fire stations.

In addition to the investment, facilities management services will be delivered by John Laing Integrated Services over the concession with a contract value of around £800,000 per annum.

David Hardy, Director of Infrastructure Projects for John Laing, said: “This project will dramatically improve facilities for the fire and rescue service in the North East, who are facing diverse and rapidly changing challenges - from the management of major incidents and ensuring a safer community, to the impacts of climate change. We are delighted to have reached Financial Close on our first fire and rescue project and look forward to a strong and collaborative partnership with the authorities.”

Allan McDougall, the Divisional Chief Executive of Shepherd Construction, said: “This exciting project will see five new stations built over the next year. Each one will include community facilities, allowing the fire authorities to link to local people and proactively look at fire prevention and safety issues.

“The North East is leading the way with these stations and we look forward to working closely with the authorities to deliver such modern and innovative facilities.”
Educating the masses

New £1bn Barnsley project will provide new and better opportunity for all students

WORK has started on the first phase of a scheme worth more than £1 billion which will transform secondary and special education in Barnsley. 

The Barnsley programme represents the largest ever capital investment in the borough and is unique across the country. Nine Advanced Learning Centres (ALCs) and two special schools will be built over coming years, with the first five due to open in 2011 - Carlton (January); Dearne (January); Darton (February); Kirk Balk and Penistone Grammar School (Easter).

They will be followed by Greenacre, Springwell and Priory/Willowgarth with Foulstone/Wombwell, Kingstone/Holgate and St Michael's completing the programme by 2012/13.

Each new school will cost between £25 million and £30 million with much of the funding coming from the council's and schools' own resources and additional funding from others, including central government.

The work will be carried out as part of Barnsley's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. Financial close has been reached for the first phase of the programme forming a Local Education Business Partnership with its private sector partner Barnsley Partnership for Learning (BP4L), a joint venture between John Laing and Laing O'Rourke. BP4L has been selected to deliver a complete transformation of educational facilities throughout the borough alongside Information Communication Technology (ICT) partner Civic. In addition, John Laing Integrated Services will provide facilities management services on the PFI and the Design and Build Schools over the 25-year concession.

The new educational facilities will feature state of the art physical and virtual facilities for Barnsley's secondary and special pupils, adult learners, teachers, support staff and others involved in the teaching and learning environment. Specifically, the programme will deliver flexible learning spaces with greatly enhanced (ICT) provision, including better access to data and resources and a wider spread of portable devices, as well as modern learning resources, social facilities, circulation and social spaces, and vastly improved sports and leisure facilities.

Barnsley councillor Linda Burgess said: "These will be state-of-the-art schools for our secondary and special school youngsters, which will provide not only outstanding learning environments, but will benefit the community as a whole and transform the landscape.

"We will have the facilities in place to enable students to access every diploma route and achieve their ultimate ambitions. We are saying to those youngsters: We want to invest in you and your future."

Tim Byles, chief executive of Partnership for Schools, the government agency responsible for the programme across the country, said it will deliver 'cutting edge design' in three phases with all the ALCs in Barnsley currently planned to be built and open by 2012/13.

"This programme is not just about bricks and mortar. New and refurbished schools make a positive difference to the lives of young people and to their communities."

LAING retirees have been invited to a special evening event to mark the 50th anniversary of the M1 Motorway.

Accepted by many as the Company’s greatest achievement, there will be a presentation in Northampton. (See end of story for details of how to apply.)

It will be 50 years ago to the day on November 2, when Minister of Transport Ernest Marples said at the opening of the M1 – at Slip End, near Luton: “This magnificent motorway opens a new era in road travel."

Once the speeches were done, he used a police patrol car telephone to send instructions to have the barriers removed at 13 access points between St Albans and Dunchurch near Coventry and the great queues of cars – filled with eager drivers – finally removed.

While the Preston bypass was the first UK road built to the new ‘motorway standard’ the M1, as its name suggests, was the real dawning of the motorway era.

It was an incredible contract for many reasons, not least the sheer scale of it. The construction site was 53 miles long and the construction techniques for the new motorway standard were largely untested.

On top of the scale of the project, it was the adversity which Laing had to overcome which sets this project apart.

The Company agreed to complete the mammoth undertaking in just 19 months.

Major competitors of Laing could not believe the Company would take on such a task and one famously told Sir Maurice Laing at the time: "You’ve been sticking your neck out to the highest standards in the world."

Unfortunately, relentlessly bad weather impeded progress in some sections, but by the end of the year, after only nine months, work to the value of £8 million had been completed. Such tremendous progress called for a superhuman effort on the part of all those working on the motorway and we do appreciate the way they have continued working so cheerfully under the most trying circumstances which no words can adequately describe. It is only when one visits the project in the midst of rain, hail and snow, with mud up to your knees, that you can begin to appreciate the true worth of the people on the job and what they have achieved."

The Institution of Civil Engineers’ anniversary event at Northampton takes place at the University of Northampton, November 17, between 6.30pm and 8pm and will feature presentations. Places are limited and tickets will be awarded on a first come, first served basis. If you would like to attend, please contact Alex Finkenrath by email: info@retirementmedia.com or by calling: 01234 313055.
More amazing stories from the M1 project

SINCE publishing the M1 pull out in the last issue of the Retired Employees’ magazine, we have been inundated with other people’s reminiscences from that project.

David Thomas, a member of the South West retirees’ club made a tiny bit of history.

He was probably the very first person ever to drive the new mini on the M1.

A couple of months before the project was finished a delegation from British Leyland arrived at B3 site offices with a ‘strange little car’ which they wanted to photograph on the motorway.

David said: ‘It was the new Mini and it was the first time it had been taken out. I was allowed to drive it on the motorway and so was probably the first person ever to do so.’

At the time he was an assistant project manager. ‘It was a job and a half’, he said.

‘Everyone was just so busy and just dedicated to getting it finished by the deadline.’

In fact, one colleague, who drove a Morris Minor Traveller, was so busy during the contract that he completely forgot to tax it!

Finbar Carroll remembers wading through miles of mud and dirt during his time as an electrician on the M1. He had to make sure that generators were working and lights set up for work which went on often through the night. This was sometimes outside or in offices.

He was one of the lucky ones with a company vehicle which wasn’t a motorbike. He had a 4x4 Bedford truck with a crane on the back of it. He said: ‘The main phrase that everyone used and said all the time was ‘it’s got to be finished on time’.

It’s funny how things go in cycles. Finbar’s neighbours at that time, in caravans just across the road were Mike Mckenna and Ken Cole. These two former colleagues were now his neighbours at North West Summer Luncheon.

‘It was a great time,’ he added. ‘There was amazing spirit and all that seems to have been replaced with health and safety these days.’

Trevor Manning did not have a truck and remembers zipping around on a BSA Bantam motorbike during the contract. At one time he had to give his boss a lift to the station. It was icy and he fell off. Luckily his boss survived with nothing more than a scratch.

‘Absolutely everyone was saying it, wherever they were in the Company.

‘We all believed it and worked all the hours to make it happen. The days just flew by.

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John LAING has added another major street lighting contract to its portfolio with a new contract with Surrey County Council.

A 50/50 consortium, with Skanska has been appointed Preferred Bidder for the £74 million Surrey Street Lighting Private Finance Initiative (PFI) scheme.

John Laing has existing contracts with Walsall, Wakefield and Manchester and under the proposed contract, the Skanska Laing Consortium would be responsible for the design, build, finance and operation of the stock of lighting columns across the Surrey County for a period of 25 years.

The design, installation and ongoing operations will be carried out by Skanska. In the next phase, contract negotiations will be concluded and financing for the project arranged. Following final approval by Surrey County Council, contract award and financial close is expected to be achieved by the end of the year.

During the first five years of the scheme, the consortium, which has combined its experience in infrastructure services and utilities, will replace approximately 70,000 life-expired street lights and refurbish and upgrade a further 18,000 lighting columns.

Existing orange/yellow lights will be replaced with modern white light sources to make town centres safer. In addition, full use of new energy-efficient equipment will be incorporated therefore reducing the carbon impact of delivering street lighting services.

During the scheme, which will start in January 2010, Skanska will also be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the assets, including provision of help desk services and emergency response.

David Hardy, Director, John Laing Investments, said: “We, together with our partners, are delighted to have been appointed Preferred Bidder by Surrey County Council, the team is looking forward to working in this long-term partnership to improve street lighting across the County. Our aim is not only to create improved lighting but to deliver innovative solutions that will reduce energy costs and provide sustainable solutions in helping the County Council to reduce its carbon footprint.”

Steve Sams, Executive Vice President of Skanska Infrastructure Development UK said: “We, together with our partners, are delighted to have been appointed Preferred Bidder by Surrey County Council for this scheme which will provide safer, energy efficient public lighting services for the people of Surrey. Skanska has many years experience in delivering street lighting in the UK and delivering these services under the PFI sector is an important part of the development of our UK portfolio.”
A royal appointment

MARIE CULLEN was invited to a royal garden Party at Holyrood House on June 30 by virtue of her work for the Haven charity. The Haven charity recently won a Prince of Wales award and subsequently a Queen’s award along with four tickets to the garden party. They held a draw for the tickets and Marie’s name was pulled out of the hat. The charity helps people with life limiting illnesses, such as HIV and motorneurone disease. They run a centre near Hamilton which provides help and advice and various non-clinical services such as alternative medicine and therapies. They can also get people involved in group activities. Marie (pictured) who has been a volunteer there for six years, said: “I am delighted to have had the opportunity to meet HM the Queen at Holyrood. I love the work which Haven does and have enjoyed being a volunteer there. It is a really friendly place which makes a real difference to people. A film was made about the place and I always remember one of the people who had benefited from Haven’s work saying: ‘This should not be called Haven, it should be called Heaven’. She said: ‘I am one of 70 volunteers and was lucky enough to be pulled out of the hat to visit the Queen at Holyrood Palace’.”

News in Brief

Anne awarded medal

LNER retiree Anne Foster (pictured furthest left) received her Women’s Land Army Medal in a ceremony at South Tyneideside Council hosted by the Mayor and the Lord Lieutenant. To apply for yours contact the helpline on 08459 335577 or website: www.defra.gov.uk

A degree at last

STAN UTTING received an honorary degree from Loughborough University in July. He was among the former students who had achieved diplomas (his being in Civil Engineering) who were upgraded as part of the educational establishment’s 100th anniversary celebrations. Stan has now been upgraded to honorary Bachelor of Science and has promised to send in the story and pictures for the next issue.

Eagle-eyed reader

THANK YOU to David Edwards who spotted that the map of the UK we published in the last issue was seriously out of date. He said: ‘I had to look twice, but realised that it featured a few counties which no longer exist anymore.”

READERS’ NEWS

When Harry wed Rose

NEWLYWEDS Harry and Rose Snell had been together for 36 years before finally tying the knot earlier this year. Harry’s best mate from 53 years ago was best man at a quiet registry office wedding in Burnt Oak in January this year. The couple decided to tie the knot because they were worried at the lack of financial security for surviving partners if they were not married.

Rose said: “It has really made no difference to our lives except that there is more security if something happens to one of us. We did go on a lovely three-week holiday to Madeira to celebrate our marriage.” Harry is 87 and Rose in her 70s. Recently the police working on a case were carrying out surveillance from their home and one of the officers involved was also in a long term unmarried relationship. Harry said: “It made him think when we finally decided to tie the knot. We just thought, why should the Government get anything that we want to leave to each other.” However, there was one cautionary note. Rose pointed out that it was quite a palaver changing her name on all her documents including her passport.

NEWS FROM THE CLUBS

CLUB CONTACTS

Cumbria Margaret Levin 01228-526374
Ealstree Shirley Napier 020 8207 5110
LNER John Crosby 0191 262 4978
North West Roy Elliott 0161 962 7175
REAL (North London) Pauline Bryant 020 8907 2166
REALM (Midlands) Jane Barnes 01827 61267
Saltire (Scotland) Jim Saunders 01324 638896
Solare (South West London) Bill Blamire 01737 553174
South West Geoff Luckett 01934 843077

CLUB EVENTS

CUMBRIA

On August 5 the club celebrated its 20th anniversary with a brass band recital and afternoon tea at their meeting.

October 7 Lunch followed by Row Valley Choir

October 11-16 A six-day holiday to Blair Atholl in Scotland.

November 4 A rush seating demonstration

North West

North West members have enjoyed a close relationship with John Laing. Earlier in the year they visited a joint services centre. The ground floor is a community centre complete with pharmacy, library (including computer area), offices and facilities for children. The first floor has doctor and dentist’s surgeries and the top floor has x-ray facilities.

In July members visited the Golden Days Garden Centre at Appley Bridge followed by a pub lunch.

REAL

Unless there is an outing, meetings take place at Allum Hall in Boreham Wood.

September 2 Club celebrates 20-year anniversary.

October 7 Talk on Liverbility, a local charity for disabled people.

October 21 Possible outing, tour of Wembley stadium. TBC.

November 4 Spuds - you choose

November 19 Coach trip to Bury St Edmunds

REALM

September Members are heading to Eastbourne for a holiday break.

October 21 Skittles and lunch at the Navigation Inn, Warwickshire.

SALTIRE

October The AGM will again be in Hamilton, courtesy of George Dixon.

November A visit to the theatre to see a very good production of ‘Chitty Chitty Bang Bang’. Details to come.

SOLARE

Despite poor weather at first members enjoyed walks through pleasant country and woods near Capel in July and August. They even spotted some deer before heading back for a pub lunch.

September 23 AGM and social meeting at Antoinette Hotel, Kingston.

October 21 Autumn lunch.

SOUTH WEST

September 24 Autumn lunch at Brent House

October 9 Skittles and lunch, Woodbridge Inn, Winscombe

November AGM and lunch at the Toby Carvery in Ewell

Contact clubs direct for full details of outings and any other enquiries
Cripps Hall of Residence at Nottingham University was built to the highest specification, but notably the whole project was designed purposefully to encompass two mature trees. Work on the £452,000 building began in September 1957 and was completed on schedule in August 1959. It consisted of seven blocks, mainly of three storeys, a warden’s house, ancillary buildings grouped around two quadrangles. Four of the blocks contained 230 study-bedrooms and rooms for social activities.

The Great Hall was a galleried dining room with a Grecian-palleted ceiling with gold-leaf lining. There was even a clock tower, underfloor heating and plenty of special finishes including cornices and arches in natural stone. The architect was so happy at the way his plans had been delivered that he arranged to have SD Thompson’s name carved in stone at the top of the tower.

The 7000th Easiform dwelling was opened at Leicester. New tenants Mr and Mrs S Steere were handed the keys by chairman for the Housing committee, Alderman Mrs M Goodwin MBE. Maurice Laing officiated at the ceremony and said: “As a company we are delighted to have been able to build such a large number of houses in Leicester.

The new physics building for Kings College University of Durham in Newcastle Upon Tyne was taking shape. The main teaching block was 200ft long and 50ft wide. A fan-shaped auditorium would be 92ft high and capable of holding 360 people. Other educational establishments included the first stage of Naiheu Grammar School which was handed over to Somerset County Council and St Brendan’s College in Brislington which was completed on October 15.

Work was well under way on the £2m Walls ice cream factory in Gloucestershire. The 30-acre site included plenty of major constructions including 280ft span portal frame with asbestos roof frame, refrigeration blocks, steam wash rooms, offices, spraying booths and a two-storey production block.

The skyline of Salisbury (the capital of Zimbabwe, now called Harare) had changed forever with the completion of the 250ft Ambassador Hotel built by Laing. Team Spirit reported that the rate of construction was something of a record in that country as work on the 19-storey building frame was completed just nine months after the contract started in December 1958 - that’s a floor every 1.5 weeks.

The Premier of British Columbia and his cabinet visited Annacis Island, left Ambassador Hotel in Salisbury, below the 7000th Easiform house in Leicester and bottom the new Walls Ice cream factory.
LAING Limited found itself top of the league in more ways than one when the Company won the contract for a new training facility for Manchester United. The £11.25m project involved building training pitches and other facilities on the 109-acre site. Phase one of the project had involved creating a huge mound around the pitches.

A Victorian garden and summer house at a Laing Homes site in Warwick was the subject of a Channel Four documentary. The TV’s Lost Gardens team was joined by students from Warwickshire College and gardening experts to restore the 150-year-old garden and listed summer house at the 17th century Westgate Arms development.

The new John Lewis store in Glasgow was hailed as a great example of how Laing Limited could make contracts work for clients. Project manager Jack Allardice told how the £34m fit out and shop fitting was completed to the highest standards in 15 months and that the escalators and lifts had been fitted within the first 12 weeks.

He added: “There was only one lifting point over the busy Glasgow railway.”

Laing’s extension of the A55 across Anglesey, in joint venture with Tarmac, resulted in the island becoming a hive of archaeological activity. Teams of archaeologists dug up sections of the road’s proposed route. The 31.5km extension was Laing’s biggest road project at the time and was being constructed as a Private Finance Initiative for UK Highways.

TV stars Stephen Tompkinson and Robson Green were reading Team Spirit during filming for an episode of Grafters at the National Physical Laboratories in Teddington. In order not to affect the building schedule at the site, the actors came down on a Bank Holiday for filming. Everyone was on site between 8am and 7pm which provided three minutes of actual film.

The first rugby match at the £121m Cardiff Millennium Stadium took place on Saturday June 26. It was a historic day as Wales beat South Africa for the first time ever after Laing staff had worked around the clock to get the stadium finished and tested before the game.

Laing staff around the country joined the millions of others around the UK and on the Continent in watching the once-in-a-lifetime lunar eclipse on August 11. The moon passed in front of the sun and, although the full eclipse was only due to be visible in the Cornish corner of the UK, staff at the Maxted House office saw at least 95% of the cosmic occurrence.

Laing Property and the Terrence Hill Group managed to pre-let the £30m Heathrow Approach building to Honda Motor Europe Limited on a 15-year lease. The five-storey development at Slough, near junction 5 of the M4 was still six months away from practical completion by Laing Limited. John Laing Property also announced plans to develop a second major leisure and retail centre in Belfast, five years after the successful sale of its Castlecourt development.

Prime Minister Tony Blair presented Business in the Community Awards. Laing provided three of the 31 finalists. Laing Partnership Housing won the Neighbourhood Renewal section for their Holly Street development. Pictured with Prime Minister Tony Blair are Tom Carroll and Holly Street resident Ken Gilmour.

THANK YOU to everyone who submitted pictures for our 2009 Laing Retirees Photo Competition. Firstly we must apologise that there just was not the space to print every image submitted, but we hope you enjoy the selection over the next few pages. As you will see, the standard of entries was very high as usual and the judges faced a tough job, but eventually the panel came to a decision of the top three. The winner is printed above and is DAMSEL FLY, by Mr PA Charter. Judges were impressed by the pinpoint focus, colours and framing. The live nature of the subject just makes the shot all the more impressive. He wins a £20 book token and the two runners up – whose entries are printed overleaf – will each receive a £10 book token.
NOVEMBER SUNRISE

Judges were impressed by the atmosphere captured in this picture and the way Len Hope managed to balance the light of the sun and the silhouettes of the trees and spires.

And the two runners up are...

CABLE CAR TO SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN

John Bourne’s image taken at Sao Paulo is beautifully framed, colourful and sharp. It provides wealth of information about the area in which it was taken from another cablecar on its way down.

Here are the best of the rest...

Left, Geoff Babbage’s PLAYING IN THE TOY TUNNEL taken of granddaughter Heather.
Above, Peter Donaldson’s PARSIER

Middle left, Pat Stamp’s IGUAZZO FALLS
Above, Audrey Hamer’s GORDALE SCAR
Bottom left John Gandy’s FINAL VOYAGE OF THE QEII
SUMMER OUTINGS 2009

Fun and friendship

THIS year’s President’s Day Summer Outings were graced by a large number of new faces – including some from the Laing family.

Solare club in South London recorded the third consecutive increase in attendance and more than 100 people dined with REAL in north London.

Among members of the Laing family attending some of this year’s events were Sir Martin and Lady Laing and their daughter Alex, Christopher Laing, David Laing and Charlie Laing.

Sue Hendin found wonderful venues where the food and service were second to none.

Stephanie Laing spoke at each luncheon to welcome guests and thank the hotel staff whose efforts helped to make the luncheons such a success.

She also paid tribute to club committee members for all their hard work during the year, Welfare manager Margaret Staines and her team for all the support they provide for Laing retirees, Sue Hendin for organising the events and Retired Employees’ News for continuing to keep everyone informed.

Sadly there is not room to fully report everything which cropped up, but here is a summary.

Saltire got the luncheons off to a great start with a gentle wind up. Members reminded me that it was Haggis hunting season and that large shooting parties from England had been arriving across the border. However some members were sad that over-hunting had left flocks seriously depleted.

Special mention should go to North West chairman Roy Elliott who had only recently recovered from having a gall stone removed. Doctors and nurses at the hospital had never seen one so big (about two inches in diameter). Far from being cowed by the experience, Roy brought it along to show everyone.

One recurring theme at these events is the fact that retirement does not really exist for many Laing employees whose building expertise is constantly required by their children.

Walker Hodkinson was virtually on 24-hour callout when his son was doing up his house. Ron Richards in Solare does not think twice before taking his tools when he is visiting his children and their club colleagues Dave and Jan Constable recalled being called out in the middle of the night to ’rescue’ their daughter when they somehow managed to fuse all the lights in their home.

Elstree’s outing to the historic White Hart included staff showing members the cells where highwaymen used to be held. Being on the main road between London and Cambridge the outings finished at REAL where Ron Pearce was among those attending. One of his most memorable projects was the restoration of the Palace of Westminster. The famous flagpole on the tower was part of his responsibility. He joked: “I’ve had my hand on the top of that flagpole – and there’s not many people who can say that.”

Also at REAL Beryl Mackay MBE was wearing the badge awarded with her honour as a founding friend for Shenley Hospital. The Laing-built mental health facility has been shut down and the land given over to housing. The only part left is the chapel, paid for by John Laing which is still used in the community. She said: “I think the community would have been better off keeping the hospital too.”

As always it was a real pleasure to see everyone, I am just sorry there is not more room to share all of the wonderful stories I heard.

Alex Finkenrath
SALTBIRE at Auchen Castle, Scotland, June 8.

This beautiful castle has been visited by many famous people including the Beatles, the King of Norway, Chris De Burgh and now Laing’s Scottish retirees.

Maurice Ashbridge, however, recalled when the building was a youth hostel where he stayed shortly after he left school in 1949/50. In his youth hostel where he stayed for nine years until retirement he learnt his trade with the Company back in 1958 and was delighted to be reunited with old friends including Ted Drinkwater.

New member George Boyd, attending with wife Muriel was a bricklayer who learned his trade with the Company back in 1958 and was delighted to be reunited with old friends including Ted Drinkwater.

One of the guests ordered an alternative main course because salmon does not agree with him. He was explaining to club chairman Maurice Lone that he had found this out during his time in the army.

Maurice said: ‘Which army were you in? Did they always serve up beautifully poached salmon?’

Jim McFadden has embraced modern technology to keep in touch with far flung relatives via a computer video link. ‘You can talk to and see your friends,’ said Jim. ‘It’s great, the youngsters are often running around playing trumpets and things in the background.

NEW at Auchen Castle, Scotland, June 9.

New member George Boyd, attending with wife Muriel was a bricklayer who learned his trade with the Company back in 1958 and was delighted to be reunited with old friends including Ted Drinkwater.

George’s father and brother also worked for the company. His brother was a plasterer and the two of them set up in business themselves working together until about 1971 when George rejoined Laing and stayed with the company until 2000.

After that he continued working for another former Laing man Fred Storey where he stayed for nine years until retirement last year.

During his time he worked on the Lanes and stay with the company until 2000. He even worked for the company out in Scotland for two months during his apprenticeship. It was for a Dutch glue factory. The clients would have had to wait another six months at least for Dutch contractors to do the work.

George Mitchell again managed to land on his birthday on the same day as the luncheon. Everyone referred to him as ‘Chucky Egg’. George was so-called because he always had an egg for his breakfast or with his lunch.

Ian Moonie is among the members who take on new challenges and is currently writing a book on the history of the Presbyterian church.

David Edwards has a passion for traditional jazz and was formerly manager of the the Gateway Jazz Band back in the 1950s. They were quite big and some very famous names of the time joined them on stage including George Chisholm.

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David Edwards has a passion for traditional jazz and was formerly manager of the the Gateway Jazz Band back in the 1950s. They were quite big and some very famous names of the time joined them on stage including George Chisholm.

REALM at Ansty Hall, near Coventry, June 12

NEW members Phil and Janet Price were happy to see some familiar faces from his many decades with the Company. He started with Laing in 1968 and moved to Laing O’Rourke in 2002. Apart from a six-month break he was with the Company between 1968 and 2002. Among the most memorable projects was the Albany Hotel in Birmingham for the team and the way they overcame the obstacles which cropped up. Raymond and Mary Ritchie were just a week away from their 59th wedding anniversary and a celebratory outing with the family.

Another new member was Mick Blakemore who worked all over for Laing including pipeline jobs in Saudi Arabia. He was an internal auditor and visited jobs like the World Cargo Centre and Glaxo SmithKline. Among the farthest travelling guests were Geoff and Lucy Hall, who made the journey from Swanage in Dorset. There were some birthday mentions, not least Hilda Thompson who will be 96 in August. Charlie Laing still works in construction and was a very welcome guest hosting a table at the event. Chairman David Barnes thanked Lady Laing for her hospitality. ‘We love it’ he said and added that the raffle raised £268.

SUMMER OUTINGS 2009

British Government to finish the job. He did a deal with his mate in digs to wash up if the other bloke cooked. "He seemed to use absolutely every pot we had – every night, whatever we ate," said Mike.

Fellow club member Stephen Moss also worked out in Tanzania working on behalf of the UN teaching people to build for themselves. They were in Tanzania at different times, but met up in Oman where their first encounter was a dispute over a parking space!

There were birthday celebrations, Jessie Hood, the club’s oldest member received a special cake ahead of her 90th birthday and Colin Niland too for his birthday the following day. Frank Higgs had a cautionary tale having accidentally put petrol instead of diesel in his car. He had driven a few miles when it konked out – luckily right near where he was going. The garage were able to pump it out but he said that in extreme cases whole engines can have to be replaced.

In a long construction career Mike spent some time in Tanzania for a Crown Agents team when Balfour Beatty ran out of money two thirds of the way through a road project. Mike was in the team put together by the British Government to finish the job. He did a deal with his mate in digs to wash up if the other bloke cooked. "He seemed to use absolutely every pot we had – every night, whatever we ate," said Mike.

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His favourite contract was the
Laing had put it up in the first place.
not sure of, they asked him how
came up against something they were
helped to build with Laing. When they
Paul's Cathedral – which he had
tear down the Parnestor next to St
Woodgreen shopping centre and St
Thomas' Hospital.
He left Laing in 1986 and moved on
to sort out the infamous housing
project for trial.
Club members were very early
lunch at the pub down the road!

ELSTREE at The White Hart,
June 18.

This pub, being on the main
road from Cambridge to London
had a holding cell for highway-
men who used to operate in this
area and were being taken away
for trial.

Club members were very early
for the luncheon and their coach
was seen speeding past the
venue. They had decided to pop
into a local garden centre. Plant
has always been big in Elstree
and as the poor coach driver
loaded up an unexpected horti-
cultural cargo it seems the same
is true today.

They also decided to stop at
another pub along the road for a
cup of coffee. The landlady was
delighted at the unexpected
arrival of this large party until
she realised they were all having
lunch at the pub down the road!

The Laing brother who took an
architectural path outside the
Company was special guest at
the luncheon. Sir Kirby’s middle
son David Laing has fond memo-
deries of the Company and many of
its great projects and it was his
mother who was the first presi-
dent of the first club here at
Elstree.

He joked that his grandfather
said many things about archi-
teets, most of them unrepeat-
able.
He even recalled his father’s
chauffeur John Weighill taking
him and his brothers for hair rais-
ing rides on the unfinished M1 as
he tested out new cars for Sir
Kirby.

Another new member was John
Pilgrim who started as a general fore-
man in 1965. He began on Easiform
projects but worked on the Barbican,
Woodgreen shopping centre and St
Thomas’ Hospital.
He left Laing in 1986 and moved on
to sort out the infamous housing
project at St George’s Hospital in the
Paddington basin. He then worked for
various companies including Magees
where he had the job of helping to
tear down the Parnestor next to St
Paul’s Cathedral – which he had
helped to build with Laing. When they
came up against something they were
not sure of, they asked him how
Laing had put it up in the first place.
Chairman Ken Jones thanked Lady
Laing.

NEW members included Terry Doyle
who started out in Bristol in 1956 and
spent most of his working career with
Laing during three spells in cost serv-
ing rides on the unfinished M1 as
he tested out new cars for Sir
Kirby.

Among the projects he looked after
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MAJOR BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Anniversary to bank on

DON AND AUDREY HILLIER GOLDEN WEDDING JULY 4

The couple met during a YMCA trip to Austria, Audrey from Hull and Don from London. During a 47-year career with Holloway Brothers and HWA, Don had started off as an engineer and went into quantity surveying.

He enjoyed his time with the Company and was particularly fond of the ten years spent carrying out all sorts of interesting jobs on the Bank of England. He also recalled working on various big jobs in Dartford, repairing the river walls at Dartford Creek which were destroyed by the floods of 1953 among others. Littlebrook Power station, where he was for a quite a while, also held fond memories. The couple celebrated with a trip on the Golden Arrow train, run by Bluebell railways along with their son and daughter-in-law.

DIAMOND WEDDINGS

4 June
Bill & Gertrude Maskell
28 July
Harold & Beth Blakey
August 20
Bob and May Temple
Bert and Kathleen Ellis

GOLDEN WEDDINGS

4 April
Tom & Isabel Muirhead
Alf & Pamela Lambert
Geoff & Dallas Carter
Jim & Doris Saunders
6 June
Jim & Ira Barker
20 June
David & Heather Davidson
Ian & Gillian Jarvis
27 June
Pat & Eric Jones
Alan & June Foskett
2nd July
Ian & Ann Wilson
4 July
Brian & Margaret Turner
John & Doreen Farrow
12 July
Pushpa & Narhari Patel
18 July
Gordon & Patrick Jones
25 July
Gerald & Shelia Stead

Still smiling 60 years on

BILL AND MARGARET CHAMBERLAIN, DIAMOND WEDDING, JUNE 18, 1949

It was a former Nottingham beauty queen who introduced this couple, according to Bill. She was Margaret’s friend and introduced us and it went from there,” he said. Bill was a work study engineer at Laing for 12 years, which he enjoyed immensely. They celebrated with a family meal with their two children, three grandchildren and a great grandchild.

The London couple

DONALD AND JEAN RIDLEY, DIAMOND WEDDING, JULY 30, 2009

This is a true north London couple who met when Jean visited Donald’s family home in Finchley and have stayed together and in the same area ever since. Jean worked as a secretary for various Laing Board members, starting in 1972 for Reg Saville, then working for Frank Bryer and retiring in 1993. She was from Barnet and they celebrated the anniversary with a meal for family and friends in London attended by their daughter and two grandchildren.

Send your Anniversary details to Retirement Media, 5 Harpenden Close, Bedford, MK41 9RG or call us on 01234 313055. You can also email us at: info@retirement-media.com. Alternatively contact the Laing Welfare Department. We will return any photos you send us in the post.

Two times 50 years

SYLVIA AND RON (JOSS) HODGSON GOLDEN WEDDING, JUNE 27, 2009

The couple met at a dance at the county ballroom in Carlisle. They got on like a house on fire and were married six months later. At the time Ronnie was already working for Laing and spent 50 years with the Company too. Sylvia worked in the office at the SMT Garage.

They have a son and a daughter and three grandchildren, all of whom still live around Carlisle, and celebrated the event with a family meal.

Sylvia’s secret to a long and happy marriage is to “always try to see the other person’s point of view – and have a row every now and then to clear the air.”

90 + 95th birthdays

Jock Mulgrew - 1 June - 90
Pete Sellick - 5 July - 90
Wilf Brown - 23 July - 90
Derek Sands - 7 August - 90
Dave Caulfield - 20 August - 90

Don Bilham on his 95th
Free switchover help for over 75s

The Digital Switchover across the UK is well under way, but many people still do not realise that there is free help available for anyone aged over 75.

The same TV programmes are transmitted in a different way. Since last year regions in Britain have been changing over.

There is free help available for over 75s.

Other useful websites you might want to visit are:
- DirectGov.co.uk
  This is the Government website which includes information on virtually every aspect of life.

- Taxevo.org.uk
  A free and independent tax advice service for older people on low incomes who cannot afford to pay for professional advice.

- Helpline: 0845 601 3321 or call: 01308 488066

- Some local authorities and charitable organisations offer help and advice about free computer and internet training.

- For information about whether there are scheme in your area, you can visit: www.ageconcern.org.uk/ageconcern/it/gettingstarted

- Alternatively call Age Concern’s helpline on 0800 009966.

Make the most of the internet

There is a website available for ex-employees of John Laing who wish to keep in touch with former colleagues.

www.laingpastandpresent.com

is a free site which has various information and is secure.

To find out more you can visit:
- www.laing.com

There is information about the structure of the current company as well as the latest news releases and updates.

Other useful websites you might want to visit are:
- DirectGov.co.uk
  This is the Government website which includes information on virtually every aspect of life.

- Taxevo.org.uk
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FRED BELL, formerly a General Foreman with Holloway White Allom, died on Thursday 16 June 2009. He was 80 years of age and retired in 1992 after 41 years’ service.

LES BOND, formerly a General Operative with John Laing Construction, South west region, died on Saturday 28 March 2009. He was 82 years of age and retired in 1991 after 43 years’ service.

NICK CANNICOT, formerly a Safety Officer, with South West Regional office, died on Friday 12 June 2009. He was 75 years of age and retired in 1992 after 15 years’ service.

PATRICK DALY, formerly a Ganger with John Laing Construction, London region, died on Wednesday 13 May 2009. He was 87 years of age and retired in 1981 after 26 years’ service.

DAVID DAVIDSON, formerly a Personnel Manager with John Laing Construction, Southern/Wessex region, died on Sunday 5 July 2009. He was 84 years of age and retired in 1990 after 28 years’ service.

JOHN DYAL, formerly a Site Manager with Laing Homes, died on Monday 6 July 2009. He was 78 years of age retired in 1995 after 29 years’ service.

WILLIE HETHERINGTON, formerly a Chargehand Bricklayer with North West Region, died on Sunday 16 August 2009. He was 88 years of age and retired in 1984 after 17 years’ service.

DOUGLAS ELBOURNE, formerly a Purchasing Clerk with John Laing Construction, Scotland, died on Thursday 23 July 2009. He was 86 years of age and retired in 1986 after 20 years’ service.

FREDERICK (FRED) KENNY, formerly a Crawler Crane Driver with EPL, died on Monday 11 May 2009. He was 71 years of age and retired in 2001 after 43 years’ service.

JOHN Loughran, formerly a Banksman/HGV driver with EPL, died on Thursday 2 July 2009. He was 80 years of age and retired in 1987 after 30 years’ service.

PAT MURRIN, formerly a Walking Ganger, with John Laing Construction, London region, died on Sunday 28 June 2009. He was 93 years of age and retired in 1980 after 22 years’ service.

SIRI HARRIVE (JONES), formerly a Marketing and PR Executive with Laing Homes, died on Thursday 24 June 2009. He was 83 years of age and retired in 1980 after eight years’ service.

WILLIAM HETHERINGTON, formerly a Chargehand Bricklayer with North West Region, died on Sunday 16 August 2009. He was 88 years of age and retired in 1984 after 17 years’ service.

GORDON WILDERSPIN, formerly an Accountant with G.P.S, died on Friday 17 July 2009. He was 84 years of age and retired in 1989 after 10 years’ service.

IN MEMORIAM

PAYE and tax self assessment

In the last issue we included an incorrect reference for PAYE and self assessment tax inquiries. Please contact: HM Revenue and Customs, Customer Operations, Devon and Somerset Area, Norfolk House, Temple St, Bristol, BS1 6HR. Tel: 0845 366 7830.

Quote Reference: 794/KZ38589
John Laing
making infrastructure happen

celebrating 160 years of community vision

www.laing.com