

# Retired Employees' News

SPRING 2014



**SIR JOHN STORIES**  
Readers' memories  
and pictures of Sir  
John Laing.

**FLOOD HELP**  
Information and advice  
if you have been  
affected by flooding.

**CEO RETIREMENT**  
John Laing CEO  
about his 23 years  
with the Company.

**John laing**  
making infrastructure happen

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**COVER:** Building work at the Civic buildings in Carlisle. The City is celebrating their 50th anniversary with a special open day. See page 13.

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## Grandparents get a raw deal on their rights

**THERE** is a special relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren, a unique and trusted channel of communication, no better summed up than by the exchange passed on to me at the Christmas lunches.

Apparently this lady's ten-year-old granddaughter once said: "Grandma, when you die, you will be my ancestor."

Quite aside from the fact that children often feel they can talk to grandparents about all sorts of things, many are relied upon for financial support. Certainly my family would have struggled without both sets of grandparents chipping in to provide childcare.

Despite this, grandparents have no rights when it comes to seeing their grandchildren. There are an estimated 1million children in the UK denied contact with their grandparents due to family breakdown which may have been caused by a host of reasons including divorce, alcohol or drug dependency, domestic violence, bereavement or family feud. This issue was raised recently on The One Show by Esthter Rantzen.

A piece of legislation which would have provided some grandparents rights fell at the first hurdle in Parliament in 2010. Let's hope that this treasured relationship can be protected in legislation some time soon.

Talking of change, this Spring sees an awful lot of it. You can meet the new South West welfare officer on page 5. Also, Adrian Ewer is stepping down as CEO of John Laing after 23 years with the Company. He gives a very frank interview of his time with the Company on pages 6 and 7. There are write ups of the Christmas lunches and also a collection of some of your recollections of Sir John Laing himself. What a character he was.

On the subject of families, a woman had identical twin boys, and had to give them up for adoption. One went to a family in Egypt and was named 'Amal.' The other went to a family in Spain, where they named him Juan'.

Many years later; Juan sent a picture of himself to his mum. Upon receiving the picture, she told her husband that she wished she also had a picture of Amal. Her husband responded: "They are twins love. If you've seen Juan, you've seen Amal."

Finally we ought to pay tribute to pensioner David Bowie, who beat a host of young pretenders to win the Best British Artist Brit Award.

Unlike him, I am not going to get involved in the debate regarding an independent Scotland. However, his intervention brought out the best of Scottish humour. Some of the funniest puns of his famous songs were: 'The Man Who Fell to Perth; Pound Control To Major Tom and Ziggy Played Stranraer.'

Alex Finkenrath

# John Laing environmental fund set for stock exchange launch

JOHN Laing is backing a new environmental fund which is due to launch on the London Stock Exchange this year.

John Laing Environmental Assets Group Limited (JLEN) will initially purchase seven environmental infrastructure assets which are part of John Laing's portfolio.

The launch of JLEN and the divestment by John Laing are in line with the Company's strategy to grow its assets under management.

Within the environmental infrastructure sector, John Laing is currently focused on building its onshore wind, solar photovoltaic (PV), waste management and biomass portfolio of projects in the UK and Northern Europe. It owns 16 environmental infrastructure assets in operation and development, 14 of which are in the UK and two in Northern Europe.

Three of John Laing's 16 environmental infrastructure assets that will be sold to JLEN are onshore wind projects with a total generating capacity of 44 MW. Two are solar PV plants with a combined capacity of 25 MW (one of which is intended to be acquired from John Laing subject to sufficient funds being raised by JLEN).

It is intended that John Laing Investments Ltd will subscribe



**An on-shore Scottish wind farm**

for up to 24.9% of the JLEN IPO and will be a cornerstone investor following the fund's Admission to trading on the London Stock Exchange. Depending upon how popular the issue is, John Laing will be allowed a minimum of 10% and a maximum of 29.9% of the Ordinary Shares. On Admission, JLEN will have a right of first offer over certain environmental infrastructure assets held by John Laing.

The divestment follows the successful launch of the John Laing Infrastructure Fund (JLIF) in November 2010. As at 31 December 2013, JLIF had generated a total shareholder return of 33%.

Adrian Ewer, John Laing CEO,

said: "John Laing has responded to the Government's increase in focus on economic infrastructure by developing its portfolio of assets in the environmental infrastructure sector.

"We have developed these assets so that they are at the stage at which they are now attractive to investors seeking robust and sustainable yields. We have successfully executed this strategy previously with JLIF and, with significant prospects ahead to acquire further environmental infrastructure assets in the UK and internationally, we look forward to providing JLEN with further opportunities from our environmental infrastructure portfolio."

## JLIF acquires 100% school and street lighting assets

JLIF has completed the acquisition of the remaining stakes in three assets from Bouygues UK, resulting in 100% ownership of each asset. Initial stakes in the assets were acquired as part of JLIF's £123 million portfolio acquisition from Investors in the Community LLC ("IIC") in 2013.

The Lambeth and Redcar & Cleveland Street Lighting

projects have together seen the replacement of more than 23,000 lighting columns.

The Peterborough Schools project has been operational since 2007. The project comprises a new-build academy and two refurbished and extended secondary schools providing teaching for up to 3,395 pupils. David Marshall from John Laing Capital Management ("JLCM"),

Fund Manager to JLIF, said: "This represents another example of JLIF's ability to efficiently add value by acquiring stakes in existing assets, in this case as a result of the successful acquisition of a portfolio of assets from IIC in August this year. JLIF will continue to actively seek further growth opportunities by investing both in new and existing assets."



## Financial close on Australian rail contract

Financial close has been achieved by John Laing, as part of a consortium led by Bombardier Transportation, on the New Generation Rollingstock (NGR) project in Queensland, Australia. The appointment which was made by the Queensland Government further enhances the Company's strategy of growing its portfolio of investments in the Asia Pacific market. The project involves the provision and maintenance of 75 new six-car trains for a duration of 30 years for the South East Queensland suburban passenger rail network, and includes the construction and maintenance of a depot facility. The Department of Transport and Main Roads is delivering the project in partnership with Projects Queensland. Queensland Rail is providing technical expertise to integrate the new trains with the existing network. Testing of the first completed train is expected to commence in approximately two years.

# New CEO appointed

Olivier Brousse has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of John Laing.

He will succeed Adrian Ewer who told the Board last year of his intention to retire.

Olivier, who is relocating to London, took over on March 3, with Adrian Ewer staying on for a period to ensure a smooth transition.

Olivier joins John Laing from Saur Group, the international provider of delegated environmental services management, where he was Executive Chairman. At Saur Group, Olivier has been instrumental in transforming its partnership with the public sector and diversifying its range of services in France and internationally. Prior to joining Saur, Olivier was Deputy CEO of Veolia Transportation, the largest private sector operator of multiple international transport services. He has extensive experience of major infrastructure projects spanning utilities, transportation and environmental assets.

Dr Phil Nolan, John Laing Chairman, said: "We are delighted that we have attracted someone of Olivier's calibre to succeed Adrian. His outstanding track record at Saur Group and prior to that at Veolia, combined with the strong existing John Laing management team that he will inherit, reassures us that we will retain the solid platform that has delivered John Laing's great success. The Board believes Olivier brings with him the necessary drive and experience to ensure we are well placed for the future.

"Adrian has given outstanding service to the Company – 23 years in total, eight of which as Chief Executive. His leadership has been exemplary, overseeing the strategic shift away from construction to focus on our key target sectors of renewable energy, waste, accommodation, health and transport across the UK, continental Europe, North America



**New CEO: Olivier Brousse**

and Australasia. He has helped turn John Laing into an investor and manager of infrastructure assets with a portfolio of investments valued at over £650 million. He leaves the business well equipped for future growth and, on behalf of the Board, I thank Adrian and wish him a well-deserved retirement."

Adrian Ewer, Chief Executive, said: "I am honoured to have been Chief Executive of John Laing and to have worked with such a committed, inspirational and innovative group of people. I believe we have achieved great success in positioning the business as a market leader in privately financed infrastructure and I would like to thank my colleagues for all their support. The business is in robust health and I'm pleased that it is being left in Olivier's safe hands."

Olivier Brousse said: "I am delighted to be joining John Laing, an undisputed market leader in investing in and managing infrastructure assets internationally. I look forward to working with Phil and the team to build on Adrian's good work and take the business to its next stage of growth and performance."



**Welfare team: from left: Out going Welfare Manager Margaret Staines, Tony Edwardes, David Batchelor and new Welfare Manager Heather Cunningham**

## David steps up as South West's Welfare Officer

David Batchelor is the new Welfare Officer covering Avon, Cornwall Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire following a varied career within the Company.

He started with John Laing in 1968 as an articled student on a construction degree at Aston University, and after graduation he joined the Purchasing Department in London region, later moving to the South West as Purchasing Director. He then made the transition to Construction Director in the region and later SW Commercial Director.

David then joined John Laing International as Equipment Division Manager. The role was different again with a worldwide brief including a great deal of work in the education and medical sectors in the Middle East, Far East, Africa and Eastern Europe in all visiting over 20 underdeveloped countries.

His next career change was based in America as the JLI joint venture representative for a project on the US military base on Diego Garcia in the middle of the Indian Ocean. As it was British territory, all building works required a UK representative and David commuted thousands of miles to this tiny island by military aircraft from Colorado.

David then moved to Laing O'Rourke as Head of Support Services in the United Arab Emirates between 2005 and his retirement in October 2011.

"Throughout my time with the Company it has always been the people I have worked with who have made it special," said David.

"I consider it an honour and a privilege to have the chance to keep working with the Company and be part of the team which provides help and support to former employees. It is one of the very good things which always set the Company apart from most others."

David is no stranger to providing help and support. In the 6 years before his retirement he and his team were in a position to make a real difference to the lives of over 20,000 employees from 30 differing countries all living away from their homes and families and working in a demanding environment.

David said that "While working abroad I was delighted to meet many people I had worked with in the past including two colleagues who joined Laing with me in 1968. I cannot imagine that happening in many other organisations. Now Sue and I are back in UK and enjoying spending time catching up with the many good friends we made from our time in the South West."

■ Heather Cunningham will cover Welfare visits in Berks, Bucks (split) and Herts (split). Margaret Staines will continue to cover Essex, Herts (split) London (north, north west and East) and Middlesex.

## Tony clocks up a 56-year career

Tony Edwardes is retiring from John Laing after 56 years at the end of March.

He joined straight from school in 1958 aged 16, working in Newcastle and Whitby. Most of his time was spent in production control, although he points out it was given 'about 20 different names' during his career.

From there he moved to Sunderland. When the work fell off a bit, around 1963/64, he moved down to Bristol where he stayed until 1975. Among the most memorable jobs there was Barclays International in Poole. Tony can't help remembering the time a crane fell down and crushed a row of houses.

The next move was up to Milton Keynes, where the Company was building the new shopping centre alongside Civils.

"When we arrived in Milton Keynes, we were surrounded by fields of Brussels sprouts, there was a pond with geese on it and we even saw deer," he said.

From there he moved to the newly opened Luton office in 1981, where he dealt with admin and industrial relations. In 1993, he became a welfare officer and has continued doing that ever since.

"I have really enjoyed my years with John Laing," said Tony.

"I have met some wonderful people and the last 21 years with Welfare have been especially rewarding, in terms of the job and being able to pass on the support provided by the John Laing Charitable Trust."

Asked about the biggest changes during his long career, Tony recalled the end of the 70s when the Company began to use sub-contractors instead of people of its own.

Tony will be staying in touch with his Company friends and colleagues as a member of the South West retirement club.

# Book-keeping to bee-keeping

**When Adrian Ewer started out as a newly qualified chartered accountant, he had no idea he would end up as CEO of one of the world's leading infrastructure companies. Now, after 23 years with John Laing, he has been forced to retire earlier than he would have liked on health grounds. Here Adrian tells us about some of the ups and downs of his John Laing career.**

**From book-keeping to bee-keeping Adrian Ewer has risen to any challenge that has presented itself to him. In the past 23 years the success of John Laing plc has been at the forefront of his working life, but now he has to step down to face an even greater challenge.**

Adrian was brought in to John Laing by former Finance Director Jim Armstrong who had spotted his potential when they worked together for Lilley Construction in Scotland.

Thrown in at the deep end on arrival with the Company in 1990, Adrian's first challenge was to deal with cost overruns in the Laing Leisure Division. "The trouble was that the Leisure Division was way ahead of its time," he said.

The division was working on a type of Center Parcs development in Gloucestershire called Lakewoods, for which the Company had acquired the rights on some picturesque gravel pits, as well as the London Dome (not to be confused with the Millennium Dome).

"We know Center Parcs-type developments currently do very well and London Dome was to be an exhibition centre and sports arena in London's docklands. You only have to look at London ExCel to see how successful it might have been, but it was the wrong time for the Company and the decision had been made to get out of these businesses and concentrate on our core activities."

At that time the Company's core businesses were construction, homes and property. Having dealt successfully with his first task, Adrian became Group Financial Controller just when infrastructure investment was 'finding its legs' in the UK. John Laing already had experience with investing in infrastructure – taking stakes in key projects as well as building them.

The Europistas Toll Road in Spain, the Euro Hub at Birmingham Airport and the Second Severn Crossing were



**Adrian Ewer is retiring after 23 years with John Laing**

big early projects for John Laing and Adrian was keen for the Company to find more success in an area of business where he predicted great potential returns.

"The Company understood how equity could work in infrastructure," said Adrian. "We had great expertise in managing projects and when the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) came along in the mid 90s, it was like manna from Heaven."

The Company was quick off the mark finding projects which people wanted to build, cherry-picking gems like the M40, A55 and Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. The Company was also making strong investments abroad. During the 90s Adrian championed the infrastructure route and the Company began building a book of investments.

Whilst Adrian admits that there were a few which did not perform up to expectations, John Laing was doing very well in this emerging sector.

Adrian saw it as a calculated challenge, something he has not been afraid to embrace even when it comes to one of his hobbies. With no prior experience and despite reacting badly to stings, Adrian took up bee-keeping.

"I was always fascinated by bees and was determined to understand how they work," he said. "I react very

badly to bee stings and have been stung countless times. I wear my bee keeping outfit like armour. I seem to have got the hang of it now."

This instinct to prepare for challenges was just as evident at work. There was no hesitation when asked what the toughest time was during his career with John Laing.

In 2000 the John Laing Board took the tough decision to sell off its Construction Division due to the financial difficulties it was experiencing.

As Finance Director, Adrian was at the heart of the complex financial arrangements involved in ensuring John Laing survived as a company, including hiving off Construction in October 2001.

"We all worked non stop for that 24 hours," said Adrian. "In one night we sold Construction for £1, launched a rescue rights issue to try and raise the funds needed to cover the costs, had to sign a new corporate banking facility, which left the Company virtually hogtied and then had to payout of our US bond holders.

"To top it all off, the next morning we had to go into the City and announce the Company's worst ever set of results. It was a terrible time."

It was a particularly low ebb, but Adrian found that out of adversity came strength and it led to what he considers to be among the best days of his John Laing career as the Company worked to get back on top.

"It was a difficult time for the Company and in particular the employees," said Adrian.

"I know how proud the John Laing people are of their construction achievements and history. Selling off the division which had made John Laing a household name was not one taken lightly by the Board."

The rights issue was successful and Laing Property was also sold leaving John Laing plc still standing, but now with two divisions: Homes and Investments.

The Board opted to sell homes division to George Wimpey in 2002 and become a specialist investor in infrastructure. With the proceeds from the sale of Homes Adrian was able to pay off all the banks and start building the new business in earnest.

"Seeing the Company come out the other side has to go down as one of my happiest times with John Laing," said Adrian. "It took nine months but being able to free John Laing from the huge burden of having unhappy banks around our necks was a wonderful feeling. Since then we have never looked back as a company."

In July 2006 Adrian was appointed CEO of John Laing, to succeed Andy Friend who had done a great job in positioning John Laing as an industry leader.

The Company continued to grow and was the subject of a major bidding war late in 2006, finally being bought for £1bn by the private equity giant Henderson.

John Laing is now recognised as an international market leader in privately financed infrastructure. The Company celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> infrastructure investment in 2012 and among the many UK projects it has on the go are the Intercity Express Programme, a £2bn project in joint venture with Hitachi, the Second Severn Crossing and Greater Manchester Waste Management PFI. Abroad it owns and operates hospitals, roads and even a prison in New Zealand.

The Company is also at the forefront of renewable energy in the UK, owning and operating wind and solar farms across the country. On this issue Adrian feels the Government policy of offering greater subsidies for offshore wind farms is misplaced.

"I understand the Government does not want to upset people who don't want a wind farm near their home, but the fact is that the technology is improving all the time," said Adrian.

"They are getting quieter and more efficient and could make a real difference to this country's ability to generate its own power in the future. However far better subsidies are offered for offshore farms.

"I don't know how people felt about windmills going up near their homes in times gone by, but you probably couldn't buy an old windmill for love nor money these days – people live in them"



The Second Severn Crossing, an early infrastructure investment

Another career decision of which Adrian is proud is the setting up of the John Laing Infrastructure Fund (JLIF). This is a separate company from John Laing and is listed on the London Stock Exchange in the FTSE 250. He describes the relationship as being like a conveyor belt. John Laing finds and sets up the infrastructure projects and then sells them to JLIF to manage.

However, there is more than a tinge of regret in Adrian that he has had to bow out at the age of 60 before he feels his role is complete.

"The Company is in a good position and I would have liked to carry on a bit longer, but I have been diagnosed with Leukemia," he said. "The time has come to get treatment and I am lining up for a six-month course of chemotherapy.

"In one sense I am looking forward to having more than two weeks off for the first time in 43 years, but in another sense I shall probably be bored within a few days."

It is not that Adrian is short of things to do. He and his wife have

four children and a grandchild. Professionally he will remain as a Non-Executive Director of the Go Ahead group and has plenty of hobbies aside from bee-keeping, including field sports and playing the drums.

Adrian plays in a couple of bands, only for fun. One is an infrastructure industry group, the other is a covers band which – until recently – was called Midlife Crisis.

"It seems that the band felt I was too old for them to justify that name any more and it has been shortened to 'Crisis'," he said with a wry smile.

Despite spending his career seeking balance and harmony in numbers, it is the people that Adrian will miss most of all, in particular 'the employees past and present who have made the Company what it is today'.

He said: "We try hard not just to be a financial player by maintaining core skills. We think it is important to keep the skills on board – such as engineers – to ensure that projects are delivered."

Adrian is convinced it will continue to do well under the new CEO Frenchman Olivier Brousse (see page 4).

"He understands the business and has a proven track record," said Adrian. "I have noticed an increased amount of French phrases seeping into emails. However, Olivier speaks perfect English and used to live in Clapham, south London."

Whatever challenges lie ahead for Adrian, he is used to starting from scratch, something he will have to do in many aspects of his life – including his bees.

"I had to let the whole lot go recently," he said. "It would have been impractical to try and move them all up to our new home in Scotland. We will see how I get on with the Scottish bees – I am sure they will be fiercely independent!!"

**Alex Finkenrath**





The Company was heralding its first flats built under a Government loan scheme, which included living quarters specifically designed for disabled people. Sir Keith Joseph, Minister of Housing and Local Government, officially opened the WVS (Women's Voluntary Service) pioneer flat scheme at Bromley in Kent. He paid tribute to the WVS's initiative in making the flats a reality, as well as all those involved in making the scheme a reality. This included disabled Turkish architect Bedi Oztuna. Two of the 33 flats in the scheme were especially designed for tenants in wheelchairs.

Pictured, a man shows how the flats benefit tenants who are wheelchairbound. Inset, Agent Stan Holmes (left) chats with Sir Keith Joseph.

Industrialised building was becoming a hot topic and John Laing was at the forefront. In a speech to a conference held at the Building Exhibition of 1963, John Laing said he expected many local authorities to warm to the prospect during 1964 as they looked for 'new ways of solving their problems'.

Summarising the reasons for industrialisation he said: "At the moment building is a highly labour intensive industry. If the necessary growth rate of this industry is to be realised without raising the price of building, relative to the general level of prices, this can only be achieved by greatly increased productivity, and I submit that in the end the only way of doing this is in making the industry more capital intensive and less labour intensive."

He added that there were already 1.5million people employed in construction, representing one in eight of those employed in all production, besides those employed in the production and transporting of building materials.

It was announced that the Company had won the contract for the new M6 motorway. The Midlands Motorway Link would comprise six miles of reinforced concrete motorway and connect with the M6 near Dunston, extending towards Walsall. There would be 28 bridges.

Swindon marked completion of the 4000th home that John Laing had built in the area with a special luncheon. Kirby Laing attended the occasion, which also heralded the fact that the Company had built 50% of the borough's post-war houses, having begun work there in 1949.

In a review of Company activities during 1963, the Birmingham Bullring stood out as a major success along with the Sectra System in Manchester. Lytag had gone from strength to strength with its use in multi-storey construction. In Canada Team Spirit reported: "It has been a brighter year with the highlight the successful completion of the Mayfair Shopping Centre, Victoria." Team Spirit also reported that for the Construction

company and other companies in the group 'it has been a year of looking outward and exploring opportunities overseas. We hope that the year ahead will see these possibilities realised'.

It was announced that Thermalite had produced a new 3-and-a-half inch building block. Team Spirit reported that loadbearing inner leaf walls and partitions in two-storey flats and houses could now be constructed at both ground and first floor levels. They were both cheaper and lighter than previous blocks.

A 'family-size turkey' had been presented to the 1000th motorist to drive onto Blackburn's roof-top car park. The car park had been partially opened to the public to relieve parking problems in the



Team Spirit was keen to point out that staff who spent New Year's Day at Holborn Police Station were not in custody, but at work. Also any headaches they were suffering was to do with the noisy process of putting in piles for the 13-storey project. Pictured from the left are: Tom Nally, Gil Lumley, Peter King, Jim Patient, Chris Everett, Martin Connaughton and Charlie Keifer.



area during the Christmas period. Eventually parking for 180 cars would be provided there. It was part of a John Laing project to build a retail market on a six acre site in the town.

The Home Counties Croft Golf Course Estate at Dunstable had reached its halfway point as the 500th house was handed over. Kirby Laing handed No1 Derwent Drive to the Chairman of Waterlow and Sons Limited, which had bought some of the homes for its employees in the town.

An account from behind the 'Iron Curtain' from George Horne, of Production Control, was published. He had been advising the Russians on construction methods and programme for

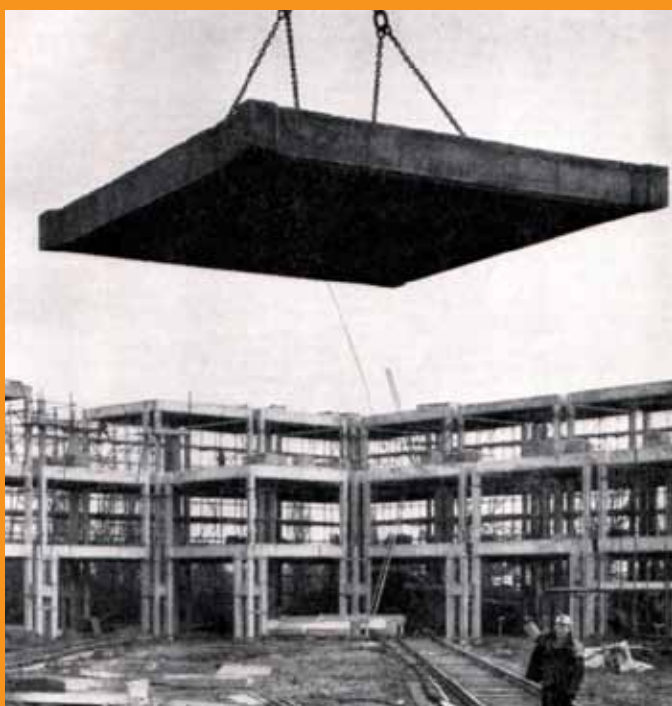
two sugar silos being erected to 'our Company's design'. One thing he reported was: "A most striking thing is the amount of manual work undertaken by women – digging holes, concreting, loading bricks, plastering and tiling." He had been struggling with the food, which was invariably 'Bortsch - which appeared to have anything and everything in it.' Thankfully the cooks did eventually learn to prepare boiled and fried eggs for breakfast at least.

The February issue of Team Spirit announced that talks had been held the previous August with Holloways Holdings Limited, with a view to becoming part of the Laing Group.

There was an introduction to guide dog Trixie and her owner 20-year-old Rosalie Richardson. The shorthand/typist had been blind since the age of three and was working in her first job at the architects department in Mill Hill. Team Spirit reported that Rosalie had 'a gift for radiating happiness'.



# 1964



Above, erection team for the Mineral and Mining Blocks at Birmingham University. Back row, from left: T Hamilton, A Marshall, J Hannon, A Winsko. Front row: O Kerrigan, T Garwood, J McGrinder, P Teague and L Dickenson. Left A 21-foot floor unit being lowered into position during construction.

A system of erection which used a precast concrete coffered floor meant that the new block at Birmingham University went from ground to third floor in less than two months. The scheme would be for an L shaped building comprised of two separate blocks each 140ft by 117ft. There was a casting area on site where the floor units were made. The moulds were mounted above ground so that - during cold weather - hot air could be blown underneath. Each flooring unit was 21 feet square and weighed 19 tons. They were two feet thick and were being cast at a rate of 10 each week. A 20-ton derrick was used to lift the floor sections into place. They were carefully slotted into concrete dowels. Once put in place there was a space of two feet and six inches between slabs which were filled with precast concrete duct covers. After services were installed the columns were panelled with either timber or treated asbestos. The first units were placed on December 30, 1963 and the first block structurally complete by March 1, 1964.

Team spirit - 1964



Site team from Midlands Region at the Charles Darwin Centre project in Shrewsbury.

There was a major celebration in Shrewsbury as Midlands Region marked major progress on the Charles Darwin Centre. More than 50% of the 42 shops and nine stores on three retail levels had already been let. The project was due to open in the autumn of 1989. It involved: 2700 tonnes of structural steel, 500,000 bricks, 22,000 m sq blocks, 12,500 cu metres of concrete, 31,000 precast planks, 60ft difference in site level and 400 piles to a depth of 100ft.

The first in a new type of contract was awarded to the Medical Equipment Division of John Laing International (JLI). Valued at £3.8million, the seven-month contract involved supply, installation, commissioning and 12 months warranty maintenance of equipment at the 300-bed Pyramid Hospital in Cairo. There were 738 different types of equipment amounting to 20,000 items from 130 suppliers. It would be shipped in 30 containers.

John Laing sold 55% of its Spanish subsidiary Laing SA to the Spanish IB MEI. The move was designed to give Laing SA 'an even stronger 'local' appeal'. Laing SA had been operating in Spain for 25 years and was one of the top ten principal construction companies in the country. In 1988 the Company recorded a turnover of £75million.

To mark the end of the Children's Hospital Appeal, a free concert was to be held for staff at Wembley Conference Centre during March. Among the acts would be two bands sponsored by the Company: the John Laing (Hendon) Band and early boyband - Rich Street. Other acts included impressionist Paul Melba, illusionist Van Buren, singer

Susan Maughan, comedian Jeff Stevens and juggler Tino. At the heart of the fundraising efforts was the Laing Grand Draw, for which the Company and staff sold 155,000 tickets. The top prize was a Metro car. Marian Jones was surprised when she called the winner of the tenth prize. She asked to speak with Barny (whose name was written on the ticket) only to be told that he was a dog. The Yorkshire Terrier was officially listed as a winner, although there was some doubt that he would get much use out of the sunbed he won.

Bill Hewetson was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours list for 'services to British commercial services and community interests in Dubai'.

He was involved with the Deira Tower, the camel race track, military hospital in Muscat and the Dhabi Tower, Abu Dhabi.

Holloway White Allom won an £8.3million contract at Hyde Park Gate, for Robart Holdings. The work involved demolition and rebuilding behind a five-storey retained facade over three listed Victorian buildings. It would require extensive underpinning and retention of significant listed parts, as well as piled foundations and major refurbishment.

North West Region was constructing one of four new computer centres at Norcross near Blackpool. The centre would



**The Orchards Shopping Centre at Dartford went slightly further than expected with its topping out ceremony. The £10.4million project was completed by Laing Southern Region. Illusionist The Amazing Kilinski proceeded to saw architect Chris Cain in half on the day. Thankfully, no injuries. The centre incorporated 27 unit shops and five kiosks in 108,000 sq ft of retail space.**

help provide a faster and more efficient service for the 27 million people receiving pensions and benefits. The £9.2million project was described by Peter Lloyd, Parliamentary Secretary for Social Security, who said the new Clarke House 'would be an integral part of the largest and most ambitious civil computerisation programme in the world'.

Laing Management Contracting (LMC) southern picked up two central London projects worth £218million. The prestigious £88million office development at Vintners Place (near St Paul's

Cathedral) involved building five of the ten floors underground due to height restrictions. The second project was the £130million Westminster and Chelsea Hospital. Construction was due to begin in May on the 650-bed teaching hospital. It was being constructed on a seven-and-a-half acre site where 111-year-old St Stephen's Hospital stood.

The March issue of Team Spirit was the 500th. The first had been published in November 1946.

Laing Northern had a page of letters from very happy clients complimenting them on projects

across the region. These included the £17million Lanes shopping centre in Carlisle, the Sanyo Electric Manufacturing site in Co Durham and the Open Air Museum at Beamish for the English Tourist Board. John Luke told Team Spirit that none of the jobs had been without their problems, but that the input of John Laing staff and good relations with clients meant projects were properly delivered. He added that the most important aspect of their work was that they care about the jobs.

Laing South West were working on a £3million contract refurbishing the National Museum of Wales. The work required careful copying of original plasterwork.

# 1989



Team Spirit reported from the 30th Staff Course, held at Down Hall in Hertfordshire. John Renshaw opened the two-week event and received attendees' business plan presentations on the final day. Sir Maurice Laing chaired a session featuring guest speaker the Rt Hon Edward Heath MBE, MP. Colin Fletcher reviewed Laing strategy and the business environment and Jon Rushton reviewed the impact of the Quantity Surveyor's role on the Company's image and performance. There were many speakers too.

Pictured, back Row, from left: Richard Galland, Andy Davies, Fraser Scott, Ian Jones, Ian Smith, Keith Carey, Keith Green, David Crabrett, Mike Hansford, Geoff Tennant, Rupert Dawson and John Masters.

Middle row: Martin Heal, Tim Relleen, John Thorn, John Chambers, Paul West, Bob Weightman, Enrique Gomez de la Fuente, Phil Hobson, Mark Ballett and David Boyes.

Seated: Chris Johnston, Mike Stoney, Glynis Metcalf, John Farrow, Elspeth Swain, David Curtis, Helen Gordon and Catherine Griffiths. Front: Pat Cafferkey, Clive Maxwell, Peter Sloane and Robin Sherwood.

Team spirit - 1989

## Laing Engineers and Architects 2014 Reunion

The annual event will take place at the former Laing Sports Club in Rowley Lane on Thursday March 20.

It will start at 12noon with a buffet lunch at 12.40pm.

The cost is £12.50, payable at the door.

Please advise John Clark if you intend to come. Guests are welcome.

E mail [jgpa.clark@btinternet.com](mailto:jgpa.clark@btinternet.com) [preferred] or call on 01582 454984.

Please address your news and other items of interest to:

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## Walkers celebrate a 40-year anniversary

Retirees gathered to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Laing Fell Walking Club in February.

Pictured are John Rudford (of the St Albans Football Society) with former Laing members Judy Foster, Mike Shafi, Andrew Marr and John Davies.

The club is organising another fell walking trip at Little Langdale in October. Anyone is welcome to come along. A hostel has been booked there from October 3-5. If you would like to go along, please contact Mike Shaffi at [m.shafi797@btinternet.com](mailto:m.shafi797@btinternet.com).

He said: "The hostel is very comfortable and has all the facilities. We have been using the same place for decades.



"Any readers are welcome to come along."

Another Laing retiree, Neil Kitchener told us at the Christmas lunches that he still uses the same hostel and looks forward to seeing the names of former John Laing colleagues in the visitors' book.



Thank you to former Scottish Region Contracts Manager Jimmy Stirling who texted to say that he recalled the foremen's course. He is pictured in the centre of the middle row. He also identified Dougie Carberry GF pictured second from the left in the front row.

## Something for everyone at U3A

Dear Sir,

"I have lost count of the number of people who are about to retire or have recently retired who say they have nothing to do or do not know what to do to fill their time. They say they are bored. My stock answer is join your local U3A.

"It is a voluntary organisation founded in the UK in 1982 where people who are not in full time employment, regardless of age, ethnicity or creed, can come together with like minded people to expand or share their knowledge or interests or acquire new skills.

"The word university is used in its original sense of people coming together to share and

pursue learning in all its forms.

"There are no examinations, degrees or formal education. It is solely for pleasure and informal learning and socialising

There are over 900 U3As around the country with around 350,000 members.

Each group is autonomous, run by the voluntary efforts of their members.

All U3As are Registered Charities in their own right and are members of the Third Aid Trust.

Each U3A has its own classes which embrace most interests its members have to help each other to share their knowledge, skills, interests and

experience and to help them enjoy and explore new horizons. The classes are usually led by volunteer Group Leaders who are only too pleased to pass on their knowledge and expertise.

Members get the opportunity to join Shared Learning Projects with other U3As run by universities, research institutes etc who need volunteers to help with a variety of projects.

There is no need to sit at home and wonder what shall I do today? There is something for everyone in U3A . The old saying: "It's never too late to learn is a touchstone of U3A."

**Cecil Cherns**

# City marks golden anniversary

**CARLISLE City Council has been in touch about the celebrations planned to mark the 50th anniversary of the civic buildings constructed by John Laing.**

We were able to put the organisers in touch with some of the men who had worked on the building, who have passed on a few of their memories below.

All are welcome to the open day which takes place on March 12. There will be a free behind-the-scenes tour of the Civic Centre and an exhibition of photographs and plans of the building (which will be up from March 10-21).

The Mayor of Carlisle, Cllr Ray Bloxham, will be present and there will be a chance to visit the Council Chamber, the councillors' robing room, the Mayor's Parlour and the roof – providing spectacular panoramic views of the city.

Four time slots will be available – 11am; 12noon; 1pm; and 2pm, with each guided tour lasting around 45 minutes.

You will need to book though as there are only a limited number of places. If you don't have online access, tickets are also available from the Civic Centre.

An exhibition of photographs and the original plans will also be on display in the Civic Centre foyer between Monday 10 March and Friday 21 March. The City Council has gathered together the display with the support of Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery, Cumbria County Council Archives service and John Laing plc.



Cllr Jessica Riddle, Portfolio holder for Communities and Housing, said: "Love it or hate it, there is no escaping the Civic Centre and its impact on the Carlisle Skyline.

■ Reader Tony Douglas was there at the start, putting up the hoarding and then working on shuttering for the hyperbolic roof. Another Carlisle retiree, Alan Brown worked on the shuttering for the central spine of the building where the stairwells went. Before construction started Alan Crowther had been sorting out the levels and measurements.

Gordon Lawson worked on this building and also the Hamilton Council buildings

**Above the poster for the 50th anniversary open day. The 11-storey building was designed by architects Charles B Pearson, chosen after a national competition attracted 200 entries. John Laing built the project for £820,000.**

## New archive film

ANOTHER film has been added to the list of DVDs from the John Laing archive.

The British Film Institute has released 'Raising The Roof', which features a young John Crosby from Newcastle among its stars.

The film explains how John Laing constructed giant aircraft hangars at Gaydon Airfield, by building the roof and then using jacks to construct the rest of the project underneath it. The film is about 20 minutes long and was made in 1959.

## Photo competition

**THANK you to everyone who entered the 2013 Photo Competition.**

**The results will be published in the next issue and there will be a book token prize for the entry which judges select.**

**Please feel free to get ready for this year's competition. Remember you can submit any picture, even if you took it some years ago. One of this year's entries was a snapshot taken in 1978 which recently resurfaced. Full details will be included in the next issue.**

# Memories of Sir John Laing

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Thank you to the many people who took the time to pass on a few memories about Sir John Laing. He inspired such a large number of people inside the Company and far beyond.

We have referred to Roy Coad's biography of Sir John (Laing) and The Good Builder by Berry Ritchie for a mini biography of Sir John on the facing page. We are always happy to receive further recollections of the great man.

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**Ken Norman was formerly an employee with Elstree Computing, but his knowledge of Sir John comes from his interest and support for Christian organisations.**

Sir John was on the board of The Crusaders Union and often visited their summer camps. Ken said: "I was walking the road near Llanbedrog, one summer in 1953, when a car (registration number JWL 1) stopped and the chauffeur asked me the way to the Crusader camp! We had been planning a welcome party for John Laing. We borrowed a farmers trolley and fixed a sign on it, in black and yellow. The sign said 'LLAINGS OF LLONDON AND LLANBEDROG'. We wheeled him down to the beach on the trolley and he joined in the fun. We arranged a fancy dress party on the beach. I have attached a photo of this event. John Laing is the one with a blanket over his shoulders; not bad for a 74-year-old man."

Ken's other recollection of Sir John is when I was in my office at Mill Hill. The office faced the road from the car park to the main building. One day each week he could be seen walking down the road on the arm of his nurse. He said: "I asked a colleague why and was told that "he comes in to sign the charity cheques".

■ Margaret Adams first started working for the Company in 1944. Her father was Sir John's chauffeur for many years.

She recalled a day, not long after her

family had moved to a Laing house in Bunns Lane. Her father Bill White was just eating his lunch ahead of driving Sir John to an appointment.

Oddly enough, Sir John occasionally drove himself to his chauffeur's house from Fairholme, where he lived. This was one such day.

Shortly before Sir John arrived, part of the plaster on the ceiling fell down. When he knocked at the door Margaret's mother explained the slight commotion to Sir John. The next day, without warning, a team of Laing staff arrived to put the ceiling right.

■ Margaret Daltry told how her husband Nigel Redfearn would always say how Sir John would go around switching the lights off in unoccupied offices.

Also when Sir John was visiting a site, they would all worry about where to take him to lunch.

One particular day, it was raining hard and Nigel mentioned lunch. Sir John pulled his collar up and said: "Good job it is not far to the canteen from here."

■ Bill Cutmore recalled an early memory about Sir John. Shortly after he had started with the Company he and his wife were living at her parents' home in north London.

Sometime in the early evening, during atrocious weather, there was a knock at the door. He was shocked to see Sir John standing outside in pouring rain. Immediately Bill invited him in, wondering what important business had brought the Company chairman to their door at this time of night and in such conditions.

"Oh no thank you," said Sir John. "I am just collecting for this Christian charity." Bill said: "I quickly ran in and managed to scrape together a donation from everyone in the house. We put it in the collecting tin and Sir John went on his way."

■ Peter Donaldson's first memory of Sir John was similar to that of Bill Eaton's in the last issue.



Ken Norman's picture of Sir John at a Crusaders Union summer camp

# live on worldwide

Having turned up for interview at Mill Hill and not realising that the polite and friendly man who welcomed him was Sir John himself.

Some years later, Sir John was due to meet the team at the Britannic House BP contract. Project manager Mac McKinnon had briefed everyone that Sir John was to take him out for lunch following the visit.

On his return to the site, Mac explained the 'short lunch' was taken in Sir John Laing's car which had been parked on the site boundary in Ropemaker Street. They had enjoyed sandwiches and a thermos full of hot coffee. No waste of the Company's money or time lost on site work!"



## Always keeping an eye on costs

John William Laing was born in Carlisle in 1879 and was working for the Company (set up by his grandfather James Laing in 1848) by the age of 20.

They were a very religious family and part of the Christian Brethren.

In September 1906 John and his father (also John) signed a contract to build surface water outfalls at Barrow-in-Furness. Due to recession, the Company was keen for work and accepted an onerous clause which made John Laing and Sons responsible for completing the contract in spite of virtually any eventualities.

The weather was terrible, the landowners difficult and the Company faced ruin when it was forced to redirect a sewer. John had nearly despaired, but instead took on a new partner - God. He went to the grounds of Furness Abbey and prayed. He promised God that if He showed him the way through, he would make Him a participating partner in his business.

He even wrote a promissory note on a piece of Furness Abbey Hotel writing paper.

The Company broke even on the contract, despite all the problems, and

by 1926 it was expanding so fast that John Laing moved the headquarters to Mill Hill in London.

His strong Christian beliefs never included alcohol, and he refused to build pubs. To this day there is a dearth of public houses in that immediate area of London.

Sir John never forgot his silent partner, maintaining throughout his life that God had kept his side of their bargain. Aside from the promised money which he gave to charity each year, Sir John did much more.

He lived very modestly, in spite of his means, and had long refused to take profit from the construction of Christian places of worship. From All Saints Church at Gretna to the rebuilding of Coventry Cathedral, Sir John stuck by his principles.

As Roy Coad wrote in his biography: "Some years before his death, his advisers had reckoned that his personal estate would consist of little more than his house and insurances. In April 1978, after his death, his net estate was published at £371. The man who had handled millions had given them all away."

## Early office politics!

I joined the Company in 1963 and was given an office at Mill Hill HQ. Sir John regularly came into the offices and the receptionist would then find him a vacant office. Early in my career, I had been on site and mid-morning breezed into my office to find Sir John occupying my chair. He asked me my name and what I did and then picked up a piece of A4 paper, on which was written: "I have completed Helen's Review Form. Jim." "Why has somebody used a complete sheet of unused A4 paper for such a short message?" he enquired.

"I don't know, Sir John," I stammered. "Then tell him he's wasting money", he retorted. "Now tell me, how long do you spend out of the office in a week?"

Oh dear, I could see where this could lead. I can't remember what my garbled response was, but it obviously wasn't very convincing, because his next words were: "Do you really need an office of your own?"

I offered to leave to let him to get on with his work, but he smiled and said that he was about to go anyway.

I vowed in future that I would check with the receptionist to find out if Sir John was in my office.

**John Salter**

**There was plenty of good cheer at this year's Christmas and New Year luncheons. There was also a warm welcome for new club members.**



**Festive farewell for Laing angel**

News that Margaret Staines was stepping down as Welfare manager was only announced after the luncheons had started. However, it was a mark of how greatly appreciated Margaret has been in her role that any clubs still managed to arrange tributes and thank yous for all of Margaret's hard work over the years. The lunches were also a chance for club members to meet Margaret's successor Heather Cunningham. Margaret will continue to work in Welfare (see page 5). She said: "I have made many friends during 22 years as Welfare Manager and although I have handed over the reins to Heather, I am delighted to still be part of the Welfare team."

**New club members**

**REALM David and Debbie Phillips**

He was a regional engineer, having started with the company in 1974 and retired from Laing O'Rourke in 2013. His first project was a D14 office building in Milton Keynes. His wife Debbie said: "I remember meeting him in a field ahead of his job. There was nothing there, no one had built Milton Keynes yet." He worked on a great many projects and, as a senior engineer often received calls demanding help with sudden dramas at various projects around the region, including a wall falling down at a prison and a library which appeared to be sinking! Hospital projects seemed to be a recurring theme in his career, having worked on 23 in total. Among his most memorable projects was Birmingham Airport which was his first as project engineer.



**Roy and Carolyn Gill**

Roy started his career with John Laing during 1967 joining as an apprentice carpenter and joiner at the Boots Refurbishment Project, Broadmead, Bristol. He was the Business Safety Manager Laing Building South when the construction business was purchased by O'Rourke. There were many memorable moments, including a sundowner boat trip with Tony Edwardes who somehow managed to drop his glasses into the harbour. Also being complimented on doing a good job by Prince Charles. At Centre Parcs, Sherwood Forest



- 'Robin Hood, Robin Hood riding through the glen' was played over the site radios to warn everyone that Stewart Lowe, Project Manager was leaving the office for a site tour.

**SALTIRE Neil and Christine Kitchener**

Neil spent 43 years with John Laing. He left school at 18 but had been working as a production controller at Wraysbury Reservoir near Heathrow. Having graduated from university, he returned to John Laing where he had many roles including agent and eventually principle engineer with Laing O'Rourke when he retired in August 2012. He met his wife Christine on the Inca Trail in Peru and settled with her in Scotland. They married six years ago.



**Keith Little** has now joined Saltire from LNER. He is pictured here with partner Jean Weldon.



**SOUTH WEST John and Pam Pingree**

John spent 28 years with the Company, starting as a QS at Kingswood Housing, based mainly in the South West. He was also chief QS in Saudi and there for the memorable time in 1985 when John Laing pulled all their staff out over night. They were back in Mill Hill by the next morning. He ended up as a Superintending QS back in the South West.







Malcolm and Marion Smith at Elstree



Bill and Jean Ferguson at LNER



REAL table full of prizes for the raffle



Monica and Jerry Lewis at Solare luncheon



Cyril Jones South West and his picture

# Round-up of festive lunches

There was only one clash of dates this year so Margaret Staines and Heather Cunningham attended the Solare luncheon on December 4. They were joined by Sue Hendin for the first time as an honorary member of her local club.

Grateful thanks to Gil Lumley who sent pictures of the event. That day I was north of the river, with John Laing Charitable Trust Director Jenny Impey and Teresa Pettican at the REAL lunch at Bushey Police Social Club.

There was an extra surprise for members when some loud and not altogether enjoyable karaoke music was blasted through the speakers during lunch. A quick investigation by concerned staff revealed that the singer had accidentally been patched through from the event being held upstairs by a group of Police widows.

On December 9 Realm welcomed five new members along with guests, including Heather Cunningham to Ansty Hall. Charlie Laing, was happy to draw the tickets in the raffle, which raised a whopping £295.

Among the diners were John and Carlee Leftley who had a big domestic decision to make which affects many retired people these days. Whether or not to join facebook. As a means of extending contact with their grandchildren it is highly desirable. However, they were still looking into the potential pitfalls of social media. With that in mind we will be carrying a special feature on the pros and cons of computers and social media in retirement next issue.



REALM diners at Ansty Hall

On December 10 North West Manchester enjoyed an excellent lunch despite the best efforts of a previous party who had used the same room in the Britannia Hotel at Didsbury. Staff had to work their socks off to make the room festive again after the other group took virtually everything bar the fixtures and fittings during their event. It certainly did not dampen the festive spirits of the assembled throng.

Carlisle met on December 11. Alan Brown was expecting a busy Christmas with a litter of greyhound pups on the way. Various members kindly shared their memories of the Civic Buildings project (see page 13).

LNER met at the Assembly Rooms

in Newcastle on December 12 and it was a double celebration as Art and Mavis Smith celebrated their Diamond Anniversary the same day. The raffle raised £184.10.

Elstree's New Year luncheon at the Toby Carvery in Borehamwood was another jolly affair, which provided one couple with some respite after part of their roof was torn off by the winds on December 23. Malcolm and Marion Smith had been living with a tarpaulin covering the space where the roof had been and a room full of buckets.

Saltire met up on January 14 at the Millennium Hotel in Glasgow. During proceedings Margaret Staines was presented with a Quaich or drinking cup which was accompanied by the good wishes: "Lang may your lum reek (chimney smoke)" The raffle raised £79.

South West met at the Brent House Carvery near Weston Super Mare on January 16.

Cyril 'Shamrock' Jones donated one of the raffle prizes, a beautiful painting of a horse which attracted a lot of interest.

Hazel Tatton has taken up gliding – in her 80s. When her son and daughter booked to go, she said she would like to tag along and loved it. Now she is planning to go again in better weather.



Just desserts for the Carlisle club

Following the messages from various retirement club committees last issue, Shirley Napier, club secretary of Elstree, has added her views:

"We meet every week and there are lots of laughs and a great deal of caring for each other and lending a helping hand. We all enjoy our trips out and are especially happy that Lady Stephanie spoils us each year with our summer lunch. Keeping in touch with what is happening at



John Laing plc is also so very useful to us all. It is the friendship that is so important and knowing that there are people we can rely on."

## News about Summer this year's luncheons

This year I have agreed to take on organising the President's Day Summer Lunches.

I will of course strive to maintain the very high standards set by Mrs Sue Hendin in previous years.

These are lunches for and about retirement club members, so I would be grateful for your views on potential venues and locations.

We endeavour to pick sites which are convenient for members to get to,

although with some clubs covering very large areas, it is never going to be perfectly located for everyone.

There is no truth in the rumours that I was going to use the budget to purchase a kebab van and drive it to the various clubs.

I very much look forward to seeing you all at this year's events and hope that they will continue to provide an annual highlight for members.

## Club Events

### CUMBRIA

Monthly meetings at Wigton Methodist Hall.

#### June 4

President's Day Summer Luncheon at the Inn On The Lake, Ullswater (CA11 0PE).

### ELSTREE

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

#### May 21

President's Day Summer Luncheon at Grovefield House, near Slough (SL1 8LR).

### LNER

#### March 5

AGM at the Assembly Rooms, Newcastle.

#### 24th April

Spring outing will be to the Parkmore Hotel and Preston Park Museum.

#### June 2

President's Day Summer Luncheon at Beamish Hall (DH9 0YB).

### NORTH WEST

#### June 5

President's Day Summer Luncheon at the Gibbon Bridge Hotel (PR3 2TQ).

### REAL

Monthly meetings at Allum Hall, Borehamwood.

#### April 2

Social afternoon.

#### May 7

Cheese and wine.

#### May 22

President's Day Summer Luncheon at Grovefield House, near Slough (SL1 8LR).

### SOLARE

#### March 19

Spring meeting at the Hotel Antoinette, Kingston followed by lunch at subsidised cost.

#### April 23

Lunch at Ristorante Sorrento, 379 Ewell Road, Tolworth, KT6 7DE.

#### May 20

President's Day Summer Luncheon at Stanhill Court Hotel (RH6 0EP)

### SOUTH WEST

#### March 27

Spring Lunch at Cameley Lodge (BS39 5AH).

#### May 19

President's Day Summer Luncheon at Beechfield House (SN12 7PU).

### REALM

#### March 12

AGM Methodist Church Hall, Solihull (B91 1LG). Buffet lunch, presentations of cheques to charities followed by the main business.

#### April 2

Ploughman's and social from 12noon at Newton Regis Village Hall, with quiz and bingo.

#### June 6

President's Day Summer Luncheon at Ansty Hall (CV7 9HZ).

### SALTIRE

Monthly meetings at St. Stephen's Church, Glasgow.

#### June 3

President's Day Summer Luncheon at Cringletie House Hotel (EH45 8PL).

# President's club update

Spring is in the air and it's a time of new beginnings, although little changes at the root of things and our clubs continue to flourish.

In 1986 I hosted the first Summer Lunch for Elstree Club at Hunsdon House, having been invited to succeed my late mother in law, Lady Kirby Laing, President since 1971. A small, enthusiastic membership provided support and continuing friendship for those who'd worked together and I soon understood why my mother in law had felt so personally involved.

Over the past 28 years, under the enthusiastic guidance of John Laing Charitable Trust Secretary Mick Hamilton and Senior Welfare Officers - originally Alan Martin and then Margaret Staines - another eight clubs were introduced around the country and I was honoured to become their President. Club activities have expanded and include Summer Lunches, organised by Sue Hendin and which I host; and Christmas Lunches, organised and hosted by the committees.

Last April, Mick Hamilton was succeeded by Jenny Impey. Many of you met her at the Summer lunches last year and will have recognised her commitment to all retired employees.

Margaret Staines recently announced her retirement as Welfare Manager, but I'm delighted that she'll continue to work with the London clubs.

Heather Cunningham, who had worked with the Company for some time, has succeeded Margaret. Heather met old friends and new at the Christmas Lunches and is enthusiastic about her new role.

Tony Edwardes is also retiring as a welfare officer and will be replaced by David Batchelor.

Sue Hendin retired completely last year and although initially I



undertook all secretarial work, Martin and I are now introducing 23-year-old Jack Trowsdale to the dubious joys of coping with us! He will be with me in May and June.

In addition to being Editor of the Retired Employees' Newsletter since its launch in 2001, Alex Finkenrath has accepted responsibility for organising the Summer Lunches, which I shall continue to host.

Martin, David and Mary, Christopher and Diana Laing have long supported the Summer Lunches and join us whenever possible, along with many of Sir John's great grandchildren.

Most important to the clubs' success are the voluntary committees - an inspiration to everyone.

In summary, JLCT, the Welfare Department, Committees and Laing family agree that for as long as members wish the clubs to continue, we'll do all we can to help. Some things may change, but membership continues to provide invaluable opportunities for meeting up with friends and enjoying some happy occasions; and in 2013 we were delighted by the number of retired employees - of all ages - still enrolling. If you are interested in joining us, please contact the secretary of your local club and you will receive a warm welcome.

**Stephanie Laing**

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## Diamond Anniversary

January 16  
**Robert & Joan  
Witkowski**

## Golden Anniversary

16 November 2013  
**Tim & Pam Snow**

4 December 2013  
**John & Margaret  
Boles**

21 December 2013  
**Iain & Jean Priestnell**

2 January 2014  
**Roy & Rita Bettney**

4 January 2014  
**Frank & Joan Vickers**



## Dancing to Diamond anniversary

**Art and Mavis Smith  
Diamond Wedding  
December 12, 2013**

Art and Mavis met while he was refurbishing her aunt's bungalow. It wasn't long before he had invited her along to the youth club run by his father where she taught him to dance.

In fact his father reckoned he knew of 180 marriages which started at the youth club. "It was quite a matrimonial place," said Art.

He started working for Laing in Canada on a hospital project in Toronto. He recalled that the site manager recognised his accent as being from the north east and it turned out that he came from another district of Art's home town Middlesbrough.

The other thing he recalled when he started, back in 1970, was being told that he would soon be wearing pyjamas with 'Laing' on them and his blood would start running yellow.

After four years overseas Art and Mavis came back to work at Mill Hill. He noted that he was referred to as a contracts manager in Canada, a financial manager in the UK and all the while he was doing the same QS job.

He and Mavis were keen to move to the Newcastle area, but his many requests were refused until, after 13 years, he decided he would quit at which point they suddenly found him a posting. He worked out his career in the north east, where he made even more lifelong friends, many of which he still sees at the LNER retirement club. He points out that he always seemed to work on hospitals and that when it looked like he was going to be working on the big Monks Cross shopping centre development in York, it ground to a halt when the developer suddenly decided it was a good idea to move a roundabout!

The couple have twins - a boy and a girl - four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. They celebrated their anniversary going out with their family, but also with a dance at both of the dance clubs they still attend.

Art said: "I really enjoyed my time with John Laing, it was the people above all that made it so special. We still receive Christmas cards from friends in Canada.

"It was also very special that our fellow club members made such a fuss of us at the Christmas luncheon. It was very moving."

## Andy and Jean are as good as Gold

Andy and Jean Allan  
Golden Wedding  
June 1, 2013

Following National Service in the Royal Air Force Andy met Jean at the local dance hall in Falkirk. They were married and later had son, Scott. Having worked on the payroll and costing with Wimpey, Andy joined John Laing via Glasgow Office in 1974. He was based at various sites in Scotland as well as a period in the payroll office in Glasgow. He then transferred to Laing Engineering, working at Grangemouth chemical plant, followed by Nottingham Power Station on payroll and bonus costing, was then transferred to the Channel Tunnel 'on a rescue mission'. There was then few months spent at Mill Hill before going to Sellafield on bonus costing. It was back up to Scotland after that on



a large pipeline running from Dumfries to Ireland.

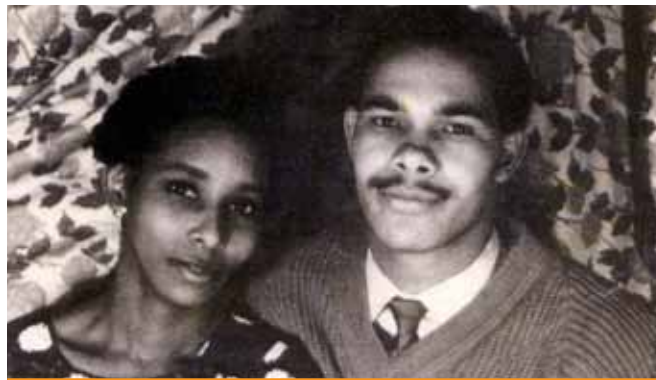
Another pipeline contract in the Bristol came next and then a secondment to Armstrong Electra, where he had to transfer their payroll system onto the John Laing system, which he managed within three months. That payroll was later handled by the Newcastle office, from whence he retired as a manager in March 2001 (following spells in Manchester and St Neots).

■ **Andy made sure we knew about this last year, but I am afraid we mislaid the details, sorry it's late.**

## More Golden memories

Ronald and Miriam Windley  
Golden Wedding  
January 4, 2014

Thank you to Ronald and Miriam for this beautiful picture marking their Golden Anniversary in January.



*We are always delighted to receive details of your Golden, Diamond and Platinum anniversaries. If you would like to be included in a future issue, please send your words and pictures. Alternatively, feel free to call us. The contact details are featured on the inside front cover of this publication. Please supply a stamped addressed envelope if you wish to have any photos you send returned.*

## 90th birthdays round-up

18 November 2013  
– **Ivor Johnson**

28 November 2013  
– **Cliff Wilson**

2 December 2013  
– **Eric Andrews**

14 December 2013  
– **Ted Bampton**

20 December 2013  
– **Bill Tilley**

14 January 2014  
– **John Beavis**

## Care.data medical scheme

NHS ENGLAND has delayed plans which would have allowed them to share patients' medical records anonymously. The care.data scheme is now set to go ahead in six months' time.

Patients' records will automatically be shared unless they opt out.

Supporters of the scheme maintain that the records will remain anonymous and will be used to improve healthcare and help advances in medical research.

Critics say that the information, which can also be passed to researchers and even some private companies, could be misused or that sensitive information could go missing.

The choice to keep your medical records private is completely down to you; all you need do is inform your GP of your choice, which you can do simply by writing a letter or dropping a form into your surgery.

There are templates on the [Laingpastandpresent](http://www.laingpastandpresent.org) website, or you can contact your local surgery for further information. There is also information at: [www.england.nhs.uk](http://www.england.nhs.uk) or <http://medconfidential.org>.

## Flood advice and contact numbers

The Environment Agency - which is responsible for England and Wales - says that in the event of a flood, it is vital to put people before property, cooperate with the emergency services if they tell you to evacuate your home and be prepared to act quickly to get yourself to safety.

In the event of an emergency, the agency urges people take the following precautions:

### Gather essentials

- Fill jugs and saucepans with water.
- Grab your flood kit if you have prepared one.
- Collect blankets, torch, first aid kit, medication and food.

### Move items

- Move important documents, personal items, valuables, lightweight belongings upstairs or to high shelves.

- Raise large items of furniture, or put them in large bags if you have them.

- Move people, outdoor belongings, cars and pets to higher ground where there is a means of escape.

### Prepare your property

- Switch off water, gas and electricity at mains when water is about to enter your home. Do not touch sources of electricity when standing in water.

- Fit flood protection products if you have them, eg flood boards, airbrick covers, sandbags, and toilet bungs on downstairs toilets.

- Put plugs in sinks and baths. Weigh them down with a pillowcase or plastic bag filled with soil.

- If you do not have non-return valves fitted, plug water inlet pipes with towels or cloths.

- Disconnect equipment that uses water, like washing machines and dishwashers.

### Stay out of floodwater

- Avoid walking or driving through flood water.
- Be aware that flooding can cause manhole covers to come off.
- Keep children and vulnerable people out of floodwater.
- Don't walk on sea defences or riverbanks.
- Take care or avoid crossing bridges



when water levels are high.

- Take care crossing culverts as they are dangerous when flooded.
- Look out for other hazards such as fallen power lines and trees.
- Wash your hands thoroughly if you touch floodwater as it may be contaminated.

**Call 999 if you are in danger, or people have been injured.**

### Remain calm.

Evacuate when told

- Follow the advice of emergency services if they tell you to evacuate - they will take you to a centre run by the local council and give you food and bedding.
- Bring clothing, medication, and baby care items.
- Bring pets in a secure carrier and pet food.
- Tell someone if you intend to stay with friends or relatives instead of the evacuation centre.

## Contacts

■ Call your local authority to find out about sandbags and other flood services they provide.

■ Environment Agency general information: Tel: 03708 506 506 / Minicom service, for the hard of hearing: 03702 422 549.

■ The national Flood Forum can offer help and advice on all aspects including trouble with insurance claims: tel: 01299 403055.

■ Please only call 999 if you or someone else is in immediate danger.

# In Memoriam

**Les Andrew**, formerly an Accounts Manager with JLC died on Saturday 7 December 2013. He was 83 and retired in 1993 after 43 years' service.

**Ted Copeland**, formerly a Ganger with Laing Northern, died on Friday 10 January 2014. He was 88 and retired 1985 after 27 years' service.

**Dennis Cornish**, formerly a Plant Manager with Laing Civil Engineering, died on Monday 23 December 2013. He was 81 and retired 1994 after 16 years' service.

**John Crehan**, formerly an Overseas Service Manager with Plant and Transport, died on Monday 18 November 2013. He was 97 and retired in 1981 after 32 years' service.

**Dan Doherty**, formerly a Site Manager with Civil Engineering, died on Friday 8 November 2013. He was 91 and retired in 1987 after 22 years' service.

**Bob Goodfellow**, formerly an Administration Manager with JLC, SW Region died on Tuesday 26th November 2013. He was 89 and retired in 1988 after 28 years' service.

**Jack Harvey**, formerly a Checker with JLC, Southern Region died on Thursday 12 December 2013. He was 89 and retired after 29 years' service.

**David Green**, formerly a Building Services Manager with Laing Management, died on Saturday 11 January 2014. He was 78 and retired in 1997 after 20 years' service.

**Norman Hazell**, formerly a Civil Engineer with Laing Civil Engineering, died on Tuesday 24 December 2013. He was 71 and retired in 1993 after 13 years' service.

**Joyce Heap**, formerly a Senior Technical Typist with Research and Development, died on Tuesday 12 November 2013. She was 87 and retired in 1982 after 19 years' service.

**George Heslop**, formerly a Construction Manager with Laing Ltd, died on Sunday 26th January 2014. He was 76 and retired in 1999 after 36 years' service.

**Frank Hughes**, formerly a Ganger, SW Region died in November 2013. He was 89 and retired 1978 after 29 years' service.

**John Kelly**, formerly a Site Manager with Laing Midlands, died on Sunday 26 January 2014. He was 80 and retired in 1995 after 31 years' service.

**David Lewis**, formerly a Sales Office Manager with Thermalite, died on Wednesday 15 January 2014. He was 93 and retired 1983 after 29 years' service.

**Mike Millwood**, formerly a Parent Company Director, Mill Hill. Died Thursday 28th November 2013. He was 84 and retired 1985 after 39 years' service.

**Joan Moister**, formerly an Accounts Assistant with Research and Development, died on Saturday 4 January 2014. She was 86 and retired in 1983 after 16 years' service.

**Mel Rosser**, formerly a Site Manager, SW Region died 22nd November 2013. He was 87 and retired 1991 after 23 years' service.

**Pat Still**, formerly a Secretary with LTG died on Thursday 5 December 2013. She was 65 and retired in 2010 after 26 years' service.

**Jack Tippins**, formerly a Joiner with Laing Ltd, Midlands died on Sunday 29 December 2013. He was 94 and retired in 1982 after 30 years' service.

**Reg Young**, formerly a Supervisor with EPL died on Saturday 28 December 2013. He was 84 and retired in 1991 after 39 years' service.

# John Laing

making infrastructure happen



at the  
heart of the  
community

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