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**GROVE PLACE
VILLAGE
NEWSLETTER**

FEBRUARY 2011

EDITING THE NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter is written on behalf of the Residents as a whole. The Editors review what has been written and advise me. I take total responsibility for the content published. I accept am in the hot seat. You may question why I am writing this. (You may question why I am compiling the Newsletter in the first place and all I can say is I have done many stupid things in my life!)

Request:

If you want to see something included then please put pen to paper, or press the keys on the keypad or just tell me. All contributions will be credited unless the person in question does not want to be named.

If there is something you don't like or disagree with, tell me.

If an item is turned down the person will be told, personally. This will be done in confidence and may be done in conjunction with an editor.

Ancora Imparo (I am still learning)

Barry

MANAGER'S CORNER

Sales

You may have heard that Life Care Residences have brought sales in-house. This brings Grove Place Village in-line with the other LifeCare Residences.

Savills is an excellent Estates Agent and highly competent at selling residential properties, however, retirement villages are somewhat different. While residential properties are part of the sales offering the lifestyle and the population seeking the retired lifestyle tend to be somewhat different.

As LifeCare Residences have extensive sales experience in this specialized market it has been decided to bring the operation at Grove Place Village in-house.

Decorating

Northcliffe and Paget corridors have been appraised and decoratively reviewed by interior designers. The aim is to make them visually pleasing and welcoming by decoratively softening them. Consultation with contractors started in December. A "visual sample" area is commencing in Northcliffe imminently.

Safety

The doors that normally give access to the old stairs in the house have been locked. This is because a review by the insurers considered the uneven treads and variation in risers to be unsafe for users and have withdrawn their cover.

Open Day

The next open day is planned for 12th February 2011

Pool

To reduce condensation and conserve energy the pool will be covered from 8 pm to 8 am. If the pool is in use at 8 pm the covers will not go on until the session is finished. The Gym is unaffected.

GROVE PLACE LIBRARY

Peter Otway writes

The library now has some 1200 books arranged in alphabetical order by author in a catalogue on the desk in the library. It can also be viewed in Excel on the library computer under the file names, lib cat 1, lib cat 2, lib cat 3 and new arrivals. If you have any difficulties accessing these files I will be happy to assist.

When taking books out please enter details in the book provided. When returning books either replace them in their correct position or leave on the desk.

There is no limit to either time or number of books you can take out but please remember that the more you have the less other people can have.

The library is useful addition to the facilities here at Grove place and I would like to thank all who have contributed books.

GROVE PLACE VILLAGE – MEETING REPORT

I was recently privileged to attend a meeting, together with some other people, with Peter Cottrell. Now that may be a strange thing to say: privileged. I was impressed by his sincerity and passion for Grove Place Village. Not many people in his position would sit by the bed of a dying resident and hold their hand. Not many people in his position will speak with such passion of the vision he has for Grove Place Village, and speak of the hard headed financial reality and pride he has in steering the village through the turndown in the market and how this Village is whole heartedly supported by our Bank and our investors for the long term. This has been borne out by regular property valuations that continue to reflect the original purchase prices. There was a concern that negative rumour mongering could affect our property values and have an adverse effect on sales. I reached the conclusion, from what I heard, that we are in safe hands and, as I came here to live out my last years with my wife, I will be happy to leave here in my specially constructed wooden overcoat, well, perhaps not happy as I won't know about it.

I attended another meeting with two senior managers. They, through their language, demonstrated a hard headed, logical business approach showing concern for residents and a recognition that we are in this adventure together and getting process right to handle things is essential. Process is being looked into at the moment and will be published in due course.

PICTURES

It has been brought to our notice that we have a few people that have produced pictures that few of us have seen. Perhaps you would display them in the "crafty room" to inspire the users of said room and enhance its décor. Please offer your exhibits to The Manager and she will find the resources to hang them. (Bit like Judge Jefferies, but I didn't say that.) It would also be good if we could enhance the front page of the Newsletter with examples of your artwork (emailed to me) or photos that relate to the life and times of Grove Place Village like Jim's January photo.

SHOPPING

Thursday 3 rd February	M&S / Sainsbury	Hedge End
Thursday 10 th February	Morrisons	Totton
Thursday 17 th February	Tesco	Shirley
Thursday 24 th February	Sainsbury / Iceland	Shirley
Thursday 3 rd March	Waitrose	Chandlers Ford

Please indicate the day before (Wednesday) that you will be going shopping and arrive in plenty of time for the bus. This would be a great asset to the staff.

MONEY MATTERS

You may have heard Martin Lewes on the radio. He is the money saving expert. He often mentions his web site, www.moneysavingexpert.com. It's worth a visit.

Saving

In April the price of postage stamps will rise. If you are a letter writer it may be useful to forward buy stamps in say a block of a hundred. *(Thank you June.)*

Charity

Joan has put a box in the library (bottom shelf of the table between the windows) for used postage stamps for charity.

Beware this does not catch on Mr Chancellor

P. Smith, Sheffield

As a 75-year-old widower, I may not have long to go. With £35,000 in premium bonds - which have earned a few £50 prizes but face diminishing returns due to lower interest rates - a £9,000 Isa, which earns less than inflation, and the declining value of my house, all of which will be taken by the state if I have to go into a home, I have decided to enjoy the fruits of my labour. I'm going to sell my house, liquidate my premium bonds and Isa and blow the lot on a luxury round the world cruise in the best cabin with a butler.

When I return home, destitute, the state, which has destroyed my pension, increased my fuel bills and levied unstoppable council tax increases can support me on benefits in a council flat for the rest of my life. At least I'll be warm and fed. *(Thank you Emily)*

H&S WARNINGS

With thanks to the Sunday lunch club

The three women looked towards the dormant fireplace. Two were standing, they looked like mother and daughter and one was sitting.

“What does it say?” asked the older standing woman referring to a notice.

“It’s a safety warning,” said the daughter

“Why?”

“Perhaps your not old enough to put a log on the fire.”

“No,” said the rotund woman sitting on the settee, “its because logs are too expensive to burn.”

“Well I don’t like the colour of the notice,” said the older woman.

“What’s wrong with it?”

“Well logs are rural so the notice should match and enhance the surrounds and not be in black on white.” The three women perused the notice.

“Yes,” said the rotund woman on the settee, “The paper should be a delicate pale green and the words in dark green.”

“People won’t see it then,” said the younger of the standing women.”

“That doesn’t matter,” said the older standing woman, “I never take any notice of these sorts of notices anyway. What we need is a notice to each of us that says: if you do something stupid and die it’s your fault and the authorities will sue you.” She and her daughter smiled.

“What do you mean by stupid?” asked the rotund woman on the settee somewhat tetchily, missing the joke.

“Stupid means not putting brain in gear before doing something you know you shouldn’t be doing even if there isn’t a sign telling you not to do it,” said the younger woman.



THE SECRET ASSASSIN

He's about. hiding, waiting and then without warning, he strikes. You don't see him, you don't hear him, you don't feel him and you don't even smell him but he can be there waiting to strike.

He's not a very efficient killer and often leaves his victims physically or mentally disabled and with that can come emotional trauma and often the need for care. He is a very frequent attacker striking a minimum of three hundred and fifty people a day in England. He has his favourite targets though, over fifty, over weight, unfit, unhealthy lifestyle and that includes all those that smoke and those that, perhaps, have a little more alcohol than they should, too much salt and not enough fruit and vegetables. Any one or more of the above and he may seek you out and strike. But you may be fit, healthy and he picks you out for reasons of his own and strikes you down.

His name is Hypertension but his street name is High Blood Pressure.

What to do to detect him, this destroyer of lives who has no signs or symptoms – simples – just go and get you blood pressure checked. If the doc. decides it's high you will be prescribed pills, wow, I bet that pleases you. Pop a pill a day and it will be alright - um, not quite - tackle the life style bit to be reasonably sure.

WHERE THERE'S A WILL ...

You may have seen Sir Gerry Robinson on TV on Friday 14th January talking about Wills – *You Can't Take It With You*. Most of us at Grove Place Village are nearing the final countdown. One of the messages was that writing a Will is not about getting it down in black and white although that is necessary; it's about dealing with emotional issues within families. He said, "If you don't leave a Will it's a flaming mess for whoever's left behind." He suggests that part of the problem is we don't like facing up to our own death, also it has much to do with our reluctance to face emotional complications with the people involved. Bite the bullet and explain.

Using a lawyer is probably the best option when drawing up a will and nominating executors that are likely to be around when you don your wooden overcoat. Take care and beware of the Will writing scam. You may run into this by letter, a cold call on the phone, by email or even in the shopping precinct.

MONDAY AFTERNOONS

Roni writes

To say we played games may conjure up weird and wonderful images according to your sense of humour such as chasing one another round the garden or playing 'put the tail on the donkey'. No, No none of that. We come together play several board and card games.

So far we have tried Chase the Jack, Switch (cards), Rummikub (a numbers game), Chinese Chequers and Scrabble. We also have Mastermind, Dominoes, Cribbage and Draughts. The accent is on having fun, nothing too serious. See you at 2:30 pm every Monday in the room off the restaurant.

FROM THE STAFF

A member of the staff told me that they would like to thank the residents for their kind gifts and donations over the Christmas period. The member of staff who wrote this ~~missile~~ missive asked me to keep confidential so I told Lesleigh that I wouldn't say she wrote it.

Jane would like a new Jag and was rather hoping her sugar daddy will give her one

Pauline would like further pole dancing lessons and somewhere to practice

Lesleigh would like some new shoes and more shoes and even more shoes

Lisa would also like a new car as well but not Red as her husband wrecks red ones

Colin and John would like matching outfits as they are feeling a tad neglected

Peter would like a year's supply of cheese to put in his ears – his earplugs are broke

Jason wants a new assistant preferably one from Playboy.

WE ARE SURVIVORS

(For those born before 1940)

By Mr Bridge

We were born before television, before penicillin, polio shot, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, video and the pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ball-point pens. Before dishwashers, tumble dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes . . . and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together (how quaint can you be?). We thought 'fast food' was what you ate at Lent, a 'Big Mac' was an oversized raincoat and 'crumpet' we had for tea (um, no comment). We existed before house-husbands, computer dating, and 'sheltered accommodation' was where we waited for the bus.

We were before day care centres, retirement villages and disposable nappies. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, artificial hearts, word processors or young men wearing earrings. For us 'time sharing' meant togetherness, a chip was a piece of wood or a fried potato, 'hardware' meant nuts and bolts and 'software' wasn't a word.

Before 1940 'Made in Japan' meant junk and a junk was a Chinese boat, 'making out' referred to how you did in your exams, 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt and 'going all the way' meant staying on a double-decker bus to the terminus.

In our day, cigarette smoking was 'fashionable', 'grass' was mown, 'coke' was kept in the coalhouse, a 'joint' was a piece of meat you ate on Sundays and 'pot' was something you cooked in. 'Rock music' was a fond mother's lullaby, 'Eldorado' was an ice cream, a 'gay person' was the life and soul of the party, while 'aids' just meant beauty treatment or help for someone in trouble.

We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the way in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder there is a generation gap today . . . BUT

By the grace of God . . . we have survived!

(Thank-you for the reminder Roni)

OLDER AND WISER

You know the physical muscles aren't what they once were but what about the mental muscles. Professor Elliott Jaques (1917 to 2003) discovered that the main criteria for senior management are not intelligence or knowledge or experience, although all these are contributors, its time span of discretion. Simply, this is how far a person can look ahead and then act to reach that distant goal. For many people it's a day and for a very few it's twenty-five years. The other thing he found was that the older people became, the longer the time-span they could manage, hence the "elders" of simple societies.

This is not new stuff. You can find references in the Old Testament; Job said "With the ancient is wisdom and in the length of days understanding."

In 2010 a group of psychologists in the USA set about probing the skill with which people of various ages could solve problems of social conflict and the older people were more competent.

Wisdom, now that is a great word, has been demonstrated to improve with age, but what is it that's improving. Research show older people are better in the areas of: "knowledge for dealing with life's problems", "a preference for fair compromise" (note the word "fair") and "ways of managing uncertainty". Most relevant to the American studies were "acknowledgement of others point of view" and "concern for conflict resolution".

I know you knew this already. I just wanted to show the wisdom of age has been demonstrated by science. Um, now where did I leave my glasses?

POEMTRY AND RIMES

I once was told by Colin Silk, my English teacher at school, that everybody is a poet, they just have to sit down and do it. Perhaps you have a poem or rhyme, so next month let's have your offering. Here's a starter. You have probably met Rufus roaming Grove Place grounds or nipping into the Manor if a door is open. I wrote a cat poem as Doreen is getting one. (I'll do one on Happiness next month as I find cats and happiness related – see; you knew I was strange.)

Our Cat – Rufus

Sitting in the armchair,
 laying on my lap.
Basking in the sunshine,
 just a little nap.

Fishing in the goldfish pond
 with a soggy mitt.
I'm sure it's just the mice he eats
 that makes him fart a-bit.

Boom! Boom!

INTERNET IRONY

Until recently it was not unusual to hear that the elderly were saying that modern technology was not for them. (I'm not sure what elderly means but there you go.) This technology thing has now become folklore and like most folklore it's ~~a load of~~ ~~era~~ not true. What has been identified is that the teen and twenties use computers and the internet very differently from us who are approaching or past our sell by date. The older generation, apparently, gain much by going on line, shopping, hunting bargains, contacting and communicating with friends and relations, researching their passions and interests, managing their finances and paying their bills and the eradication of isolation that is a blight on so many older person's lives. Some people now have gone back to work from home using the internet, both paid and voluntary. At Grove Place we have people that use the internet in many different ways.

There are problems. Some seven million people aged sixty-five and over do not currently use the internet but work is going ahead with various initiatives to plug that gap such as the Government "Online Centres" network and "Simplicity" computers launched by Valerie Singleton in 2009, and others. The best start point we have found is the BBC. Go to www.bbc.co.uk/connect/campaigns/first_click.shtml. It has a simple click and a video that will guide you and you can also download a beginners guide on a pdf. You can read real words in simple text. Pdf, sounds complicated, um no, the site instructions tell you exactly what to do. Mind you if you can't use a computer then that is not much use so talk to somebody about a beginner's computer course: ring **08000 150 950**.

There are of course infrastructure issues such as poor telecommunication links so that 'speeds' in many rural locations are inadequate, and users here will have noticed this but by 2012 it should improve, ah, promises, promises.

Local access to computers can be found at Lords Hill Library, 02380 833007: Totton Library, 02380 864458 and Romsey Library, 08456035631.

If you have an insight into services that can help other Residents with their computers and using the internet please tell us about it and we will include that in the next newsletter.

INTERNET SCAM

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) are currently seeing an increase in the number of customers reporting phishing emails advising customers that they are due a tax rebate. **HMRC never inform customers of a tax rebate by email.** Fraudsters appear to be particularly active at this time of year as we approach the Self Assessment filing deadline, so you need to be extra vigilant during this period. If you have received an email claiming to be from HMRC that you suspect may be fraudulent, please forward it to phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk.

CONTACT

You can contact Barry using 'snail mail' by posting stuff through the door of 22 Northcliffe House, catch him in the manor, leave it in a envelope on the desk, or by email to barry.j@learningpartners.co.uk.

AUNTY LIL

By *Barry Johnson*

My Aunty Lil was married to my Uncle Arthur. Lil was a "bit of a girl" if you know what I mean. Uncle Arthur worked for the GPO as an accounts clerk sending out telephone bills since he left school in 1926. Money ruled his life. I wouldn't have said he was a miser though my mum and my aunty Lil did. I preferred my gran's description, "miserable skinflint".

Aunty Lil and Uncle Arthur had separate savings accounts. Aunty Lil had, to use her description, "bugger all", but nobody knew what Uncle Arthur had. He'd check all the bills, would only allow my aunt to buy things after extensive research into the cheapest option and he would not only work out my aunt's contribution to the purchase but he would build in a use factor, so that she always contributed more than he did. Mind you she did get an allowance for doing the washing and cleaning the house and things.

By now you may have gained a picture of a very happy household! When I stayed with them as a child he charged my mum rent and my Aunty Lil had to pay for the additional food that I ate.

By now you think I am joking. No, she got her own back in different ways. My mother told me, when I was older, that my Aunty Lil used to charge Uncle Arthur for the usual married relationship activities and I knew she had a few 'boyfriends'. As I said, Aunty Lil was a bit of a girl.

Uncle Arthur was very health conscious, even had a small ultra-violet radiation machine and a bike, but despite that, or perhaps because of it, he was often ill. Eventually he was rushed to hospital and it seemed he had something incurable. He made my aunt swear on a bible that when he died, she would put all the money from his savings and bank account in the coffin with him. She was to use the haversack he had been issued when he was called up in the Second World War. Mind you, the bible bit was going a bit far as she never went to church apart from weddings and funerals. Still I suppose it made him feel better as he was a believer.

Then, he died - suddenly. He was listening to Hancock's Half Hour and might have laughed.

At the funeral he was stretched out in the open coffin in his Sunday suit, collar and black tie, highly polished black shoes, hair combed with Brylcreem - very smart. My Aunt was in black, clutching the RAF haversack, next to my mum. The ceremony finished. Just before the undertakers closed the coffin, she said, "Wait just a minute!"

She placed the haversack by his feet in the coffin. The undertakers closed the coffin lid and rolled it away.

Mum whispered, "I hope you weren't crazy enough to put all his money in that haversack."

"Yes." Aunty Lil whispered back, "I promised. I promised him that I was going to put all his money in the coffin with him."

"You mean to tell me you put every penny of his money in there?"

"Yes I did. Sold his bike and his other stuff, got all the money together from his accounts." She paused, smiled, she had a wicked sense of humour. "Put it into my account and I wrote him a cheque."

I don't think I have ever seen the widow and her sister giggling helplessly at a funeral before, or since.