



The Chairman's Letter

I write this before the festive season, knowing that the decorations will be back in their boxes by now. So, I hope that you had a really enjoyable Christmas, close to your friends and family and free of the bugs that seem to fly around at this time of year. I also wish you every happiness and all success for 2008.

My first and least onerous task must be to thank my predecessor as Chairman, John Bentley, for the enormous contribution that he made during his second tenure of office. He took over at very short notice, despite some demanding commitments. Without his guidance and dedication to Barnsdale, we would have found life to be very difficult. I must also thank John's wife, Anita, who acted as the Board's minute secretary and provided a very useful "corporate memory", whenever the wheel looked like turning full circle. John and Anita have given tremendous service to Barnsdale to the benefit of all Owners and that brings me to membership of the Board of Directors.

As Owners, we all want the very best for our resort, most probably at the lowest possible cost. To achieve this balance requires a capable and active Board of Directors for Barnsdale in Rutland Owners' Association Limited – our company. On our present Board, we have just two ladies and some of our longer serving members have already happily celebrated their seventieth birthdays. We seek to be representative of all Owners but can only do that if we have volunteers from all sectors of our owning community. If you want Barnsdale to maintain its high standards in the future and you want your voice to be heard, why not think about joining the Board? I would welcome being contacted by anyone who thinks they could make a contribution to our joint efforts. If you are not keen to take part in the business management process, but have the skills to help record our meetings as a minutes secretary, you would also be very welcome.

The last time I wrote in our Newsletter, it was as Chairman of the Lodge and Leisure Committee, and I reported that we seemed to be enjoying a period of stability. That did not last for long! Almost as the ink dried and the presses rolled, our Management Company representative on the Board resigned her post for personal reasons. Around the same time, other key, long-serving members left for pastures new. This, inevitably, stretched the remaining management resources and some minor areas of dissatisfaction were reflected, over a brief period, in comments to exchange organisations such as RCI. However, Barbara Hodges, the Barnsdale Hotel Group Accountant and Company Secretary, worked tirelessly and ceaselessly to make sure that the ship stayed clear of the

rocks. We now have an excellent new management team in place, with Russell Waters as the General Manager and Sue Moore as Membership Services Manager, and improvements have been made in a number of areas, with more on the horizon, while the normal high standards are being maintained elsewhere.

Our budget is limited and the demands are many, but we try hard to keep up the standard of the accommodation and leisure facilities for which we are responsible. No doubt we could do more, but then the Sinking Fund contribution would have to increase and that would not be popular! Bearing that in mind, the Board would welcome your comments and suggestions on what might be done and where improvements could be made. We make every effort to keep a close eye on things, for example, over the past year John Wedgwood has led the inspection of every unit and is now starting the cycle all over again. However, there is no substitute for the balanced comment of someone who has stayed at the resort over a period of time.

Talking about guests' comments, we are now enjoying a closer working relationship with RCI and hope that this will enable us to keep track of the good and bad comments received by that organisation. The Board has been given direct access to RCI comment cards and, with the Barnsdale Management Team, is able to identify areas where improvements are needed as well as those where we are achieving the right standard. In this context, it is pleasing to note that we are already seeing an improvement in those few areas that were criticised during a short period in the summer and see no reason why our Gold Crown should be threatened. Our closer relationship with RCI also enables us to discuss with them the problems that owners seem to be experiencing with getting the exchanges that they want and the way some exchanges are managed. The two way flow of opinions means that while the Gold Crown is always under review, we constantly strive to ensure that RCI always delivers the best possible service to our Owners: both sides need to maintain high standards.

In closing, I should like to thank all of my fellow directors for their hard work throughout 2007. Also, I again wish all of you a Happy New Year and ask that you please give thought to joining us on the Board of your company.

With all good wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Moore".

Peter Moore

Scams – and Legitimate Timeshare Sales and Transfers

There have been incidents of Owners having been contacted by a company that proposed to sell their timeshare. The companies involved operate under the names of DGS Brokers and Greystoke Leisure, both apparently based in Malaga. Neither are the accredited agent of any recognised sales organisation and it appears that they are operating a scam that involves the release of personal banking information that enables improper access to personal accounts. As always, be very careful not to give information to cold callers.

Also, please be very wary of dealing with agents when selling your timeshare. We have also been told about several agents both registered in this country and abroad who are scamming timeshare owners. Last year there was one timeshare owner who lost both their unit and money by becoming involved in such a scam.

If you do want to sell, the resort recommends that you either try to sell your unit yourself by advertising locally or that you contact the resort and they will try to sell it for you. There are a number of key facts that owners should be aware of:

1. If you are selling your timeshare you should give the purchaser a 14 day cooling off period. When a re-sale is done through the resort this period is offered and is considered to be good practice within the industry.

2. When it comes to the actual time for transfer, both you and the new purchaser should make an appointment to come to Barnsdale to go through the process together. This helps to prevent future problems for all parties concerned. It is recommended that you organise the funds to be available to you on or before the appointment date, i.e. through utilising a bankers draft, cash or bank transfer. Cheques obviously require a period of time to clear and, therefore, can be more cumbersome in this process. When you come to Barnsdale you need to be clear whether you have banked your week with an exchange company or whether it is available to occupy, also whether you have paid your management fee or whether the new purchaser will be liable.

3. On transfer, a fee of £300 is payable to Barnsdale Management Company to conduct the transfer process. This fee pays for the new certificate from Hutchinsons and Co. as well as the administration time taken.

BOA website – barnsdaleowners.co.uk

The Barnsdale Owners Association website was created in April 2003 primarily to enable owners who are not regular visitors to Barnsdale to keep in touch with the work of the committee and to see what is happening at the resort. It only shows information that should be of interest to timeshare owners or guests staying in the timeshare units. I deliberately kept the website layout simple, so that I am able to display information within minutes of receiving it and readers do not have to scroll through long menus or click on numerous links to find the required information. Although the minutes of meetings are displayed on the BOA Committee notice board in Leisure Reception, they can only be read by those visiting Barnsdale.

Over five pages the website shows the current composition of the board of directors, the approved minutes of their most recent meetings, the latest editions of the BOA News, updates on developments at the resort, messages from membership services and finally a photo gallery. I have had requests from outside agencies and given them permission to use my photographs in their advertising.

Our annual bill for hosting the website is just £47, and the domain name **barnsdaleowners.co.uk** costs just £8.50 every 2 years. I feel that we get outstanding value for money, as almost 2500 owners can reach the website 24/7.

At long last we have a link from the Barnsdale Hotel website. The November 07 statistics show that people accessing our site are from the USA 50% (mainly commercial), UK 9%, Australia 2% with Spain, Brazil and the Netherlands also joining in. Any suggestions as to how better use may be made of our available space will be welcomed and considered; provided that they are technically possible and not too complicated.

Adrian Allain

Lodge & Leisure Report

Committee: Odile Churchward,
Sheila Buntun, John Wedgwood,
Dusty Miller (Chairman)

Having worked as a committee member, I have now taken over as chairman and look forward to helping solve the many issues and problems this committee faces.

We are progressing with the refurbishment programme and formulating a long-term plan for updating kitchens, bathrooms and bedrooms. The overriding concern has to be value for our money and we on the committee try to get the balance right between good quality fixtures and fittings and the money we have to spend. As regards bathrooms, after taking advice on health and safety issues and contact with hotels and other Time Share resorts, it has been decided over time to replace the Jacuzzi baths with traditional design baths. This is also a prudent financial decision as the current baths are proving expensive and more difficult to service as spares for pumps, motors etc. become more difficult to source.

In an ideal world we could budget for every eventuality, but like all businesses, we have to be prepared for the unexpected. For this reason we do keep a reserve fund which, we calculate, is adequate for most emergencies. The Leisure facilities and Lodges have, however, reached an age when it is prudent to do a full audit and prepare a rolling 5-year plan. Apart from the management company's input, the committee is very grateful for the work done by John Wedgwood, who carries out regular lodge inspections and has prepared very detailed statistical data. This, together with the input, expertise and extensive knowledge accumulated over time by the management company, Odile and Sheila, forms the basis of our refurbishment and spending programme.

There is a lot of work going on and in the maintenance week this year 4 new kitchens and 7 or 8 bedrooms will be updated. If your particular Lodge has not yet had the benefit of some of the refurbishment programme, be assured that it is 'on the list'!

New England in the Fall

We occasionally while away an idle hour browsing the RCI website to see what is available for my next school holiday. While hubby was looking for somewhere warm, I had a look at the East coast of the USA – the flight is not much longer than going to Turkey! Vacation Village in the Berkshires came up. Two days later I got an email from Air Miles offering 2 for 1. No chance of getting that for half term I thought, but checked out the flights for Boston anyway. They were available – checked RCI... the units at Vacation Village were still available. Serendipity. Booked rapidly.



Our apartment – we had the top floor

The resort is located in the Berkshires in eastern Massachusetts, close to the borders of both New York State and Vermont. The 2½ hour drive from Boston could not be

much easier – we were on the 190 about half a mile from the airport and followed it to junction 2. Turned right onto Route 7 North and followed it for 21 miles. The left turn to the resort is clearly marked and 2 miles up the road we arrived to a very warm welcome. They don't get many visitors from the UK.

Our car came from Hertz. I only mention this because it came with an excellent satellite navigation system ("Neverlost"), which was well worth the extra.

The reception area is quite large including a guest lounge (leather sofas, open fire and free coffee most of the day). The back wall is glass, looking onto a fair size indoor pool. There is also an outdoor pool, not in use during our visit, a games room with pinball and vending machines, a small fitness centre and a computer room offering free internet access.

There is a programme of activities during the day, but we found so much to see and do that we did not take advantage of it.

The unit was, for us, excellent. We expected a two bedroom one, but what we actually got was 2 adjoining units with a common lobby. The A unit was larger, HUGE in fact, but the B unit would have been quite adequate for us as a couple. This arrangement may appeal if you travel with children and grandchildren or another couple as it gives you your own space, but with plenty of room to eat or socialise together. Both units had bed settees in the lounge. The only downside of the resort for us was the lack of a restaurant on site. There were two a very short drive away, and literally dozens within 20 minutes. Similarly with grocery shops.

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Exclusive RCI Offers

Something for Everyone

As a valued Barnsdale Country Club Owner, we are committed to helping you make the most of your ownership and want to help enhance your holiday experience. Your Board has therefore secured the following exclusive offers for you from RCI, the leading holiday exchange company.

If you are **already an RCI member** we would like to offer you **20% off an RCI Extra Holiday** to be booked by 31/03/08*

If you **used to be or have never been an RCI member** we would like to welcome you with **One year's free RCI membership** if you deposit at least one of your 2008 or 2009 Barnsdale Country Club weeks before 31/03/08.

RCI membership gives you access to exchange opportunities at over 4,000 affiliated resorts worldwide in more than 100 countries, the best prices on all your travel needs, a vast selection of Extra Holidays, without the need to make a holiday exchange, plus much, much more.

Don't miss out on these fantastic offers,
call RCI now on **0870 6000 175**

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Bookings must be made by 31/03/08. Travel must be taken by 31/07/08 (excludes peak holiday periods). Offer applies to all Extra Holiday bookings, subject to availability, excluding rentals. Discount applies to 1 week's accommodation only. Offer is valid for new bookings only.

RCI

So, what did we do? We looked at the trees; they were absolutely glorious, made even better by the brilliant sunshine we enjoyed for most of our holiday. The area known as the Berkshires is very cultural! During the summer there are numerous Arts Festivals and lots of museums and galleries. We enjoyed visits to the Norman Rockwell museum and the Hancock Shaker Village. For those who like a little retail therapy there is an Outlet Mall in Lee (Junction 2 of the I90); the Berkshire Mall (which has a Sears, JC Penney and a Macys) and, a little further away, there is a Designer Outlet village at Manchester in Vermont.

Further afield, we drove to Deerfield, via the Mohawk trail. The scenery was magnificent and the end point was the Yankee Candle Company's flagship store. It was more like a village – not everyone's cup of tea, but you are on holiday. In the winter this is skiing country, and you are about a mile away from one of the area's leading ski centres, at Jiminy Peak, which is reputed to be very family friendly.

Most of the time we poddled around the local towns and chilled out.

Overall, a very successful exchange. Perhaps not great for youngsters at this time of year, but we thought that there was



House in Deerfield

something for everyone and would certainly recommend giving it a try.

Sandra Adkins exchanged into Vacation Village in the Berkshires (RCI reference number 6057) in late October 2007.

The editor welcomes reports of your exchanges. Please send them to editor@boanews.co.uk or to Membership Services.

All Change at Barnsdale

Whenever you ask anyone what their favourite time of year is invariably they say autumn! With its dark nights cold mornings and a fantastic array of county colour to be seen, no wonder. This autumn we had something to shout about, a new management structure and team joins Barnsdale Hall Hotel.

Russell Waters, takes up the position of general manager, with over 30 years' experience in the hotel and hospitality industry and, having worked for many of leading hotel chains and resorts, he brings a wealth of experience in both.

Having previously opened the Nottingham Belfry Hotel, a brand new 4-star hotel on the outskirts of Nottingham, for Marston Hotels, he succeeded in scooping two prestigious tourism awards, just eight months after opening.

At the East Midlands Tourism Excellence Awards 2006 he achieved Gold for Business Tourism and Silver for Large Hotel category. The hotel was credited by judges for offering an 'exemplary service and high quality product.'

Russell has now plumped for the beauty and tranquil retreat of the country side "Where better to start your day than the magnificent views over Rutland Water." he added.

His task at Barnsdale is to develop the resort into a quality benchmark to which others should aspire to, through excellent reputation and consistency in the delivery of service, quality and standards available.

His first appointment, Mr Richard Brennan, joins him as operations manager to assist in creating a centre of excellence with friendly yet attentive staff who together will be focused on maintaining guest satisfaction. Other new recruits joining the management team in bringing consistency through standards and service to achieve this goal are Sarah Aspinall who rejoins Barnsdale, as reception manager, after furthering her career and experience in a

similar role. David Fletcher a golden keys representative previously worked with Russell on the opening of the Nottingham Belfry, as Head Concierge. With the representation of the society of the Golden Keys Les Clefs d'or, David too brings a wealth in customer hospitality and satisfaction.

Membership Services

Hello, my name is Sue and I have recently been appointed as the Membership Services Manager and, although I am new to the office, I am not new to Barnsdale as I have worked here for two years as a Weddings and Events Coordinator.



Born in Stamford, I now live locally with my new husband Steve and our little Westie, Molly. Steve has worked at Barnsdale for over 10 years, so his knowledge and experience of the Lodges and Resort has been a great help. Prior to working at Barnsdale, I lived and worked overseas for over 15 years for a large UK Tour Operator as a Resort Manager, so although I have left the beautiful Mediterranean weather behind, working in this beautiful resort more than makes up for it.

Gilly Ward, my predecessor, is a hard act to follow, but like Gilly I will provide an excellent and personal service to our owners and guests, and be as pro-active as possible in ensuring the continual success and developing further this unique and special resort.