

## Committee jottings



Some of the main points  
from recent  
committee meetings

### 25th February

At the first meeting after the AGM, Peter Moore was elected as chairman, Norman Smith continues as secretary, and Leigh Willows agreed to become Treasurer. Dusty Miller continues to lead the Lodge & Leisure committee.

The date of the next AGM was fixed as Saturday 28th February 2009, commencing at 14:30.

In the L&L area, it was agreed to purchase crockery to begin the replacement programme for the lodges. The existing crockery is no longer available, and so some lodges will be equipped with new crockery, and the existing pieces from those lodges will be used to replace breakages in the other lodges.

The replacement of the surface of the Crazy Golf area was agreed.

Dusty Miller agreed to attend the TATOC (Timeshare Association of Timeshare Owners Committees) meeting, and to seek information on the VAT status of Timeshare Resorts, the RCI accreditation system and the question of buying out a freehold.

The board agreed that in addition to the general running of the association, a special focus would be placed on mobility access issues and environmental awareness in the coming year.

### 7th April

The chairman reported on positive meetings he had held (jointly with Russell Waters) with RCI, II and DAE (Dial an Exchange). Also that following on from the last meeting, the swimming pool timetable has been amended so that for the majority of the opening time the facility is available to all-comers. Feedback from users and levels of usage will be monitored over the next 3 months.

The L&L committee reported that a programme of replacing the dated storage heaters with panel heaters in the lodges had started some time ago, but had not been completed. It was agreed that the costs of completing this should be obtained, as this programme was worthwhile and should be finished.

A survey of soft furnishings and beds would be undertaken, to ensure that any below standard items could be rectified.

Dusty Miller reported on the TATOC conference. TATOC planned to move to a more active role, in an attempt to widen the appeal of timeshare ownership to a new generation. The report also noted that delegates at the conference had expressed a feeling that RCI was losing members because of a perceived lack of choice when seeking an exchange. It was felt that this limited choice derived from the move by RCI to Points and the continued emergence of RCI as a holiday group with wider interests than just timeshare exchange.

### Gold Crown

There have been rumours that Barnsdale has lost its Gold Crown. This is not true; Barnsdale is still a RCI Gold Crown resort, and an II Premier resort. For the background, please see the Chairman's letter.

### Day Trips from Barnsdale

Barnsdale now offers day trips to our guests. Already in place is a trip every Monday afternoon, which tours round Rutland Water, and includes the Rutland Belle boat trip.

The next on the agenda, which may be in place by the time you read this, is a Wednesday trip to Burghley House, with a shopping stop in Stamford.

Others will be added if these trips are successful and well supported. I am sure that you will agree that this is a beneficial addition to the service offered, and I hope you will join one of the trips the next time you are staying at Barnsdale.

### How do you mark a resort?

As anyone who has exchanged with RCI will know, each exchange is followed up with a "Welcome Back" questionnaire, where RCI asks for your opinion of the exchange.

It is on the results of these that Gold Crown status is decided. I was surprised, as you may be, that a Gold Crown depends on a resort averaging over 4 out of 5 in each category (significantly above 4 in some cases).

I tend to adopt a British, reserved, attitude when I fill in this type of form – on a scale of 1-5, it is almost impossible to score more than 4 from me – so I've been marking down resorts without realising it.

Especially if you exchange back into Barnsdale (as I sometimes do), you might like to bear in mind the impact of your report on a resort's RCI status.

*Leigh Willows*

**BARNSDALE  
OWNERS  
ASSOCIATION**



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[www.barnsdaleowners.co.uk](http://www.barnsdaleowners.co.uk)

## The Chairman's Letter

With the coldest Easter that I can ever recall and a surprisingly heavy snowfall in early April, I hope that you are reading this in the warmth of some gentle summer sun and whilst sipping your favourite cool drink.

Looking back to before Easter, we had our AGM in February and it was gratifying to see more than 100 people in the room. The proceedings went well and there were some interesting questions raised by owners and their partners. Many of these centred upon levels of dissatisfaction with RCI and it was helpful that Susan Duncombe, RCI Sales Director, and her colleague Marj Anderson were on hand to provide answers. Since the AGM, together with Russell Waters from the Management Company, I have met with Susan to discuss some of the problems that have been raised and also to let her see for herself the high standard that we endeavour to maintain at Barnsdale. This is important, because our Gold Crown is under constant review and the RCI assessment system runs on a fixed annual basis, rather than the more logical rolling review system that is used by some other organisations. This means that it is sometimes hard to recover from any temporary dip in our standards, in time for the close of the fixed assessment period. Also, the RCI system is computer derived, based upon scored comments from our exchange guests. Given that only around half of our guests respond and that human inclination can be more towards criticism than praise, this system, once again, provides a somewhat flawed analysis.

Whatever the weaknesses of the RCI assessment system, and we feel that they are many, we are stuck with it. However, by keeping in touch at senior level within RCI, we are able to have a helpful dialogue. So far this year we are on track to keep our Gold Crown and this reflects the focus and hard work of the Barnsdale Management Company's team and the careful scrutiny of our Lodge & Leisure Committee. It was disappointing that a proofing error meant that the current RCI Directory omitted our Gold Crown. Susan Duncombe and her team were most apologetic about this and have done their best to redress this mistake, which is not repeated on the RCI website, by an article in the latest edition of RCI's Holiday Magazine.

Russell and I have also met with managers from Interval International and Dial-an-Exchange. These meetings have broadened our knowledge of what these two exchange organisations have to offer and enabled us to show them the full range of services and facilities at Barnsdale. We are listed by Interval International as a Premium Resort, the highest level possible. Interestingly, that organisation's approach to assessment is more "user friendly" than that of RCI. While Interval makes its initial assessment on the basis of customer feedback, it also engages in dialogue with a resort to achieve some form of balance and would not



remove an award without careful consideration.

At a recent Board meeting, we set two objectives for the future, in addition to the routine business that we conduct. The first is to work with the Management Company to identify areas where we can make our resort more friendly for those that do not enjoy full mobility. Here, we have to bear in mind our very limited budget and look at the problem through the eyes of owners and guests who stay for a week or two, rather than those owners who enjoy the concession of using the leisure facilities all year round. The second objective is to review our approach to recycling and environmental awareness. The Management Company has already installed recycling bins around the resort. We now intend to look at all areas of operation to see how we can reduce our carbon footprint.

We are still on the outlook for new recruits to the Board. My appeal at the AGM fell upon somewhat stony ground and, so far, has not yielded any new directors, although we do have one owner who is interested in joining us. Perhaps, if I yell a little louder, I might get better results? We really are keen to get some new blood on the Board, not least because Leigh Willows has now taken over as the Finance Director as well as looking after communications. This came about because Denis Jowett stood down from the finance post after the AGM, although he remains a director. If anyone out there would like to join in the fun, please get in touch with me through Barnsdale Management.

By the time of the next newsletter, I will be digging out the cashmere jumpers again and admiring the work of the moths over the summer months. While the moths will have been enjoying themselves, I hope that the same will go for all of you as well. On behalf of my fellow directors, my very best wishes to you for a long, warm and happy summer.

With all good wishes

*Peter Moore*

Peter Moore

Visit [www.barnsdaleowners.co.uk](http://www.barnsdaleowners.co.uk) to keep up to date

## Lodge & Leisure Report

**Committee:** Odile Churchward, Sheila Bunten, John Wedgewood, Dusty Miller (Chairman)

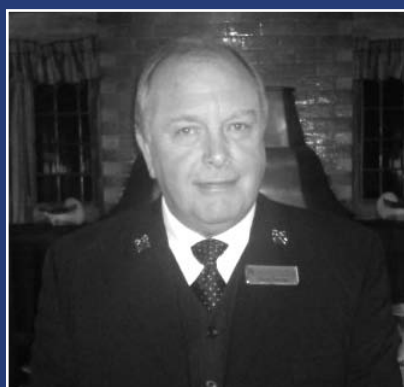
If ever you wanted to see what a difference the emergence of Spring makes, just visit Barnsdale and see the gardens – wonderful. For those of you who have visited recently you may have noticed how areas around the Lodges have been transformed from rather rough grass areas (due to the trees being in close proximity) into gardens which creates a good first impression and is much more pleasing on the eye.

Continuing the theme of first impressions we are also aware that many of the furnishings in some of the Lodges are looking somewhat tired and worn. Some new beds have been purchased and each Lodge inspected so replacements can be planned for the future. The Committee has also asked for an audit of the carpets and curtains to be done so that samples and estimates of costs can be made for replacements where necessary. At the same time it is planned to replace a further 5 kitchens and bathrooms during the maintenance period in January 2009. Over time many of the old storage heaters have been replaced and it is in the plans to replace all the remaining heaters with more up to date and efficient panel heaters.

The Crazy Golf has now been updated with an all weather, hard wearing surface together with new adult and children's putters. These, plus special balls, are specifically designed for this surface and conventional putters and golf balls are not to be used on this surface. This is a very popular activity and we hope the surface will have a long life of up to 20 years.

We are constantly aware of Health & Safety issues and have decided to replace one unsafe bathroom with a 'state of the art' shower. Safety grab rails are also to be fitted to all bathrooms. On site Recycling facilities are now available for use by all guests and where possible all bulbs are being replaced with low energy alternatives.

As always there is much more we would like to do but are very aware of financial constraints and the current uncertainty re- add on costs such as fuel prices etc. However we do believe that we are getting good value for your money!



### The Concierge – at your service

Our Head Concierge, David Fletcher looks forward to welcoming you to Barnsdale Hall Hotel.

David has a wealth of experience in the hospitality industry and is a proud member of the Society of the Golden Keys of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, the prestigious organization to which only the elite are admitted! Members are distinguished by the set of 'Golden Keys' they wear on the lapels of their uniforms. The Society is affiliated to a larger body; 'Les Clefs d'Or' and has access to a network of members in 39 countries. We are proud of the fact that David is the only 'Golden Keys' Concierge in the East Midlands area. See [www.goldenkeysconcierge.co.uk](http://www.goldenkeysconcierge.co.uk) to learn more.

During your stay here at Barnsdale Hall, David will be pleased to help you with all your requirements. Whether you require a route planner to find your way to nearby towns and cities, theatre tickets to a London show, car hire, in fact anything that makes your visit even more pleasurable. So when you plan your stay with us, why not get in touch with The Concierge prior to your arrival and sample the 'one to one' service you'll experience throughout your time here. Contact David personally on [david@barnsdalehotel.co.uk](mailto:david@barnsdalehotel.co.uk) He'll be pleased to be at 'at your service'.

## The Membership Services Office requires your help!

Dear Owners,

You can imagine that with over 2,000 owners and a considerable turnover of exchange guests, the amount of calls coming in to the office on a daily basis is quite staggering, and with only one person running the office, it leaves very little time for the administration work and appointments. As the majority of the calls are asking for identical information I hope the following answers will help to reduce the amount of calls.

Q "I have left my unit for renting with you, has it been rented out yet?"

A "We will always let you know if the renting has been successful. Telephone at least two weeks before the date to confirm if you wish to carry on or remove it."

Q "What is the date of my week?"

A "Our Timeshare Calendar is on the Owners Website."

Q "How many concessionary Leisure Cards are included with resales?"

A "Only two."

Q "I have problems with my exchange company getting my choice"

A "Please deal directly with them by phone, and a letter with all details is even better."

If you require forms for change of Membership Cards or Rental Forms, please leave a message with your details and we will send them to you.

For owners who have not rented or exchanged their weeks, could you please let me know at least two weeks beforehand if you will be using your unit. We can then carry out essential maintenance on any units not being used.

Thank you for your help

**Sue**

Membership Services Office

## Call for Contributions

I hope that you find the newsletter interesting and useful. After a period of uncertainty, we are trying to fall into a regular pattern of publication: early in the year, early summer and late summer. To do this means that I need to have enough material to publish. If there is any contribution you would like to make, especially reports of exchanges you have made, please don't hesitate to contribute. You can get them to me via the membership services office, any member of the committee, or to [editor@boanews.co.uk](mailto:editor@boanews.co.uk). Don't be shy – all contributions welcome.

*Leigh Willows*

## Annual Maintenance Fees

The invoices for this year's maintenance and sinking fund are enclosed with this Newsletter. Your Board understands that the amount of money requested is significant to many of you, not least because we are all paying it too. Rest assured that we do everything we can to minimise the amount, consistent with maintaining Gold Crown / Premier status. Every year a number of people fail to pay, and lose their week as a result, and this is something we like to help people avoid.

Each year a number of people ask if payments can be made on account, to reduce the impact of paying the full fee at once. This is not possible, but it is possible to pay by credit card. This will enable you to spread the cost as you see fit (though, of course, your card company will charge you interest if you don't pay it off straight away). There is a 3% charge to cover Barnsdale's costs of processing this, unfortunately. Incidentally, you can also pay by debit card, with a flat £5 charge for this method.

You could consider paying a weekly or monthly sum into a separate account, so that by the time the invoice arrives, you have enough to pay.

Don't forget that Barnsdale rents owners' weeks out. Although there is no guarantee that a particular week will be rented, if successful your annual fee will probably be covered, and you will still have your week available to use in future years. Obviously, you can't use it in a year when it has been rented by someone else.

It seems that some owners have been using this as a way to sell their units without a broker's fee. You should be aware that for any units which are "repossessed" (technically, have their licence cancelled) the amount realised will not be enough to provide any payment for the former owner. If you do not want your unit any more, a private sale is a much better option. Again, Barnsdale can help you out in this, though they will make a charge.



**Barnsdale**

Hall Hotel

## Buy your own piece of Barnsdale

As a timeshare owner of one of our units you are free to enjoy concessionary facilities, all year round, not just for the week you own

At Barnsdale Country Club you will benefit from the gold crown and premier accreditations awarded to the resort by RCI & Interval International exchange companies when it comes to exchanging your week with other resorts around the world. As a new owner through us you will receive the following exclusive benefits:

- Concessionary membership to Barnsdale Leisure Club all year round
- One year complimentary membership to an exchange company
- On site resort management services
- Discounts on Food, Beverages, Spa & Hotel Accommodation

Prices available from £1,500 per unit per week

For details please contact  
Sue Moore - Membership Services Manager  
on 01572 725148  
or email [suemoore@barnsdalehotel.co.uk](mailto:suemoore@barnsdalehotel.co.uk)

### WANTING TO SELL?

Barnsdale Country Club also offers a unique resale experience to our existing owners who maybe looking to sell. As the freeholder we can provide a 'one stop shop' for buying and selling.



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