

## Message from the Company Secretary

Owners will be aware that they have already received the first invoice dated 1st July 2008 for the sinking fund and management fee for 2008/2009 which contained a note to the effect that a penalty charge will apply to unpaid fees as of 1st October 2008.

I take this opportunity to point out that a reminder will be sent out on 29th August 2008 which again will remind owners that the PENALTY of £50.00 applies on 1st October 2008.

Please note that the Board have made a decision that any payments made after 1st October 2008 will incur the penalty without exception. I urge owners who do not intend to pay the sinking fund and management fee for 2008/2009 to take steps to sell their unit themselves.

**P Norman Smith**, Company Secretary,  
Barnsdale in Rutland Owners Association Limited

## A hen party arrives at Lodge 17



### Coming next time...

Squeezed out of this edition were a report of coverage of Barnsdale's recycling initiatives and Committee Jottings. Your editor hopes to bring these, and more in the next issue – due out in January. Your contribution would be welcome, too – [editor@boanews.co.uk](mailto:editor@boanews.co.uk) – or via the membership office, please.

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

## Lodge & Leisure Report

In the last Newsletter I commented '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' and this has continued to be the main focus of our work.

Beds have been replaced in 11 Lodges and a further inspection will take place later this year to check if we need to replace more.

The Cottesmore/Burley Lodges plus the Stable Block Apartments (including staircase) have been measured up for carpet replacement. The quality of carpet chosen is similar one that has been fitted to a local 5\* Country House Hotel and is hard wearing and stain resistant. Fitting will take place as soon as it is possible to arrange free time with the exchange companies.

Curtains continue to be a problem as many companies either fail to provide a quote or are far too expensive for our budget. We do believe however that we have now found a 'value for money' supplier and fitter. One Lodge will be fitted out and, depending on our satisfaction of the quality of service, a rolling programme will be put in place for updating other Lodges.

As mentioned in the last Newsletter the remaining storage heaters will be replaced by more efficient and up to date panel heaters. The time scale for this is for up to 10 Lodges to be updated in the year 2008/9 and the remainder to be completed in year 2009/10

An audit of tables in the units has shown that many are slightly damaged – stains and scratches for example – but are structurally sound. We are, therefore, looking at a 'creeping' renovation and replacement programme whereby a new table is bought and the old one then renovated. This should mean that over time all can be updated

at minimal cost. The same approach may also be taken with chairs but these will be subject to audit at a later date.

On the Leisure side, a lot of work has been done re-damp in the walls of the Squash Courts and once the remedial work has been completed on both courts they will be re-decorated.

The new extraction and air handling unit fitted to the ladies changing rooms in the swimming pool has received very good reports and our thanks are due to Mr. Penman who has not charged this work to the Sinking Fund. With regard to the Swimming Pool, repair to the pool lights will take place on October 2nd which necessitates closing the pool for that day. It is also planned for the Steam Room and Showers to be re-sealed plus work on the Ladies Changing Room Ceiling to be done on the same day, so causing the minimum inconvenience.

The Swimming Pool heating system has now reached an age whereby a major overhaul may be needed. A company has been contacted and is to do a full check before coming up with proposals and a service agreement.

On a final note I am sure you can imagine that the L&L Committee meetings are very interesting and, at times, some lateral thinking or logical deduction is required. So to finish on a lighter note – can you solve the following?

*A meeting was called. The representative from Nepal arrived by plane and was collected from the airport. The delegate from China arrived later and the taxi driver was told he would recognise him as he wore a chain round his neck. What was the weather like when the man from Iran arrived?*

Best wishes

*Dusty Miller*

**BARNSDALE  
OWNERS  
ASSOCIATION**



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

## The Chairman's Letter

For regular readers, the moths enjoyed themselves and fed well on my cashmere jumpers. I would not have expected to find out quite so soon, but the summer cooled a little earlier than I had hoped. Not many balmy nights, sipping wine under the stars. There's always next year.

My last appeal for new blood on the Board yielded one expression of interest, but we still need more new members, particularly ladies. The work that we do is not onerous but it is important. We all want Barnsdale to be a thriving resort and we all want value for the fees we pay and the contributions we make to the Sinking Fund. Working closely with the Management Company, the Board focuses on those aims. The Board meets at Barnsdale every six weeks or so and the meetings usually last around two and a half hours. Any work in between meetings, such as attending the Monday morning "Meet and Greet", can generally be tied in with regular visits to the Leisure Centre, at least for those directors who live locally. Communication and some of the work is by e-mail. The commitment is not great, but without it, Barnsdale would not be what it is today, a premier timeshare resort. So, if you have a few spare hours and some ideas about improving our resort, please get in touch with me.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, together with the Management Company, the Board is examining ways of improving access for the less mobile and lessening our carbon footprint. I am pleased to say that the Freeholder has agreed to reduce the width of the speed bumps so that people with wheelchairs and mobility scooters can negotiate the roads with greater ease, while the bumps remain a deterrent to any would-be Lewis Hamilton. Also, the Management Company has taken steps to decrease the amount of waste that it sends to landfill and to increase the use of low energy bulbs wherever possible.

Many of you will have noticed the changes that have been made to the timetable for the swimming pool. These were made in agreement with the Management Company and in the light of adverse comments from a number of Owners. Our objective was to make the pool available for



the greatest amount of time to the maximum number of people, by limiting those occasions when access had to be denied for whatever reason. The change has not gone unremarked, but the majority of comments have been in favour of the revised schedule: we cannot please everyone, no matter how hard we try! In general, the new schedule means that whenever you turn up, you should be able to swim, subject only to the limiting number in the pool.

We maintain our closer contact with the exchange organisations and I am happy to report that Interval International recently confirmed our continued status as a Premier Resort, the highest designation and one that identifies Barnsdale as "a property significantly exceeding Interval International's already high affiliation standards and delivering outstanding holiday experiences". RCI and Dial-an-Exchange have each held Owners' Evenings, using one of the Barnsdale Hotel conference rooms. On these evenings, up to 100 owners were able to hear of the latest developments in the timeshare world and to ask questions about making an exchange. The feedback from both sides has been very positive and I hope that the exchange companies will make these evenings a regular feature in their calendar.

Looking ahead to next year, we will need to agree a new three year budget with the Management Company to take effect from 1 September 2009. I know that is a long way into the future, but I do not expect this to be an easy task. We are all aware of the impact of high inflation on the economy at large and on our day-to-day living costs. Barnsdale cannot be sheltered from these increases. However, by planning well ahead and working closely with the Management Company, I hope that we can identify areas where savings can be made or costs contained through improved efficiency.

Staying in the future, I will close by being, most probably, the first to wish you all a Happy Christmas! Our next newsletter will not be published until after the decorations have completed their annual pilgrimage to and from the attic. So I hope that you all enjoy a mellow autumn followed by a wonderful Christmas with your friends and family. After that, I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the next AGM which will now take place at Barnsdale on Saturday 7th March 2009 at 14.30 and not on 28th February as some of you may previously have heard.

With all good wishes

*Peter Moore*

Peter Moore

## Twenty Years On...

August 31st marked the halfway point in the 40 year life of Barnsdale Owners Association. So, as the only director who has served since the beginning, it falls to me to give a personal account of the events of the past twenty years. In the first of a series, I remember what happened during the "early years".

In fact, I only got involved when the first committee was formed in 1989. Prior to that, the Association had been set up by the developer in July 1988 and "managed" by a board of two Subscribing Members and a Company Secretary. Minutes of those early meetings indicate that the main business was to sign and seal Purchase Agreements.

Towards the end of 1989, I and a dozen other timeshare owners were invited by the then Sales and Marketing Manager, Graham Lünow, to join with two representatives of the freeholder and the Company Secretary to form the first committee. Our first meeting was held on November 29th, and the main business was to prepare for the Association's first A.G.M. It was made clear that we had been co-opted so that our "advice and guidance could be taken by the Country Club". The implication was that we would take no active part in the running of the resort.

The A.G.M. on December 19th was a brief affair, as there were no accounts to approve (we had no money) and not much to report. The main business was the election of committee members, when all but one of us were voted in. (The one exception was my wife Anita, who had stood down when it was realised that we owned only one unit/week.)

At the first meeting of the newly-elected committee on January 10th 1990, Len Brereton was elected Chairman. The main discussions centred on a) a management proposal to withdraw the Stable Block units and two units in the Hall from the timeshare inventory (these units had not sold well and could be better used as conference accommodation) and b) the terms and conditions of the Leisure Centre lease. A sub-committee was formed to deal with both of these matters. A further sub-committee was established to deal with "liaison with members".

At the following meeting in February it was agreed that we needed a Minute Secretary – and I was the lucky person given the job! An E.G.M. was called for March 23rd to approve the withdrawal of the 6 units: the proposal was passed with a large majority.

At the May meeting we learnt that Graham Lünow had left Barnsdale and Ray Holland, the newly appointed General Manager, replaced him on the committee. The remainder of 1990 was a frustrating time. The Finance sub-committee found it almost impossible to get hold of meaningful facts and figures, the Sinking Fund assets and important legal documents were not forthcoming and there was an ongoing feud with the management company on the opening hours of the pool. Indeed, the management and costs of operating the pool were to be a source of friction for several years!

This frustration manifested itself when five committee members, including Len Brereton, indicated their intention to retire at the next A.G.M. In September I was elected Company Secretary, the first one not being an employee of the management company.

On December 19th, the 1990 A.G.M. went off smoothly. Two new committee members were elected and it was announced that the long delayed legal documents, the Leisure Lease and the Deed for Foundation Members (those who bought units before December 31st, 1990) were now being signed by the trustees and would soon be countersigned by the Association. At the first meeting following the A.G.M., Ruth Cunnington was elected chairman, a role she held for three years. Apart from the two new elected members, Billy Kellock, the new Sales Manager, and Arthur Blears joined the committee as the developer's representatives. Michael Page, a local solicitor, was also co-opted.

From the beginning, the developer had subsidised the running costs of the resort. After all, there were not enough timeshare owners (only 600 by the end of 1990) for the management fees to cover the costs. However, the subsidy was due to end in September 1991 and the committee was becoming increasingly concerned that poor sales would place an impossible burden on the Association and its members. At the March 11th meeting, Ruth Cunnington announced that, following a meeting with Mr Penman, the management fee subsidy would continue for some time to come. Without the subsidy the average management fee would have been about £1,800 per unit. So-called "annual memberships" were introduced to increase turnover, though some of these were converted to timeshare sales. Even so, only 13 units were sold in the first quarter of 1991. (You may recall this was the time of the last property market decline.)

The continued subsidy of management fees meant that the Association had very limited negotiating power. The developer took the view that, as he was paying a very high proportion of the Barnsdale running costs, timeshare owners had no part to play. Anyway, with so many unsold units, he had more votes than everyone else added together!

The apparent impotence of the committee led some members to question its value and one member resigned. Despite this, through regular meetings with the Chief Executive, John Diaper, and with Mr Penman, Ruth Cunnington managed to develop a better working relationship with the management company. At the third A.G.M. on December 11th 1991, there were no resignations and those due to retire sought re-election.

At the first meeting after the A.G.M., Ruth Cunnington continued as Chairman and Mr Kellock reported that sales of timeshare units were improving significantly. Having been informed that, at long last, Sinking Fund monies would be passed to the Association, a bank account was established. Very soon, though, things started to go wrong again. The Association received requests from the management company to spend money on replacements in the leisure centre, even though it had no money (the promised Sinking Fund monies had not been transferred). Mr Kellock announced that Barnsdale was terminating its agreement with Interval International and joining R.C.I. As so often happened in those days, no consultation had taken place on this decision.

The biggest upset came as a result of a perception by the management company that the Association was unhappy with its performance and wanted to change to another

company. Frantic meetings with Mr Diaper followed. Mr Penman made it known that he planned to cancel the Maintenance Agreement. Other matters concerning the availability of the management accounts to our auditors and the ongoing saga regarding the leisure lease also came to a head. Ruth and I met with the Royal Bank of Scotland in an attempt to resolve this latter matter, and it became clear that both the bank and the developer had changed their solicitors. It was still to be a further several months before this matter was finally resolved, mainly because the two firms of solicitors involved could not agree on the wording of one clause.

Gradually the situation improved. Mr Penman agreed to let the committee have the financial information it needed and also agreed to hand over the Sinking Fund monies. Even timeshare sales were improving!

At the 1992 A.G.M. and after three years working hard as Chairman of the Liaison sub-committee, Beryl Kirtland decided to retire, but all other committee members remained to serve for another year. The Sinking Fund was finally under the control of the Association and stood at just under £45,000. However, £25,000 was already earmarked for work on the lodges to be carried out during maintenance week. At this A.G.M. a proposal put to the members that *"the Committee be empowered to seek professional advice on the most appropriate means, and the projected costs thereof, of managing the group ownership rights at Barnsdale Country Club"* was approved unanimously.

We joined TATOC (The Association of Timeshare Owners' Committees) so we could benefit from the experience of Owners' Committees in other resorts.

Following the A.G.M., Barbara Atton joined the committee, Ruth Cunnington was re-elected Chairman and I was re-elected Company Secretary and Treasurer. Carolyn Hipwell was elected Minute Secretary, as I did not want three jobs! It was decided to set up an Executive sub-committee to speed up decision making when necessary; it consisted of Ruth, John Harrison and myself. John

Robinson, who had been a committee member for two years, was appointed Liaison Officer. And the big news was the Leisure Lease and Foundation Members' Deed were finally signed and sealed by all parties! Well, it only took three years.

In March 1993, Mr Kellock announced that he no longer wished to be a committee member. The absence of a management representative on the committee made communication with the management company even more difficult than before.

That year was relatively quiet after the turbulence of the previous one. We received notification from the Royal Bank of Scotland that they wished to relinquish their role as trustees. At that time, all the major banks seemed to be "getting out" of such roles. This necessitated the search for new trustees, but fortunately our contact at RBS was able to point us in the direction of suitable replacements.

Towards the end of the year, Gordon Smith resigned as a result of his business activities preventing him from attending meetings. Gordon had chaired the Finance and General Purposes sub-committee for 4 years and worked extremely hard for the Association. Perhaps he was worn out after the saga of the Leisure Lease!

John Harrison took over as Chairman of F&GP. A decision to raise a Supplementary Invoice from members of the Association to pay for bills that had been submitted by RBS over a long period of time and which the management company were unwilling to pay, plus other expenses, caused consternation. Committee members were also not pleased when a letter concerning the Supplementary Invoice and signed by the Chairman was sent to owners, as the content had not been seen or approved by even the Executive sub-committee.

Ruth had worked extremely hard for the Association during her time as Chairman, but there was concern in some quarters that her seemingly authoritarian style was not suitable for an organisation like ours. And so it was that, following the A.G.M. of November 1993, she was replaced as Chairman. But that's another story ...

## Diary News from the Membership Services Office!

As I write this, we are here right in the thick of the summer season but with the constant rain, the only thing to remind us that it is actually summer here at Barnsdale is, as usual, the spectacular gardens and the huge influx of inbound guests and children on school holidays.

My colleagues Faye and Sara and myself have been kept busy with a continuous stream of visitors and phone calls. On the odd hot days that we could prop the door open to invite the sunshine in, we saw an even greater number of visitors, and some curious hotel guests wanting to know what we are all about!

At the end of July, we had a very enjoyable evening with Dial an Exchange, with over 130 owners who came along to hear a different view of Exchanging from their Managing Director David Lilley. Congratulations to Mr & Mrs Morris and Mr & Mrs Gilliver who each won a free week's holiday courtesy of DAE. We now await a

similar evening with RCI in September.

Mid summer has brought a long awaited slow down of phone calls regarding Scam companies (hope I don't speak too soon). I cannot reiterate enough – be careful and if they contact you, rather than the other way round, this should start alarm bells ringing. Definitely do not give any money upfront. Having said that, I was rather appalled to see Etoo, a familiar scam company, actually advertising on the TV and only a few days later, the complete reverse whereby this same company have been investigated for ripping off Timeshare Owners, so if you see this name Beware!

Until next time!!

*Sue*

Membership Services Office