

## *The Chairman's Letter*

Having been the first to wish you all a Happy Christmas, I suspect that I will now be the last to wish you a Happy New Year; such is the timing of our newsletter. Nevertheless, now that the decorations have completed their return journey, I do hope that you all had a really enjoyable time at Christmas and that all fortune is yours for the New Year.

I know that many of us try to make well-intentioned resolutions as the New Year is born and no doubt, if you are anything like me, many of those have already been forgotten. Despite the generally patchy record of resolutions, I wonder if I could tempt fate by suggesting two resolutions that it would be helpful for you to keep. The first is quite simple – "I will attend the AGM on Saturday 7th March 2009". We had an encouraging turnout last year and it would be really good if we could have even more owners present this time for our once-a-year get together.

The second resolution is also simple – "I will not be a victim of a timeshare scam". There are a number of scams in operation, all designed to relieve you of your money and, quite possibly, your timeshare, without any gain to yourself. Clearly, these scams must be fairly convincing because some very intelligent owners have fallen victim to them and parted with money and bank details over the telephone to an unsolicited third party caller. Many of these callers operate from overseas, making it very hard to pursue any legal redress. In a meeting with RCI, it was agreed that the old maxim held true – "If it sounds too good to be true, it is". Please, please note that exchange companies will not cold call you to suggest that you sell your timeshare, nor will they ask you to sell your weeks or points. Also, I can promise you that no-one from Barnsdale or the Owners' company will ever contact you to discuss selling your timeshare, unless you have made the first approach. Therefore, if someone telephones you or writes to you offering to buy your unit, it is 99% certain to be a scam. If you do want to sell, Sue Moore in Barnsdale Membership Services is an excellent and safe starting point. Treat any unsolicited approach as being highly suspicious, no matter how plausible it sounds and whose name they take in vain.

As 2008 came to its end, I was sorry to receive Odile Churchward's resignation as a director after many years of valued service. I had known for some time that this was imminent, as Odile had announced that she and her husband planned to retire to Switzerland. Sadly for us, but happily for Odile, those plans have now come to fruition. I am sure that you would all wish to join me in thanking Odile for her hard work as a director and in wishing her all happiness for the future.



Staying with directors, I am delighted to say that my "Your Board needs you" appeal did not fall on deaf ears. In fact we had more applicants than we could sensibly cope with and we had the unenviable task of having to decide between excellent candidates. My thanks to everyone who expressed an interest in joining the Board and a welcome to our two newly co-opted directors, Lisa Neale and Patrick Candler both of whom bring with them some very useful expertise.

Other good news was that we have been informed by RCI that we have retained our Gold Crown for another year. This reflects the hard work of Russell Waters and his Barnsdale team together with Dusty Miller and his colleagues on our Lodge and Leisure Committee. Maintaining an ageing estate with limited funds is no easy task and it is a great credit to everyone involved that the hard work has been rewarded. Credit must also go to Susan Duncombe, RCI Sales Director, and her team who have worked closely with us throughout the year to make sure that Barnsdale gets the recognition it deserves.

I was going to close by being the first to wish you a Happy Easter, but decided that that would be more suited to the AGM when all of your Board really do hope to see as many of you there as possible. In the meantime, may I once again offer my wishes for you to prosper and find happiness in 2009. I would also like to offer my thanks to my fellow directors for their constant support and hard work throughout the past year. I look forward to continuing our work together in the year ahead.

With all good wishes



Peter Moore

## *Twenty Years On ...* *John Bentley continues his personal account* *of the BOA "early years"*

Following the 1993 A.G.M., the new committee met on January 10th 1994. I was nominated for the post of Chairman, but Ruth Cunnington was not. Ruth had worked very hard as Chairman of BOA for three years and she appeared visibly shocked when committee members thanked her for her work but made it clear they did not want her to continue.

I was elected unopposed and thus I began my first stint as BOA Chairman, one that was to last for 11 years. We now needed a new Company Secretary and I was delighted when Barbara Atton, who had joined the committee a year earlier, agreed to take on the role. It was a position she held for six years, and jolly efficient she was too. Stuart Illsley was elected Treasurer and Carolyn Hipwell continued as Minute Secretary.

My style of chairmanship was very different to Ruth's. I believed the Association should be more open and transparent. I expected each committee member to voice their opinion on major issues before decisions were taken. I wanted timeshare owners to be kept informed of those decisions and the reasons for them. One obvious way forward was to send a regular newsletter to all owners, but we had no money! (Remember, the developer was still subsidising us.)

We set up a new Communications sub-committee, chaired by John Robinson. Part of its role was to find ways of financing a newsletter. In the short term, I prepared a Chairman's Letter, had it photocopied and sent it to all timeshare owners. The response was encouraging. I then set about producing the first "BOA News" on my very basic home computer. I remember some people saying "you'll never keep it going", but here we are with Issue 35.

### *Working relationship*

I also wanted to have a more positive working relationship with Barnsdale Management Company. After all it was in the interests of both BMC and BOA that we worked together. This process was helped considerably by the election of Roger Adcock and Heather Thornton as the developer's representatives on the committee. Roger served for several years and worked wonders by finding more cost-effective ways of solving problems. We were now having to use the limited Sinking Fund to start replacing worn out items in the lodges and the Leisure Centre.

We established a General Purposes sub-committee, initially chaired by Ruth Cunnington, later by Ken Green, to look after expenditure from the Sinking Fund and health and safety matters. Ken was to become a stalwart committee member and later my vice chairman. He reminded us regularly that we were running a business and controlling a considerable amount of money on behalf of our members.

Our new trustees, Hutchinson & Co., were appointed. We were now facing a new situation. A very small number of owners were defaulting on their management fees, in effect a breach of their contract. The committee decided that Clause 74A of the Articles should be invoked, whereby persistent non-payment would result in the owner losing their unit. When this happened, the Association needed to dispose of it. Initially, local press advertising was tried, but there was no response.

After considering using a timeshare resale company, the committee decided to try selling the units privately. This involved Barbara Atton in a huge amount of work, including

showing potential buyers around the resort, but to her credit she succeeded in selling five units. Others were purchased by Penwise Properties.

On November 16th 1994, my first A.G.M. as Chairman went off reasonably smoothly, with those committee members due to retire being re-elected. During the next year we had to deal with new Health and Safety rules for the pool area, including improved supervision; the installation of a turnstile to control access to the pool; replacement of ageing gym equipment; regular inspections of the lodges (diligently carried out by Barbara Atton, Carolyn Hipwell and Roger Adcock), followed by ensuring that necessary repairs and replacements were carried out.

### *Sinking Fund*

During the previous four years the Sinking Fund levy had risen to 25%, as required by the Articles of Association. To keep the total cost of owning at Barnsdale as low as viably possible, the committee decided to lower the levy to 10%. It was felt at the time that this would produce sufficient income to meet the Association's needs. Needless to say, it was not long before it became necessary to start increasing the levy, but fortunately it has never had to be increased as high as 25%!

Production of "BOA News" continued. When I asked owners for suggested designs for a logo, we received 17 replies. The one selected, submitted by one of our corporate owners, is still in use on our letterhead and, of course, on "BOA News". After producing the first few issues on my home computer, the committee finally agreed to have them printed by a professional company. We were lucky to find one of our owners who ran a successful printing firm in Peterborough, and they have produced "BOA News" ever since. Thank you, Iain and Joanne!

At the following A.G.M., both Ruth Cunnington and Mike Page retired from the committee. Mike, a qualified solicitor, had been of enormous help to the Association for some five years, and I was very sorry to see him leave. I appealed for new committee members and, as a result, three new directors were co-opted at the next committee meeting. One of these was Jim Simms, who a year later became our Treasurer, a job he carried out with great diligence. Although he is no longer our Treasurer, I am grateful that he still serves as a director.

You will have noticed I use the word "director". As BOA is a limited company, its committee members are by definition its Board of Directors, with their details registered at Companies House. Yet it was only in July 2001 that committee meetings became Board meetings.

### *Conference Centre opens*

About this time, the developer informed us that he was planning to build 10 more timeshare units on land opposite the Cottismore lodges. However, by June 1996 he had decided instead to build a new leisure centre. In the event, the proposed leisure centre became what we now know as the Edith Weston Conference Centre. It all happened very quickly and on November 15th 1996 we held our 8th A.G.M. in the Edith Weston.

The new venue proved a big success, attracting over 200 people to the A.G.M. Many took advantage of a special Owners Weekend with an all-in price for 2 nights' accommodation, buffet supper on Friday and Beaujolais Dinner following a day of "surprise events" on Saturday – all organised superbly by Heather Thornton.



In January 1997, we established a new Finance sub-committee under the chairmanship of Ken Green. Finance had become an increasingly important concern of the Association and the new sub-committee was kept busy. In particular the costs of running the swimming pool were spiralling, so when the Management Company recommended bringing in a specialist professional organisation for a fixed annual fee, we had to consider it seriously.

And so began a new era for Barnsdale, with Fitness Express managing the leisure facilities. It proved to be a bumpy ride.....

*left: The new (in 1996) Edith Weston Conference Centre*

## Lodge & Leisure Report

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

At the time of writing we are nearing the festive season with Barnsdale and our lodges and apartments facing up to the frosty weather which is taking turns with the wind and rain to make our job as difficult as possible. To add to our problems a long-serving member of the Lodge & Leisure Committee, Odile Churchward has decided to move back to her native Switzerland. We will miss her input and background knowledge of Barnsdale which I, as a relative newcomer to the board, relied on to help in the decision making process. Grateful thanks to Odile from all on the committee. The good news is that we have a replacement, with the new member of the Board Lisa Neale joining us. We look forward to having a young, fresh approach and input to our meetings. Welcome Lisa!

So how are things progressing on the lodge refurbishment programme? Heaters for upgrading 10 more lodges have been ordered and will be fitted as soon as possible. New carpets have been fitted to all the mews block and corridors. Relevant redecoration has also been carried out. The curtain replacement programme is now underway with Lodges 4 & 5 having been completed with another 3 of the most needy lodges earmarked for replacement in the new year.

New dining furniture and re-upholstering of chairs where appropriate is being trialed and, if the committee is satisfied with both the standard and the cost of the purchases and work, the programme will be rolled out. During December and the maintenance period new bathrooms will be fitted to Lodges 12 & 14 and new kitchens and bathrooms to lodges 6 & 4.

In reviewing energy saving, low energy bulbs have been, or are being, fitted wherever possible. As mentioned in the last newsletter we do, however, have a major problem with the swimming pool heating and air maintenance system. In order to achieve anything like the required temperatures the system is working to maximum capacity, i.e. maximum electricity consumption, at all times and has reached the stage where it is inefficient and obsolete. The replacement system will be modern, fuel efficient and carbon friendly. This is a major cost item and will result in the pool being closed for a few days when the changeover takes place. Due notification will, of course, be given.

On behalf of the Lodge & Leisure Committee, I wish you all a very healthy and more settled 2009.

*Dusty Miller*

## The New RCI Website

For those owners with RCI who haven't looked at the website recently, it's certainly worth having another look – the "exchange" section has been totally revamped. Now the site lists weeks you have deposited, along with the number of possible exchanges for that week (over 106,000 for my next Barnsdale week, when I checked).

Click on a week, and you are presented with a world map, showing the number of possible exchanges on each continent, and a list of possible months, showing the number of available exchanges for that month.

You can then narrow your search by time or place. Pick a continent and you will be shown the countries, with the number of exchanges for each. Or you can choose a month, and be shown a reduced number of exchanges by continent.

Then, narrow your search in any combination of geography and time and, when you get to a manageable number, click on the "List View", instead of the map, to get details of the resorts and weeks available. If you feel you have gone down a blind alley, you can always go back a step.

Personally, I think that it is a great improvement, and it may assist those of you who feel that you can't get a good exchange

from RCI. It certainly helps to you to understand what is available, without having to make too many decisions before you start your search.

Of course, it doesn't increase the exchanges available, and there aren't many options for next summer in the UK at the moment!

*Leigh Willows*

## BIROA Website

Don't forget the website –  
[www.barnsdaleowners.co.uk](http://www.barnsdaleowners.co.uk).

We are experimenting with a forum on there at the moment, where owners can exchange messages between themselves. This is an addition to all the other information available; news, minutes and exchange calendar to name but a few.

Why not go and have look now? Thanks to Martin Couchman for maintaining this for us.

## 9 Reasons Why Dial An Exchange Should Be Your First Choice For Exchanges in 2009!

### Reason Number 1.

Save at least the equivalent of your annual maintenance fee with our free Dial An Exchange Reward Card\*  
Call 01756 749 966 to find out how

Everyone at Dial An Exchange is determined to ensure you find timeshare exchange simple and cost effective.

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1. Our free Dial An Exchange Rewards Card allows you to save hundreds of pounds per year or at least the equivalent to your annual maintenance fee\*.
2. You can book Bonus Weeks from as little as £99 per week.
3. At Dial An Exchange, we offer a totally free membership option. If you don't use our service, it will not cost you a penny.
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5. Our Cancellation Protection Scheme means you can protect your holiday and your exchange fee for just £10.

### Reason Number 2.

Book Bonus Weeks from as little as £99 per apartment.

Book your Bonus Weeks now by calling 01756 749 966

6. Our Gold Membership service can remove all of the effort from timeshare exchange.
7. Our 2009 Directory makes it very easy to sit down and consider your holiday options.
8. Our first event of the year is being held in Skipton, North Yorkshire. Join our 10th Birthday celebration, enjoy some complimentary food and wine.
9. Because we care about what you think and we are happy to answer your questions face to face.

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Terms and conditions and details of savings accessible via the Reward Card are available on request from Dial An Exchange.

## Be bold and brave – The following appeared in the RCI Magazine during 2008

In the UK, Russell Waters, general manager of the Barnsdale Country Club in Rutland – an RCI Gold Crown resort – has introduced a number of new recycling initiatives since joining the resort last September.

The Barnsdale development includes a 66-bedroom hotel and 49 lodges. Waters says when he joined, the lodges had no facilities for recycling their rubbish and when he approached the local authorities to help, he got a limited response.

Not deterred, Waters has employed a private company to provide recycling bins on site. Each bin is easily accessible but has been strategically placed to blend in with the surroundings so they don't create an eyesore. Owners and their guests can now recycle paper, plastic bottles, glass and cardboard.

Spurred on by the success of the recycling bins, Waters got to thinking about the amount of mineral water sold by the resort each week.

He said: "I read an article which said three billion bottles of mineral water are drunk in Britain each year and of those, half a billion are transported from overseas.

"That means more than 33,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide is emitted every year in transporting bottled water in the UK alone."

Waters calculated that Barnsdale supplied between 250 and 400 plastic bottles of mineral water to its conference and event delegates every week. He decided to withdraw mineral water from functions and serve fresh tap water

instead. If mineral water is requested it's explained to guests why tap water is being suggested, but that mineral water can be provided if essential.

It was a brave move which has paid off, as Waters explained: "We have had nothing but overwhelming support from our guests. We've even had letters from some saying 'thank goodness someone has taken the initiative'."

Waters is positive about the future and intends to continue to find ways that Barnsdale can do its bit to protect the environment.

He said: "Recycling is a way of life today. It's on everyone's mind to help save the planet and the more we can do through business, the better."

## All Contributions Welcome

Did you enjoy the Owner's report on an exchange in this issue? Well, would you have enjoyed it? I know I would. Please try to find a few minutes to describe an exchange you have enjoyed, or wish to warn others about. Don't worry about the standard of your writing; I can always "wordsmith" it for you if necessary.

If there is anything else you would like to contribute, that would be welcome too.

Please send all contributions to [editor@boanews.co.uk](mailto:editor@boanews.co.uk) or hand them (or send them) into membership services or any board member. I look forward to hearing from you.

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

Design and print: ePrint, Peterborough 01733 313898