

## DIAMOND JUBILEE



Left to right: Britannia takes tea, the Earl of Pembroke, picnickers at North Mill Place and a Penstones' welly thrower

Wet weather did not dampen the spirits over this historic June weekend and there were reports of many garden parties and other celebrations. The Earl and Countess of Pembroke were special guests at Bemerton Farm, where a tree was planted to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The new Bemerton Farm development was created ten years ago out of the extraordinary model farm designed by Samuel Clarke for the Dowager Countess of Pembroke in 1863.

There were some more idiosyncratic celebrations elsewhere, with a welly throwing Jubilee Olympics at Penstones Court, Stanford in the Vale, a tea party out of Lewis Carroll at Manor Court, Pewsey and some determined picnickers in the garden at North Mill Place, Halstead.



## EDITORIAL

With the economy in the doldrums, Cognatum Chairman Henry Thornton reported in his annual statement that giving value for money during these difficult times remains a priority. Cost control measures enabled Cognatum to reduce management fee income by 4% last year and the aim is to further reduce administrative costs again this year.

He added that "We value Cognatum's uniquely personal and professional service and are conscious that we need to come up with plans to ensure that it continues to evolve and address new technology and changing social and economic trends. One of our great advantages is that most of the properties we manage, whatever their age, are designed to be easily adapted to changing lifestyles and modernisation. This is something for current owners to consider and an encouragement for the next generation of owners. We are reviewing our corporate plan and an important part of this will be a detailed survey of owners' views and preferences, which we intend to carry out in 2012."



## Change of Landscape

Charles Gilchrist, our new Landscape Manager

In July one of our two landscape managers, Alan Prockter, retired. In his twelve years with the English Courtyard Association, and latterly Cognatum, he has made a major contribution to improving our gardens and grounds and advising and training staff. As a highly qualified horticulturalist, Alan spent thirty-three years working with the Greater London Council, the Development Corporation and Milton Keynes.

Charles Gilchrist joined Cognatum in May on a part-time basis, to share landscape duties with Colin Quinney. Charles is based in Newbury and has run a garden management consultancy since 1988. He has designed two award-winning gardens at the Chelsea Flower Show and also advises the National Trust.

## A SURVEY OF YOUR VIEWS

A year ago we printed an article by Professor Michael Ball on owner-occupied retirement housing. It raised important questions about future housing provision and how accommodation could be improved for those in later life to make these years the positive experience they should be. There have been many technical, social and economic changes since some of our earlier private estates were built more than 25 years ago. To remain at the forefront of upmarket retirement housing for the next 25 years, Cognatum must move with the times and understand what services our customers require as well as setting clear standards of service delivery.

Cognatum has commissioned Mystery Shoppers, a leading, customer-research company, to conduct a confidential survey of all our customers in the autumn. Our aim is to find out what you think of the services provided by Cognatum – where they could be improved and any ideas you have for additional services. Questionnaires will be sent to every household; this will be followed up with focus group meetings to explore issues in more depth and to generate ideas for the future. A report giving the results of the survey will be published next year.

## Guernsey Celebration

A special event took place in Guernsey in June to celebrate 25 years of Les Blancs Bois, the premier retirement development in the Channel Islands, which is managed by Cognatum. This included a lunch in the grounds for residents and special guests, prepared and served by catering students of the Guernsey College of Further Education. A special plaque to commemorate the occasion was unveiled by Noel Shuttleworth, founder of the English Courtyard Association, and BBC Radio Guernsey aired a one-hour live broadcast from the site, featuring interviews with residents, guests and staff.



## News in brief...

**Stylish new houses in Odiham** – A show house is now ready for visitors at Seymour Place, where nine modern and very spacious townhouses are coming up to completion. Five remain available priced from £535,000 to £600,000 – [www.seymourplace.co.uk](http://www.seymourplace.co.uk)

**Residents Advisory Panel** – Two new members have joined the panel, which meets twice a year in March and September. Jean Schooling, FRSA, moved to Church Place, Ickenham in 1996 after a career in social services, which culminated in her appointment as Director of Social Work Services at Broadmoor Hospital. Alan Robson started in the Colonial Service in Nyasaland, and then spent the next 35 years working for some of the newly independent countries in southern Africa. He retired to Seymour Place, Odiham in 2000.

**www.cognatum.co.uk** – Our website has been relaunched with a fresh and modern layout, designed to make it easier to use and more attractive, as well as using search optimisation to boost visits from potential buyers and sellers.

**2012 annual meetings** – The first meetings will be held on 26th September; details of the 2013 service charges and reserve fund budgets will be sent out beforehand. Most other meetings will take place in October. The exact dates and times have already been confirmed. A Cognatum director will chair each meeting and there will be refreshments and an opportunity for informal discussions before the formal part of the meetings begin.

**S**ales at Cognatum Property experienced a slower start in the first quarter of 2012 compared to 2011, although there was a very significant rise in the number of sales agreed in June. The average length of time from accepting an offer until exchange of contracts has been frustratingly slow for both buyers and sellers. Our customers tend to be downsizers in the prime housing market and so trends in that market inevitably affect ours. Prime property prices are reported to have eased slightly over this period. Townhouses continue to be one of the more resilient sectors, attractive for their proximity to the countryside and the convenience of town living. The prime southeast market remains the best performer.

We have now launched the sale of nine stylish new townhouses just off the High Street in Odiham, Hampshire, which will be ready for occupation in late summer. Spacious and equipped to a high specification, they offer a perfect combination of comfort and convenience. The show house can be viewed by appointment (01491 615961). Details can be seen on the website [www.seymourplace.co.uk](http://www.seymourplace.co.uk). Current prices range from £535,000 to £600,000.



### Stylish new development at Seymour Place, Odiham, Hampshire

Nine contemporary interior designed and energy efficient townhouses, within easy walking distance of shops and restaurants in the High Street.

**£535,000 – £600,000**



### 10 Wye House, Marlborough, Wiltshire

250 yards from one of the grandest high streets in England, a two-bedroom house looking out over a landscaped garden.

**£425,000**



### 16 Dunchurch Hall, Dunchurch, Warwickshire

A stunning two-bedroom ground floor apartment with a conservatory and country views, a short walk into the centre of the village.

**£295,000**



### 18 Muskerry Court, Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

An immaculate two-bedroom ground floor apartment with two reception rooms, opening onto a private garden terrace.

**£420,000**



### 1 Hayes End Manor, South Petherton, Somerset

Two-bedroom cottage converted from a Grade II listed building in a farm setting, facing onto a courtyard garden and ornamental pond.

**£299,950**



### 32 The Playing Close, Charlbury, Oxfordshire

In the centre of this Cotswold town with its Brunel station, a two-bedroom cottage with a swimming pavilion in the garden.

**£370,000**



### 17 Flacca Court, Tattenhall, Cheshire

In a thriving village with local shops and surrounded by picturesque rolling countryside, a two-bedroom cottage with a private terrace.

**£350,000**



### 14 Northfield Court, Aldeburgh, Suffolk

Situated close to the beach in this charming seaside town, a two-bedroom house with a conservatory.

**£325,000**



### 14 Home Farm, Iwerne Minster, Dorset

A fine three-bedroom cottage with a first floor balcony over a terrace and delightful views over the gardens, converted from farm buildings.

**£475,000**



### 21 Berehurst, Alton, Hampshire

A three-bedroom cottage looking out over the Watercress Steam Railway, with a swimming pavilion and tennis court in the grounds.

**£320,000**