

# COGNATUM NEWS

No.21 Winter 2019 [www.cognatum.co.uk](http://www.cognatum.co.uk)



## Editorial

With just a few weeks to go before Brexit, the UK's economic and political future is still as unpredictable as it was after the referendum two and a half years ago. What an unmitigated mess it all seems to be, with no consensus on the way forward, and these days mentioning the dreaded B-word amongst friends unsurprisingly merits a forfeit. The property market does not respond well to uncertainty and the number of Cognatum property sales dipped in 2018 as some people opted to stay put, although the average price of successful sales continued to rise.

This edition of Cognatum News includes an article linking Malthouse Court to its brewing past and there are updates on recent events and Cognatum initiatives.

## Geoff Paul joins the board



Cognatum Estates appointed a new board member, Geoff Paul, in December. Geoff is a member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, with a wealth of financial experience, having been Finance Director and Company

Secretary for Alimak Hek and before that Financial Controller for Eurotube Limited. He was also a member of Northamptonshire Special Constabulary for 30 years and served as Chief Commandant from 1995 until his retirement in 2003. He then served as a magistrate on Wellingborough Bench until 2017.

In addition to his role on the Cognatum Board, Geoff offers his time to a number of worthy local causes. His qualification as a Level 5 Association Football Referee allows him to act as an assessor, advising aspiring referees; he helps in his local primary school by listening to children read; and he is a volunteer lock keeper with the Canal and River Trust.

## RAP News

Non-executive director Julia Gough attended the November Residents Advisory Panel (RAP) chaired by John Lavin, together with new member Bob Glover. Bob lives at Allcourt in Lechlade-on-Thames. The agenda focussed on current initiatives such as the production of new estate handbooks, parking issues, security and improvements to the alarm service. John Lavin reported on the home improvement service being offered by the new company Cognatum Services (see article on page 2), and said that providing a letting service was still under review.

The Panel strongly supported the value of holding autumn annual meetings and welcomed the improved reports. Members attached significant importance to this annual opportunity to discuss and explain service charges and other key issues face-to-face. It also considered how best to get feedback from owners, such as questionnaires and focus groups.

The view was expressed that the panel might benefit from a larger pool of people, partly to increase the range of experience of members. Members attend meetings twice a year at Cognatum Estates' offices in Wallingford, Oxfordshire, and should be open to consultation on various subjects throughout the year as needs arise. Anyone interested in joining RAP should contact John Lavin for more information.

## Aleing revival in Towcester



Malthouse Court with the old fire station and church in the background.



**The Northamptonshire town of Towcester was once renown for its breweries. Yet for much of the last 100 years this profession has lain dormant in the area, leaving many none the wiser as to the historical significance of Cognatum's Malthouse Court – so named for the famous brewery that used to inhabit the site, formerly known as 60 Watling Street. However, history, as philosophers often comment, tends to repeat itself. With the development of a new microbrewery just a few moments' walk from the estate, it would seem things are indeed coming full circle.**

Towcester lays claim to being the oldest settlement in Northamptonshire, as well as one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the country – a claim supported by recent Iron Age discoveries in the town.



However, Towcester really came to prominence in the eighteenth century, as coach travel increased and travellers looked for accommodation on the road between London, Holyhead, and the Midlands.

This growing prosperity led to the inception of various malthouses across the town, the largest and most famous of which was the Phipps Brewery, run in its most successful years by Pickering Phipps II. The Phipps family were farmers in South Northamptonshire, a profession that called for some brewing knowledge to provide refreshment for their workers. Their first breweries, founded in the early 1800s on small sites in both Towcester and Northampton, were run by Pickering Phipps I, who made a modest success of the business. However, it was upon his death in 1830, when the company passed to two of his



sons and subsequently a grandson, Pickering Phipps II, that the name of the Phipps Brewery was truly made great.

Phipps II bought the site at 60 Watling Street, previously owned by the much smaller brewers King & Sheppard, and, along with his cousin Richard, built a new brewery on the site. Business boomed, growing to employ 70 men and produce roughly 150 barrels of beer a day. At its height the pub estate stretched from Leicester in the north, Peterborough in the east, Oxford in the south, and Warwick in the west – making it the largest pub estate of any Midland brewer, and ninth largest in Britain.

Phipps' business success was combined with a philanthropic nature and a willingness to invest in the local community. He ploughed

**Continued on page 2**

## Charging points

Questions about facilities to charge an electric car are being asked ever more frequently at Cognatum property viewings, and the issue has also been raised at recent resident meetings. While there are arrangements in place on a number of estates, whereby a separate electricity meter has been installed in an individual garage to allow for a re-charging station, these measures have been implemented ad hoc. It has become clear that a more consistent, large-scale approach will be needed.

Such a project will not be without its challenges. Many developments were built between thirty and forty years ago, when electric cars were almost the stuff of science fiction, making it a challenge to retrofit charging points. There is also concern about the capacity of the existing electricity-supply infrastructure.



Equally important is the aesthetic of any proposed charging points, which need to be sensitively situated and not mar the appearance of the grounds. Careful consideration needs to be given to the development of a well-organised charging-management system, as ownership of electric cars is only going to grow. There is also the cost of the initial installation to be considered. While Cognatum is committed to responding to these challenges, it needs to proceed thoughtfully, as offering a poor service is always worse than offering no service at all.

However, the combination of environmental obligations and the increasing importance of this issue for residents and owners propels this initiative forward. Additionally the importance of maintaining and developing the infrastructure of the estates in line with modern technology is recognised, ensuring that Cognatum properties remain attractive, desirable, and a sound financial investment. To this end, there is a pilot project with Chargemaster in the planning stage.

Aleing revival in Towcester

Continued from page 1

much of his fortune back into the local area, for example building the swimming baths opposite the brewery, which made use of the spare hot water from the brewery by piping it to the baths under the road. He was much beloved by the locals, and served in several local and regional political roles, including as Mayor of Towcester in 1860. In fact to this day there is a pub in Northampton called 'Sir Pickering Phipps', a name that perfectly displays the optimistic loyalty felt towards Phipps in the local area, as he was never actually knighted!

Disaster struck in 1901 however, when fire broke out in a malting – a somewhat ironic occurrence, as the site would later house the offices of the local fire brigade! The brewery was beyond economic repair and by 1905 the site had closed, with equipment transferred to the site in Northampton. This calamity marked the rapid decline of Towcester as a brewery town.

60 Watling Street was acquired by the English Courtyard Association, now part of the Cognatum family, in 1986, and work began on developing the current estate, with the architecture taking inspiration from the Georgian vernacular of the town's heyday. Although the project was temporarily delayed by the discovery of a Roman sandal (which can now be seen in the Towcester Museum) during the excavation phase, the estate was nevertheless completed and officially opened in 1988.

Yet its roots are breaking the surface once again. A small independent business, Towcester Mill Brewery, has started up in the old mill, which is in the heart of Towcester and just a stone's throw from Malthouse Court. Producing approximately 800 litres – or roughly 1,450 pints of beer – per brewing session, it is a far cry from the huge outfit the town knew at the turn of the century. Yet the mill site is still a bustling local hub, offering not only brewery tours and experiences but also comedy events, quiz nights, and live music.

Malthouse Court owners can enjoy the locally made beers, ales, and gins as well as the social opportunities it provides. It seems a fitting way to celebrate the rich malting culture of Towcester and honour the brewing history of the estate.



Summer socials

Last year's record-breaking summer seems very distant under the gloom of February's grey skies. Yet recalling the season's many successful socials may provide just the inspiration needed to make sure the summer of 2019 is just as enjoyable. From simple and enjoyable gatherings featuring Pimms and ice cream, to the South-African-style braai hosted at Fullands Court by new estate managers Steven and Karen Greasley, owners made the most of the long, bright afternoons and evenings. These events take careful planning and discussion, so preparations need to start now, and by looking ahead to the warmer months, may even combat the winter chill.

Left: Shirley Behan relaxing at Remenham Row during the Henley Regatta.

Below left: The residents at Muskerry Court held a strawberry and cream tea fundraising event which raised £563 for Dementia UK.

Below right: Mrs Dickin (centre) and family enjoying the South-African-style braai hosted at Fullands Court.



A solution to home improvement

The last decade has seen dramatic improvements in housing design and comfort, meaning older houses, even in spectacular places, can sometimes look rather dated. Following a successful pilot scheme, a new company called Cognatum Services has been launched to provide a personal interior design and project management service to both new Cognatum property buyers and current owners, revitalising older properties with refreshing ideas and introducing colour, comfort and flair.

Most buyers are not looking for a major refurbishment project when they move, but they do want to make their new home comfortable and stylish with state-of-the-art bathrooms and kitchens.

The new venture is designed to provide as little or as much advice and inspiration as required, teaming up with good local craftsmen and contractors to see the work through to completion. For information and advice on home improvements, Cognatum Services can be contacted on 01491 821150 or by email [services@cognatum.co.uk](mailto:services@cognatum.co.uk).



Pet-friendly place to live

Bluecoat Pond in Sussex has been included in the Cinnamon Trust's Top 20 list for the most pet-friendly retired-living complexes. The charity supports people whose age or health issues make pet care a challenge, offering help with things like dog walking or looking after an animal while their owner is in hospital. The Bluecoat Pond community is proud to be recognised as somewhere that helps to realise the Cinnamon Trust's goal of bringing peace of mind for owners, and love, care, and safety for beloved pets.



Investing in Guest Suites

One of the benefits of downsizing to a Cognatum property is that you do not have to lose out on space to accommodate occasional visits by friends and family, thanks to a range of comfortable guest suites, serviced by the estate managers. At just £27.50 for a single night stay and £20 for all subsequent nights, a rate that includes a continental-style breakfast, the guest suites offer a modestly priced alternative to asking your visitors to stay in a local B&B. There is also the obvious convenience of enjoying hosting guests, who can stay just a short stroll away.

Available on more than half of Cognatum estates, the guest accommodation provides an income that covers their running costs and contributes to their future maintenance and improvement. Many of these guest suites have recently been refurbished, as part of the wider commitment to keeping estates attractive and contemporary, and others are planned to follow this year.



Armistice centenary commemorations

**Although many Cognatum property owners may have relocated from outside an area, they quickly form a strong attachment to their new towns and villages. This positive engagement with local communities has demonstrated itself most recently when many residents were involved in some inspiring commemorations of the end of the First World War.**

Residents at Malthouse Court, Stuart Court and Islescourt were instrumental in creating memorial displays for their towns and villages, and several estates organised various remembrance activities. One owner at Old Town Farm in Buckinghamshire, Jill Pateman, even wrote a book about Great Missenden during World War I.

She says of the undertaking: "In 2014, on the centenary of the outbreak of World War I, I was walking past the war memorial in Great Missenden and wondered about the 39 men on it. I made lots of enquiries in the village and was shocked to find that there was no information about these men at all. So I spent four years researching them in great detail. I was interested in them as people, rather than the military history that is already well researched. I wanted to know where they lived, what they looked like, what they did for a living, what their families were like, and how they were killed."

Sales of the book, which is available from local shops in Great Missenden, have already raised £6,000 for local charities. What a heartening example of the initiative, enthusiasm, and community spirit.



Clockwise from main photograph:  
The memorial display at Malthouse Court.  
Jill Pateman with her book.  
Islescourt poppy display.  
Betty Shadbolt, Monica Joss and Molly Woollett knitting poppies at Stuart Court!  
Poppies around the war memorial in Ramsbury.



# COGNATUM PROPERTY

RETIRE IN STYLE

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Whilst the general housing market outside London showed modest price rises in 2018, transaction numbers fell in a period of heightened Brexit-related uncertainty. Cognatum property sales last year, whilst down in numbers on previous years, still attracted much interest and rising prices. Looking back over the last five years, the average sales values have risen between 20% and 30% in line with the Nationwide regional indices.

As we look forward to 2019, whilst clarity around Brexit may be a crucial factor in any resurgence in activity, early indications from

viewing figures suggest that the market has a good pulse and buyers are again planning their next move. Cognatum Property has a wide selection of properties on the market to choose from across the south of England. In the Cotswolds we have some stylish new energy-efficient properties available, priced from £685,000.

For more information about properties for sale please see [www.cognatum.co.uk](http://www.cognatum.co.uk) or get in touch with us direct on 01491 821170 or [property@cognatum.co.uk](mailto:property@cognatum.co.uk).



£460,000

## 26 Dunchurch Hall, Dunchurch, Warwickshire

Originally built as a hunting lodge for the Duke of Buccleuch in 1890 and enjoying more than 10 acres of landscaped grounds, including an old cricket pavilion used for social and other events, a spacious house with a large living room and bedrooms up and downstairs.



£740,000

## 6 Church Place, Ickenham, Middlesex

A spacious two-bedroom ground floor apartment with a conservatory in a garden courtyard, on the Metropolitan and Piccadilly lines.



£450,000

## 1 Bemerton Farm, Salisbury, Wiltshire

A large two-bedroom cottage, part of a Grade II listed model farm with a riverside garden and even a WWII pill box.



£550,000

## 1 St Marys Court, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire

Smart, stylish and close to the centre of the Old Town, an immaculately presented two-bedroom house with an open plan living room.



£390,000

## 5 Herringcote, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

In a pretty courtyard garden with a dovecote, a three-bedroom cottage with a conservatory and garage close-by.



£360,000

## 5 Penstones Court, Stanford in the Vale, Oxfordshire

A stone built two-bedroom cottage with conservatory and attached garage, exceptional grounds and views over the Vale of the White Horse.



£285,000

## 6 Fullands Court, Taunton, Somerset

A two-bedroom house with a conservatory and walled terrace garden, in the lovely grounds of Fullands House.



£225,000

## 23 University Farm, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire

At one end of the high street, a first floor apartment with two bedrooms, video entry phone, lift access and a swimming pavilion in the gardens.



£385,000

## 17 Northfield Court, Aldeburgh, Suffolk

A two-bedroom house looking out on beautiful gardens, just a short walk to the high street and the sea.



£475,000

## 7 St Lukes Court, Marlborough, Wiltshire

An interesting two-bedroom house in a Grade II listed building overlooking gardens to east and west, in this very vibrant market town.