

COGNATUM NEWS



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Editorial

The last three years have seemed like a long running soap opera based in Westminster, and there's little sign of the storyline coming to a natural end, with the scriptwriters having plenty of surprises still in store. There is no question that the uncertainty has put a break on long-term decision-making by many businesses and families, with obvious consequences for the housing market and wider economy. But there are signs that the promise of some resolution this year, together with a growing urgency for people to get on with their lives, is easing the market. Life does go on!

In this edition of Cognatum News we focus on the history of a school site in Charlbury that was developed twenty years ago; reveal the start of a new retirement scheme in Kent; and update you on recent Board and Residents Advisory Panel (RAP) appointments. Inspired by the 251st Summer Exhibition, we also shine a light on artistic talent nearer home.



Behind the Playing Close

Attending the opening of a new community centre in Charlbury in 2017, former Prime Minister David Cameron said that Lord Hurd had warned him that Charlbury residents were a 'disputatious lot'. Charlbury is often referred to as unspoilt, a true Cotswold town that has lost none of its charm. It remains the thriving place that it was when Henry III granted a charter in 1256 establishing it as a market town of about 600 people. In the 18th century the craft of glove-making was resurgent and by 1853, when Isambard Kingdom Brunel's new railway through Charlbury opened together with its elegant Grade II listed station, Charlbury was the largest manufacturing centre for gloves in the country, leading to significant wealth and grand houses through the town. The last factory in the town closed in 1968.

Queen Victoria visited in 1886, and a national competition was launched to design a commemorative water fountain. The winning design was unveiled in the Playing Close in 1900 to commemorate her Golden Jubilee in 1887, her Diamond Jubilee in 1897, and Arthur Albright's gift to the town of a pure water supply in 1896 as well as the royal visit.

Past residents include Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury who was often seen at the parish church of St Mary's; JRR Tolkien was a regular visitor in the 1950s; and Michael Palin wrote his first novel in the winter of 1977, while staying at the Bell Hotel.

The building of Cognatum's The Playing Close in the centre of Charlbury, on the southern side of the historic recreation ground by the same name, was nearly derailed by its complicated history as a

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News in brief

Nicky Sercombe joins Board –

In June Malcolm Vine retired as Finance Director. He joined Cognatum Estates around the time of the merger in 2008 of the Beechcroft Trust and English Courtyard Association. His retirement has resulted in a few management

changes with Nicky Sercombe joining the board as Director of Resources, taking over his responsibilities for finance and other head office support functions, and Aysha Hussain being appointed to a new position of Chief Finance Officer.

Nicky joined the English Courtyard Association in 2005 as a regional manager, becoming an associate of the Institute of Residential Property Managers. Since the creation of Cognatum Estates, she has managed all the Beechcroft Trust estates and latterly become more involved in head office functions, supporting estate managers and improving services. She lives in Warwickshire with her husband and two daughters.

New resident director – Joan Edwards, who lives at Islescourt in Ramsbury, has been appointed as a non-executive director replacing Julia Gough who has retired. Joan moved from Kent to be closer to her son and his family and is involved in many local activities. After a career in HR and employment law, with experience in retail, insurance, her final role was working for Canterbury Cathedral.

RAP – Two new members joined the Residents Advisory Panel when it met in July, bringing numbers back up to seven. The new members are Dr Steve Clarke of Northfield Court and Mr Gerald Walker of Badsworth Gardens. RAP discussed the presentation of estate annual reports and the format for annual meetings. The panel is Cognatum's think-tank, a sounding board providing advice and ideas, and is normally chaired by MD John Lavin. It now meets three times a year in Wallingford and anyone interested in joining should contact the chairman of the panel.

A new start in the Garden of England

Work started in June on Cognatum's first completely new development in several years. Orchard Yard in Wingham, close to Canterbury and the channel ports, will have a rural feel, being built in the former farmyard of the Manor House, with an orchard, meadow, vegetable gardens and a Victorian greenhouse. But the fifteen new houses will be far from rustic. They are designed to be light and airy, providing flexible space and plenty of storage, as well as being energy efficient and low maintenance. Another first is the club house which will include a gym and space for social gatherings, and there will be comfortable guest accommodation.

The project is being funded by Cambria Group, a property investment company, which is also working with Cognatum on a number of other potential schemes across the country.

Richard Powell, director of Cambria said: "Cambria are delighted to have teamed up with Cognatum. Their vision for independent senior living in beautiful homes, in wonderful landscaped settings, with highly professional service delivery really

resonated with our understanding of what people in later life aspire to. All Cognatum's estates have really stood the test of time and continue to be lovely places to live; our responsibility is to create 21st Century versions that capture the original essence but with a focus on environmental sustainability and the use of technology.

Orchard Yard delivers a key requirement of private grounds in the heart of the village, with no need for unnecessary car journeys as everything will be on the doorstep."

Cognatum Property will be marketing the new properties which should be completed in Autumn 2020.



Richard Powell and Glynne Benge of Cambria at Stuart Court with the Princess Royal.

Behind the Playing Close

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former school. By 1447 The Playing Close, on Brown's Lane, was already established as a recreation ground. Bull baiting was a regular entertainment until 1820, and during the C18th and C19th at least one of the four annual fairs was held there. In a pleasing continuity, the quarterly farmers' market is still held there.

The Playing Close had a change of purpose in 1815, when the Charlbury British School Society was established. Using funds largely from the Quaker community, they built an elementary school on land on the south-west corner of The Playing Close owned by a local charity, the Gifford Trust.

By 1830 some 94 boys and 76 girls attended the school and in 1863 a small Infants' School was added. The school grew in numbers with provision for 176 children and 97 infants in 1889.

In 1891 elementary education became free and compulsory and in 1902 when county councils were made responsible for education, the school was enlarged with a further classroom. Charlbury people, according to accounts in the Oxford Times, were not altogether happy with the way decisions about their school were taken out of their hands. Further expansion led to Charlbury Primary School moving to Crawborough in 1987 and the buildings, whilst used for further education, became semi-redundant.

When two Charlbury district councillors attended the opening of the Upper Brook Hill retirement development in Woodstock by the Home Secretary Douglas Hurd in May 1989, they decided that a similar sympathetic scheme in Charlbury on the recently closed school site would be ideal for the town.



Lord Denning

Negotiations started but it soon became apparent that the County Council had other ideas and thought that they controlled the site, not the Gifford Trust charity. At this point an eagle-eyed Guy Mossop, Beechcroft Land Director at the time, discovered that Lord Denning had championed a similar dispute near Denning's home town of Whitchurch in Hampshire and had successfully argued that as their primary school land had been donated by a charity for educational purposes, the county were not entitled to the asset once the school was closed. The eminent Lord Denning, who was Master of the Rolls from 1962 to 1982, agreed to help Charlbury and with his intervention, and the significant local support from that 'disputatious lot', the purchase went ahead, the Victorian school was demolished and 16 new houses with a swimming pavilion were built on the site by Beechcroft in 1999, and is now part of Cognatum Estates.



Bertie at Thames Bank

Thames Bank got its new slipway and moorings just in time for this year's Goring and Streatley Regatta in July. The regatta takes place every two years when a motley gathering of some 40 crews battle it out in front of some two thousand spectators.

Thames Bank's extensive river frontage next to Goring Lock has been suffering from erosion for years and needed new bankside protection. In April Thames Riverworks Piling Ltd and their 'Bantum

steel pusher tug Bertie', started installing steel sheeting topped with a hardwood capping. They also built a slipway for the small boats stored in the boathouse and upgraded the eight moorings. The work was funded by the owners with boats. John Lillington, who has kept a boat there for many years and was involved in the early design and planning, said that "moorings in Goring were like hen's teeth"!



The gardens at Hayes End Manor

We are now in our third year of a rolling ten-year garden plan, designed to ensure that all our estates have updated planting schemes and receive ongoing attention to keep them on track. While the rewards of this initiative will take time to make a big impact across all our estates, some gardens are already seeing wonderful results. Hayes End Manor in South Petherton is an excellent example.

The setting of Hayes End Manor is almost picture-perfect with its granary, manor house and enormous flax barn, but after 30 years its extensive gardens are in need of restoration as vigorous shrubs such as laurels and elaeagnus had taken over, leaving more colourful plants of the original landscaping literally in the shade. The dramatic decision was taken to clear those affected areas completely and start again, leaving them bare for a year to defeat the weeds, and start with a fresh canvas.

Estate manager Richard Bickerstaff started rigorous restoration around the estate in March 2017 and the planting

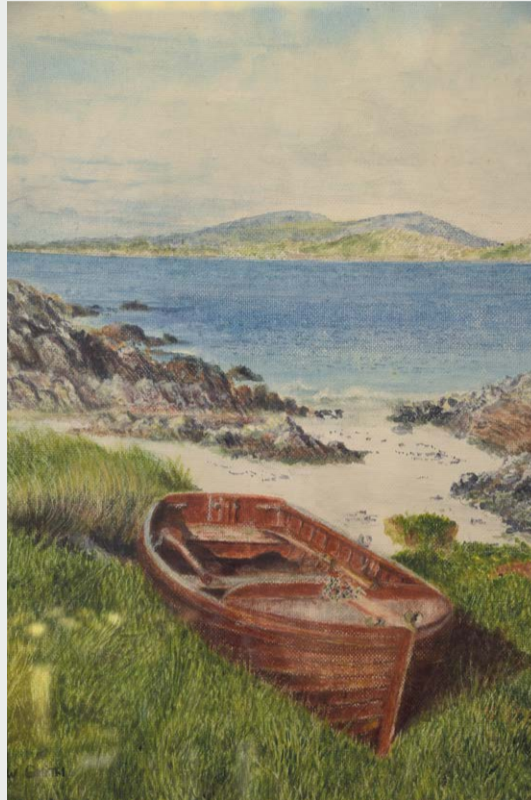
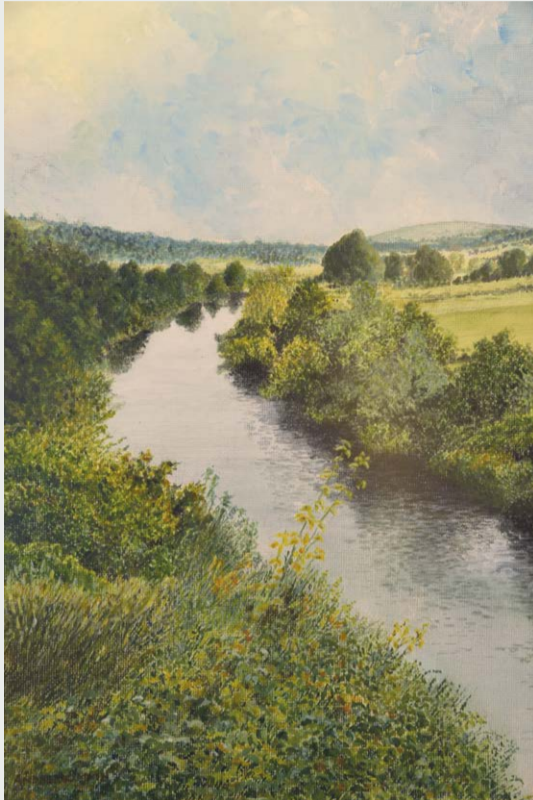
plan was completed by landscape architects Paul and Ellen Bramhill that December. Two main lawn beds were replanted in spring 2018 taking care to plant at a sustainable density for the ultimate size of the plants. After a good growing season, the beds have started to look wonderful with much more colour impact. This year's replanting has been concentrating on the main entrance beds bordering the drive which is the first and very important impression on every visitor.

By the end of this year almost half of our 60 estates will have their own professionally designed garden plan; planting has already started in 12. This huge task is being co-ordinated by garden advisor Charles Gilchrist assisted by four knowledgeable estate managers who are sharing their expertise around all our gardens: Sarah Hussey trained as a gardener with the National Trust, Will Leaper is a partner in an horticultural business, Mike Moore is an experienced manager and Eric Dougherty trained in botany at Ohio University and designed our composting system.

Artist in Residence

Like few other annual events, the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition plays a special part in the summer season and has run without interruption since 1769. It is the world's largest open submission art show, bringing together artists from all backgrounds. This year's selection is curated by Jock McFayden RA and runs until 12th August. Art in all its forms, is a very popular pastime, particularly

in retirement when time can at last be devoted to exploring long suppressed talent. We have a wealth of artistic talent in our own back yard, and some residents have set up clubs and galleries. Here we feature just two of them and hope to publish more in the future.



Andy Smith

Andy Smith and his wife Anne, moved from Hereford to Hayes End Manor, South Petherton in Somerset last year. They had enjoyed holidays in the West Country for many years and decided to permanently relocate to the beautiful surroundings, combining the geographical move with a new home that would take away the headache of looking after a house with a large garden. Andy's early career as a scriptwriter, writing for television and radio names such as John Cleese, Tim Brooke-Taylor and Ronnie Barker was followed by a variety of creative and managerial roles in television.

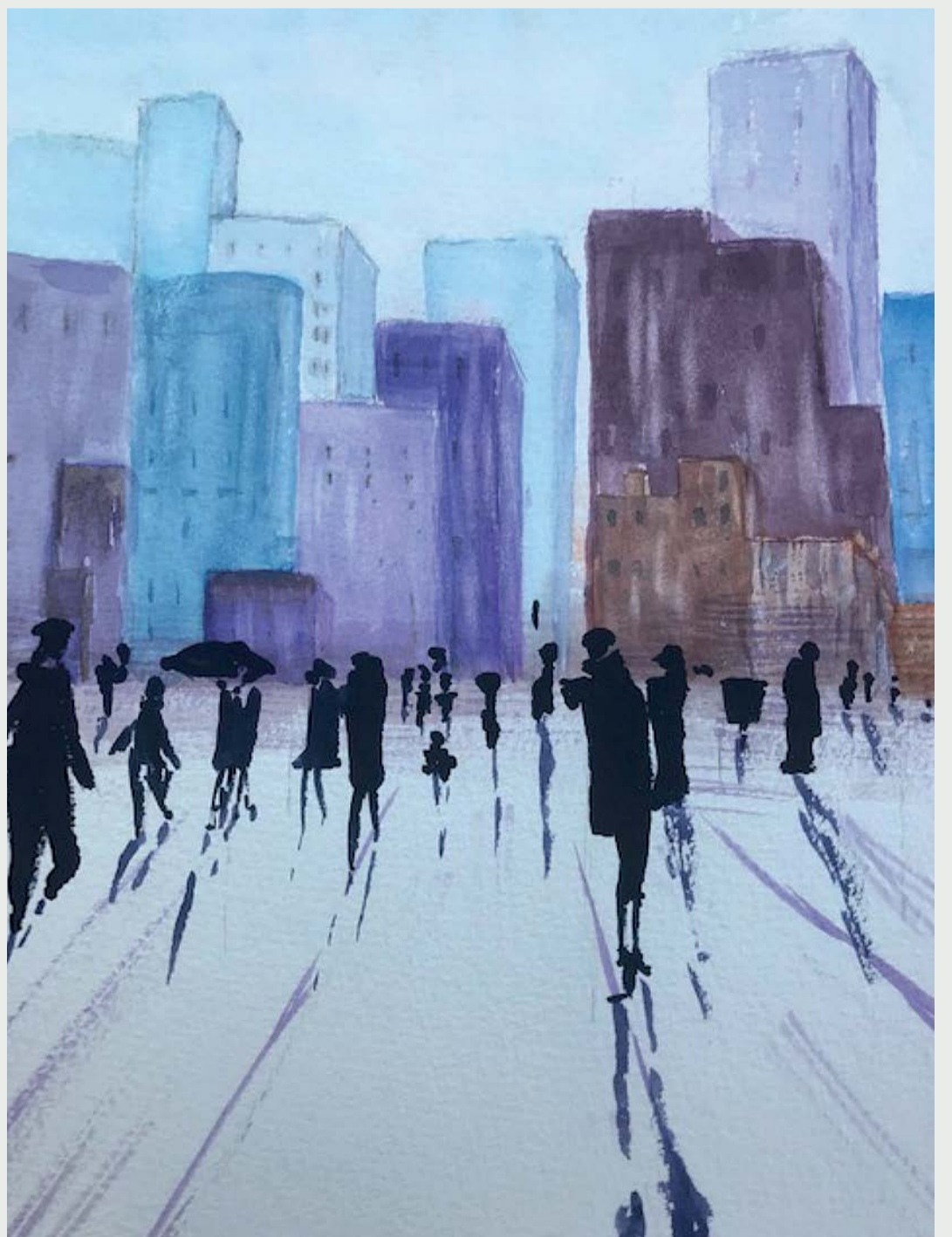
He had long harboured an interest in art and during his career dabbled with cartoons, which have been published in the national press. Now his painting has come to the fore, his work being inspired by the local scenery. The local village store sells copies of his artwork which have been turned into prints and cards and are in high demand with locals and visitors.



Linda Storey

Linda Storey and her husband have always lived in Beaconsfield Old Town in Buckinghamshire, so not much changed when they moved into St Mary's Court in 2015. However, she recently discovered that there was an Artist in Residence once a month at her local library. She signed up for the classes and turned her conservatory into an art studio. She says, "I loved art at school, but my paintbrushes gathered dust when I left. Sixty years later, at my first lesson in the library, my joy of painting has been rekindled."

"I have been inspired by my tutor, a wonderful enthusiastic artist who encourages and motivates us all. His style is very loose and modern. It doesn't feel like an indulgence and I certainly don't have time to pursue it properly, but it does give me a huge amount of pleasure and satisfaction. A vast amount of my spare time is spent experimenting - with different papers, with different media and trying many different subjects and topics. I am truly hooked and will continue." Linda and some of her neighbours are setting up their own gallery at St Mary's Court.



COGNATUM PROPERTY

RETIRE IN STYLE

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Statistics can be interesting – a review of Cognatum Property's records over the past five years show that on average sellers occupied their homes for just over 14 years and the average increase in value of their properties equated to 4% per annum. Averages of course can be rather meaningless, as some people stay for short periods of time and others much longer. But the overall picture that these two figures paint indicate settled communities and sound investment values.

Brexit has ensured that the market has continued to be slow with buyers taking longer to sell their own homes. Saleability and price are always improved when houses are well presented and it is with this in mind that Cognatum Services (services@cognatum.co.uk) was set up last year to assist sellers (and buyers) with interior improvements.

A new development in Kent is announced on the front page which features stylish new homes and for more information about these and other properties for sale across 21 counties, please see www.cognatum.co.uk or get in touch with us direct on 01491 821170 or property@cognatum.co.uk



£310,000

24 Hayes End Manor, South Petherton, Somerset

A two-bedroom ground floor apartment at one end of an extraordinary converted flax barn, with beautiful landscaped gardens and extensive country views. A popular small town with shops, pubs and restaurants.



£550,000

8 Muskerry Court, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Regency architecture inspired by Decimus Burton, a spacious two-bedroom Wing House with open plan living room, overlooking courtyard gardens, close to shops.



£335,000

42 Mytchett Heath, Mytchett, Surrey

Backing onto the Basingstoke and Deane Canal and surrounded by four acres of exotic trees, lawns, heathers and rhododendrons, a well presented two-bedroom cottage.



REFURBISHED

£575,000

1 Bluecoat Pond, Christ's Hospital, West Sussex

A fully refurbished two-bedroom cottage with new open plan kitchen/dining room and a conservatory, with views over an ornamental pool. Close to Horsham.



£400,000

12 Church Leat, Downton, Wiltshire

A spacious upside-down house with living rooms and balcony overlooking the Avon, two-bedrooms and a study. The garage is attached to the house.



NEW

£650,000

25 Stuart Court, Minchinhampton, Gloucestershire

A very spacious brand new three-bedroom stone-built cottage, contemporary interior and energy efficient, in the beautiful grounds of Stuart Court.



£395,000

18 Timbermill Court, Fordingbridge, Hampshire

On the edge of the New Forest, close to the bustling high street, a two-bedroom first floor apartment with open plan living room and balcony over garden and water meadows.



£475,000

15 Sandbourne Court, Bournemouth, Dorset

A light and airy top floor two-bedroom apartment with large balcony and views over beautiful gardens in West Overcliff. Lift access and secure underground garaging.



£230,000

11 Hildesley Court, East Ilsley, Berkshire

Nestling in the Berkshire Downs with excellent walking and racing nearby, a two-bedroom first floor apartment with stairlift access, and south-facing balcony over courtyard garden.



£480,000

19 Churchfield Court, Girton, Cambridgeshire

On the edge of this popular village, in a former farmyard, a two-bedroom cottage with a conservatory and a study over an archway. Close to Cambridge.