



## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

It is only a decade since Apple launched the smartphone that changed our lives. Now we take for granted Internet access, texting and video phone calls with the family anywhere in the world. At the touch of a screen we read newspapers, book holidays, download music and plan our car journeys.

Technology is changing at an ever-faster pace and the next big evolution is IOT (Internet of Things) whereby pretty well everything from light bulbs to cars will be connected.

What will life be like in a decade's time? Driverless cars are just around the corner and private car ownership may become less of a norm in the app-led sharing economy, epitomised by Uber and Airbnb. Driverless cars may replace estate minibuses. For now the issues to be faced are more down to earth such as what to do about older minibuses, popular on those estates that have them. To make sure their use is a pleasurable experience, Cognatum has been looking at how to modernise the fleet and encourage more use and better value for money. Stuart Court in Minchinhampton ran a trial over the summer with a lease arrangement from Mercedes Benz. The initial feedback was positive and so now there will be further cost-benefit analysis.

Whilst the need for added security measures is generally low, they can be reassuring for residents and some

existing equipment requires replacement. CCTV has come a long way in the last few years. It is simpler and less costly to install and the cameras are unobtrusive, while the Internet has enabled high-quality images to be viewed remotely in real time on smartphones.

Cognatum is reviewing estate security and personal security arrangements through emergency call companies, to see how technology can improve the quality and speed of response so that assistance can be dispatched immediately, alongside any support provided by the estate manager.

Gardens rely on more traditional technology. Our ten-year garden plans engage with a range of environmental concerns. For example, Manor Court in Wiltshire has implemented a new composting system that aims to tackle the issue of waste management. Built nearly 40 years ago, it is a beautiful estate, inspired by the Elizabethan almshouses of nearby Froxfield, with woodland and a stream. Garden Adviser Charles Gilchrist is extremely enthusiastic: "Disposal of rubbish is one of our biggest and potentially most expensive challenges. It makes no sense to remove free leaves off site only to have a delivery of compost in order to feed the beds" He hails the three-bins system at Manor Court as ideal, enabling a rotation that ensures that there is a steady supply of compost.

## Life in the Workhouse



A fully working 1950s Wurlitzer jukebox and a Coca-Cola fridge are just two pieces of the memorabilia which arrived at St Luke's Court in Marlborough last year when Anita and Chris Lowe and Teddy the Cavachon, moved into one of the apartments in the former Victorian workhouse. Chris enjoys collecting memorabilia; the apartment is testament to his eye for a treasure and has been redecorated in stunning style.

He also has a collection of prestige cars including a Jaguar and an Aston Martin. Anita spends much of her time running her company, Events and Venues International. The couple enjoy the sense of community at St Luke's and make good use of the lock-up-and-leave service, as they spend time away in their other homes. "We love it, it is such a friendly family, we can keep ourselves to ourselves when we want to and we can have company when we want it. We have had a couple of drinks parties – that's been great fun"



The Lowes' 1950s Wurlitzer jukebox and Coca-Cola fridge

## EDITORIAL

We start 2017 after the most extraordinary year politically and almost nothing now seems a surprise. There has been a demand for change and rarely have economists and markets seemed so much at odds over the country's prospects. Whilst the pound has lost value the stock market has benefited, the property market has slowed but values outside London, particularly in the home counties and southern England where many Cognatum estates are, have continued to rise, albeit slowly.

John Lavin took over as managing director in 2015 and has initiated plans to improve communications and estate services so that Cognatum estates retain their reputation as some of the most exclusive and attractive retirement havens.

### Charles Clayton

Just over a year after his retirement as managing director, it is sad to record that Charles Clayton died in August at the age of 64. The funeral service at Amersham was well attended by his family and friends, and included tributes from two retired ECA directors, Christopher Thornhill and Stephen Alexander. A keen cricketer and proud Yorkshire man by birth, Charles spent 24 years with the ECA and Cognatum Estates.



## NEWS IN BRIEF...

**RAP** – The Residents Advisory Panel welcomed a new member Clyde Garrett, when it met in September. Last year Clyde moved to Lyefield Court in Emmer Green, Reading, with his wife Maureen, after 26 years in nearby Ufton Nervet. Clyde had been a director of builders merchants Blyth and Taylor until his retirement.

The RAP has recently helped to set up a study of people's motivation for moving to a retirement community. As a result, this year a confidential questionnaire will go out to all new buyers once they move in. It is hoped that the research will help frame innovative plans for the future.

**2016 House market** – Sales agency Cognatum Property reported that Cognatum properties worth £35 million changed hands last year, 13% less than in 2015. Average values were marginally up by around 3%, but the number of transactions in the second half of the year was lower. This was in line with Savills recent quarterly prime country market report confirming a slowing down due to the EU referendum and the stamp duty on higher value properties. They forecast little change in values in 2017.

**Escape to the Country** – Those who enjoy the BBC1 programme *Escape to the Country* may well have spotted a Cognatum property that was featured in an episode aired last November. The spacious and characterful Dairy Cottage at Home Farm in Dorset was among the selection of properties offered to the prospective buyers – and received much praise!

**ECA Lease Extensions** – Following an increasing number of requests, Cognatum Estates has introduced a standard lease extension policy for ECA residents. Most Cognatum properties are leasehold with no ground rents, the Beechcroft Trust ones generally running for 999 years and the English Courtyard for 150 years. For the latter there is obviously no immediate need to extend the lease as even the oldest estates are still under 40 years old, but it may be important to some ECA owners with an eye to maintaining the significance of their investment. Further information about lease extensions is available from estate managers.

**River Dun Project** – Anne Maddison reports that her project to restore the river banks and native plants at Bearwater in Hungerford has obtained substantial support and funding from the Environment Agency, ARK, the Wild Trout Trust and volunteers – and she says her local crayfish canapés were enjoyed at the Summer Garden Party!

EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY FOR THE 55+ WITH SECURITY AND EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE, MANAGED WITH INTEGRITY

**2017** has started well with a steady flow of new property coming to the market, and buyers too. Whilst prices generally eased higher last year, the problem since the middle of 2016 has been chains delaying sales.

Cognatum Property is working on a number of initiatives including a new web site, aerial drone photography of estates to show off their unique settings and arranging interior design advice for those looking to revitalise their property, either before or after a sale. Most Cognatum properties provide spacious and flexible accommodation that can be easily modernised and made more open plan with refreshing new ideas, introducing colour, comfort, originality and flair.

On this page you can see a selection of some of the properties currently on the market.

**For details of all properties for sale please email us at: [property@cognatum.co.uk](mailto:property@cognatum.co.uk) or telephone 01491 821170.**



### 5 Dunchurch Hall, Dunchurch, Warwickshire

One half of a stable block converted into two large two-bedroom cottages. The hall was originally built as a hunting lodge for the Duke of Buccleuch in 1840.

**£365,000**



### 5 Home Farm, Iwerne Minster, Dorset

Set in over 3 acres of mature gardens, a converted two-bedroom cottage with views towards St Mary's Church.

**£399,950**



### 22 Churchfield Court, Girton, Cambridgeshire

In the countryside just 3 miles from the centre of Cambridge, a two-bedroom ground floor apartment with a conservatory.

**£425,000**



### 2 Old Town Farm, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire

A two-bedroom first floor apartment in the Grade II listed farmhouse, close to the centre of this popular village.

**£395,000**



### 14 Thames Bank, Goring-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

A two-bedroom first floor apartment in a perfect setting next to Goring Lock, moorings and garage.

**£820,000**



### 7 Wyke Mark, Winchester, Hampshire

Set around a garden courtyard, a two-bedroom penthouse with large roof terrace and direct lift access.

**£510,000**



### 18 Crittles Court, Wadhurst, East Sussex

The attractive town centre is just beyond the lych gate of this imaginative tile-hung scheme. A two-bedroom cottage.

**£345,000**



### Fullands Cottage, Fullands Court, Taunton, Somerset

A spacious detached two-bedroom Victorian cottage with gothic arched windows and private garden.

**£325,000**



### 2 Malthouse Court, Towcester, Northamptonshire

A first floor two-bedroom apartment with southwest facing balcony and views over the gardens.

**£310,000**



### 20 St Luke's Court, Marlborough, Wiltshire

Next to the Marlborough Downs and 250 yards from the spectacular High Street, a two-bedroom cottage with large terraced garden.

**£525,000**