



Littlecombe

Retirement living in the heart of the Cotswolds

life

A house with a history



ALSO INSIDE:

Meet The Hollies new manager

Woodlands' own House Doctor

Recipes from Head Chef Steve

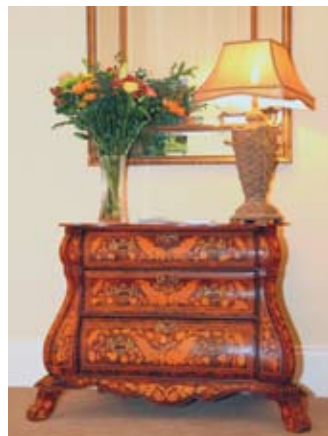


If you like the classy elegance of the Woodlands interiors, then you might well want to call on the services of the lady who created them should you decide to make your home here.

Our House Doctor has style in store

Maggie Malton – better known as 'Toots' to her friends – is offering to provide all the advice and help you need to style your new home as part of the 'moving in package'. Maggie has an excellent reputation in the area for putting the design into the interiors of homes large and small, as well as many businesses.

"I'm not there to put my own stamp on the design," says Maggie, "but to interpret what the owner wants to achieve – and then use my knowledge and contacts to make that happen.



"It can be anything from simple advice on colour schemes through to providing a complete package, so that when people move into their new apartment it is ready decorated and furnished."

As she points out, moving from a family home into an apartment can pose



Toots' suite – one of Maggie's stunning interiors some challenges – which she is happy to assist with. "I will often go to someone's home before they move and look at their existing style and

furnishings and then offer advice on what will look right in the new setting – combining old and new where it works best.

"For those moving to a smaller space there's the dilemma of what will fit, and what won't. And of course items such as curtains and carpets, for instance, will often need to be replaced. I can draw on my contacts in the trade to take along samples that will help them choose – without the need for the owners to trawl round all the stores themselves. I then have expert tradesmen to fit as well as supply all the items – without the owner having to lift a finger."

The apartments at Woodlands have all been finished with neutral colours – a blank canvas upon which incoming owners can 'paint' their own look and feel. "It's a very rewarding process," says Maggie, "because you work with the owners to share and then create their vision."

Finally, what's behind the intriguing nickname?

"I've been called 'Toots' since I was a little girl," Maggie explains. "My father would put me on his lap and sing 'Toot, Toot, Tootsie' – and the name just stuck!"

Meet Jenny Martin - our new manager



There will be a new face at Littlecombe Park from March when Jenny Martin takes over the important role of Manager of The Hollies care home.

It's a role that she's superbly suited to fill,

having spent a lifetime in nursing – including many years globetrotting to hold senior posts in countries as far flung as Oman and Malaysia. She comes to us from another care home in nearby Minchinhampton where over the last four years she has helped develop a small venture set up to provide care for elderly local residents into a thriving and very popular establishment.

"The ethos of Horsfall House was to be very much at the heart of the local community," says Jenny, "we involved children from the local school, for instance, in intergenerational activities. We had guest speakers to talk to residents and relatives and we also held lots of events which brought in local people to the home.

"I hope to bring that sense of community with me to The Hollies. But above all, I'll be looking to create an atmosphere where residents will feel safe, secure and cared for, with all their needs met.

"I also put a lot of faith in getting my staff well trained – enabling them to continually improve their skills. It doesn't just make it a better place to live – it also means you keep good staff, and that continuity is really important.

"I've seen homes where staff come and go, because they are hired on their cost rather than their ability, and you don't get the same understanding and trust – or quality of care."

Away from work you'll often find Jenny walking across the local hills with her four toy poodles – all of whom were rescue dogs. "Some of them came to me in a fairly bad way," she says, "but it's surprising what love and care can do over time!

"I'm thrilled to be coming to The Hollies – it feels right."

A House with a History



Anyone who has lived locally to Dursley will know that the site Littlecombe Park now occupies was once part of the estate owned by the Lister family, whose factory once employed up to 4,500 people – making a huge array of engineering products sold all around the world, including a famous range of engines.

'The Woodlands' was formerly 'The Towers',



Richard Buffrey with the visitor's book

built in 1894 by Sir Robert Ashton Lister. The building was not only the family home for many years but it also served as a place to receive visitors – including several members of royalty. And one man in particular has been following the revitalisation of the estate and the house with keen interest.

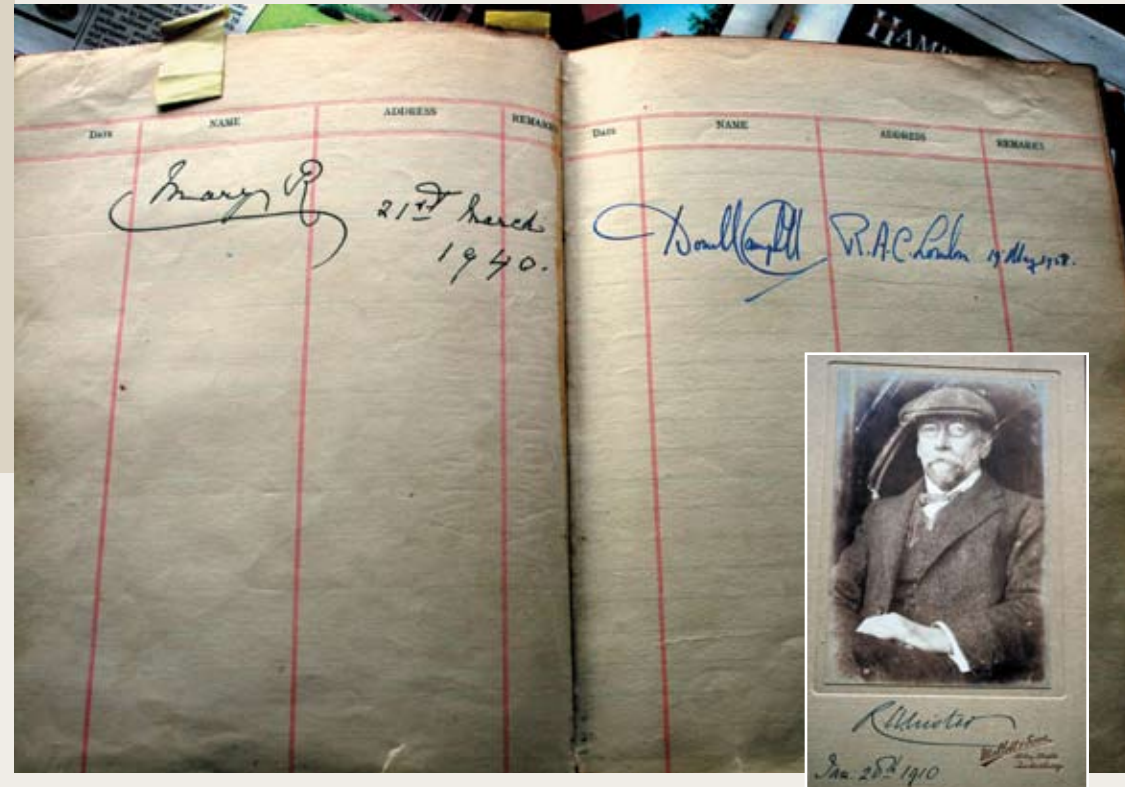
Richard Buffrey worked for the company from 1958 right through to his retirement – after 48 years and nine months in the job – working his way up through the drawing office from an apprentice to the man responsible for travelling around the world to source components. When he wasn't busy at work, he was taking a keen interest in the history of the site and making sure that precious artefacts and records were kept.

"I suppose I was something of an unofficial historian for Lister's," he says. "I took film of the site at various times, including lots of footage of The Towers which has a fascinating history. The future King George VI visited in 1931, and Queen Mary went there several times during the war years. Remember this was a very important engineering company.

"I have photographs of those visitors and also the visitors book which they signed.

"But when anyone was going to throw away

Queen Mary's signature sits opposite Donald Campbell's in the visitor's book
Inset: R A Lister



The future King George VI visited in 1931, and Queen Mary went there several times during the war years.

interesting looking items they'd call me – and I'd take them away and store them safely. I would love to see a little museum set up with these things on show for everyone to share them, and a permanent record created of the site's history. The company made some fascinating items – from chain harrows and sheep clippers through to benches and engines."

So what does he think about the changes at The Towers – or The Woodlands as it is now.

"Obviously I was a bit sorry to see some of the old oak panelling going, but I know you can't keep everything in an old building like that and you have to move with

the times. I think they've done a tremendous job of retaining the feel and spirit of the place.

"It's lovely to see it enjoying a new lease of life."

Serving the nation

The story of Lister's in Dursley goes back to 1817, when George Lister came to the town to work – eventually setting up his own factory there. The current RA Lister company began in 1867 – rapidly growing to be a major international name. And there were no busier times for the company than during WWII when their output included engines and shell cases for our armed forces. Demand was so high that three other factories were opened up locally.

So it was no surprise that Queen Mary came to Dursley to tour the works in 1940: Lister's was certainly playing a big part in the national cause.

Warming recipes for a chilly winter

It's been a chilly winter to date – so try out these three recipes from the Hollies chef Steve Dickerson designed to warm the cockles of your heart.

Steve joined from something of a star studded background – having been taught to cook by the man who taught Gary Rhodes – from Michael Caines' restaurant, ABode Exeter.



Celeriac & Apple Soup

Ingredients

2 onions, peeled and chopped , 1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed , 1kg celeriac, peeled and cubed
4 Cox's apples, cored and grated , 1 litre vegetable stock , 2 tablespoons sunflower oil , salt and pepper
1/4 pint double cream

Heat the oil in a large pan and add the onions and the garlic. Cook for 5 minutes until starting to soften.

Add the celeriac and apple and cook for another 3-4 minutes.

Add the stock and bring to the boil. Simmer for 15-20

minutes until the vegetables are tender.

Season well. Liquidise soup and pass through a sieve.

Stir In Cream and serve piping hot!

Baked Pork, Prune & Apple Meatballs

Ingredients

Butter, 1 large onion, finely chopped
Pinch of nutmeg and cinnamon
10 prunes, depitted & chopped, 1 teaspoon fresh sage
2 Gala apples peeled, cored & fine diced
4oz vegetable suet, 1 egg, 1lb pork mince

Melt butter in frying pan, add chopped onion and fry without colour. Season with the nutmeg & cinnamon

Add the prunes, cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat, add the sage and leave to cool.

When cool add apples, suet, egg and pork mince. Mix well and season with salt and pepper. Divide into twelve meatballs. These can now be shallow fried in butter to seal and give a golden colour

Finish in the oven for 8-12 minutes

Serve with buttered cabbage, creamy mashed potatoes and a suitable sauce.

The Best Bread & Butter Pudding

Ingredients

6 slices white bread, 1oz unsalted butter
4 egg yolks, 3oz caster sugar, 1/2 vanilla pod,
1/4 pint milk, 1/4 pint double cream, 1oz sultanas

Grease a 2-pint pudding basin with butter.

Butter all the bread, remove crusts & cut diagonally to create triangles.

Whisk egg yolks & caster sugar.

Scrape the vanilla pod into a pan with the milk and cream. Bring the milk and cream to a simmer, then sieve onto the egg mixture, stirring all the time

Arrange the bread in layers along with the sultanas in between (not on top as they will burn).

The warm egg mixture can now be poured over the bread and left to soak for 20 minutes.

Cover with buttered foil lightly and place into a preheated oven 180°C for 15-20 minutes. Enjoy!

Look out for more top tasting tips in our next newsletter!

Up and running

A lot has happened since the last newsletter from Littlecombe Park – including the grand launch of Woodlands which proved so successful that, in the words of Littlecombe Park owner Jonathan Hawkins, "We almost ran out of champagne!"

Over 150 visitors came along on the opening day to view the seven new apartments – significantly more than expected; many came with relatives and, in one instance, three generations of one family attended.

"While some visitors are keen to move into a dedicated retirement development as soon as possible, many visitors were looking further into the future," says Jonathan Hawkins, "and came along to decide whether this was the lifestyle for them."

"It's always a big move to leave the family home, and we always advise people to really consider all the ways in which their lives will change. A lot of those who came along on Saturday booked in for future

visits, with one visitor signing up for one of the new apartments almost immediately. In fact, the launch was so successful that two of the apartments have now been sold."

With Phase 2 of the work at Littlecombe Park now completed, the focus is on Phase 3 – which will include more apartments and the leisure facilities – with a Spring 2010 completion date.

Meanwhile, The Hollies nursing home goes from strength to strength – with many more new residents and five new staff joining us recently.



If you love golf, join the club!



Fancy a round of golf from time to time? Or perhaps you'd enjoy the camaraderie of joining a club just a few miles from Littlecombe Park that warmly welcomes senior players of all standards.

In 1889 a small band of golfing enthusiasts in and around Dursley 'resolved to introduce the Royal and Ancient game to this part of England' and so began Stinchcombe Hill Golf Club – perhaps not one of the most prestigious courses in the country but certainly one of the most scenic, and was rated as such by the late, great Henry Longhurst.

It was originally laid out as a 9-hole course and lengthened to 18 holes in 1906. Today's course, at just under 6,000 yards, might be termed 'short', but any

scratch player who returns a net 68 would be well pleased with himself: the course record of 61 was set in 1992.

"The views are just breathtaking," says the Club Secretary Ian Crowther. "The 9th hole, overlooking the River Severn, especially, and you can see 11 of the old counties from the 16th.

"That makes it sound a bit hilly, but it's actually gently undulating – you do most of the climbing in your car on the way up to the course. We've got a very active senior section, with some octogenarian members.

You can always come along for a day's play, and the green fees are just £28 in the summer. Or, if you fancy playing more than one round, the day fee is £36."

If you want to join, there's no waiting list and it's a really friendly place with lots going on – including informal Saturday morning 'roll ups', regular competitions and a Captain's Ball – making it a great place to make new friends. You can find out more by calling Ian on 01453 542015 or go to www.stinchcombehillgolfclub.com.

Out and about around Littlecombe Park

Dursley's location on the edge of the Cotswolds makes it an ideal place from where to visit some of the very best pubs in the West Country – for a meal, a pint of fine ale or a glass of wine... or just the experience of savouring one of the joys of British heritage.

On this page we've mentioned just three – but suffice to say we could have taken up the whole of the newsletter with suggestions on where to go! And we've even got a theme to the pubs we're describing: no prizes for working out what it is!

THE OLD SPOT

Let's start with perhaps the best known amongst beer drinkers: CAMRA's 2007 National Real Ale Pub of the Year, The Old Spot. It's actually on the Cotswold Way as it passes through Dursley, making it a popular watering hole for walkers as well as locals. In CAMRA's words: "The Old Spot is friendly, deeply traditional and one of the must-visits of the county." And we wouldn't disagree.

But it's not just for those seeking liquid refreshments. As well as guest ales and a famous whisky collection, the food is excellent too. The wholesome menu is available 12-8pm on weekdays and 12-3pm on weekends.

THE SNOOTY FOX

The Snooty Fox in nearby Tetbury is a much larger and grander affair, and popular with people looking for a luxury break and special meal as well as a good choice of beers, wines and bar snacks. The bar areas have terrific leather armchairs to sink into – making it very tempting to stay there for the whole afternoon! One of the Hatton Hotels, it prides itself on its cuisine and accommodation, making it a great place for friends to stay when they're stopping over.



ANCIENT RAM INN

Finally, a spooky moment as we make our way over to Wotton-under-Edge to the Ancient Ram Inn; and while the other two pubs are old, this one is said to date back to the 12th century. The pub is a wonderful place to visit with its ancient, creaking floorboards and genuine fireplaces – but beware! There are tales aplenty of ghostly goings on at The Ram.

If the people who have lived – and died – there over the last 850 years weren't enough to fuel such speculation, the pub is built on an old pagan burial site. It is claimed to be one of the most haunted houses in Britain, with locked doors slamming in the night, unexplained knocking on the windows, cats appearing and disappearing, sudden pools of water and strange smells. Small wonder that paranormal investigators and film crews are regular visitors!

For further information and enquiries about Woodlands at Littlecombe, please call us on 01453 546183 or email us at info@littlecombepark.com

Alternatively, visit our website: www.littlecombepark.com

© Littlecombe Park. Registered office: Charter House, The Square, Lower Bristol Road, Bath BA2 3BH
Registered in England company no. 04923339

