

RETIREMENT



MIXING IT UP
Ellie Wheeler, Rosemary Lindsey and Christine Bradley-Bright, left, are among the residents at Thamesfield, below, who enjoy cocktail making



designated fitness room in the village clubhouse, with classes led by Angus Clark, 59, who has been teaching Tai Chi for 30 years.

"I wasn't sure how it would go but it has proved to be really popular," he says. "The emphasis is on strengthening the core and the legs, so it's very good for balance and mobility. Older people can have a real fear of falling so strengthening their leg muscles through a series of postures, combined with mindfulness exercises, improves mobility and confidence."

Millbrook Village, which has two-bedroom apartments from £200,000, also offers ballroom dancing and ballet classes. Wayne Sleep, the choreographer and former principal dancer of the Royal Ballet, even held a class for the residents to mark the opening of their clubhouse. It hosts a range of country club-style amenities, including a restaurant, bar, gym, swimming pool, snooker room and activity rooms. At other Renaissance Villages developments, water aerobics and Pilates have been added to the activities mix.

The roster of opportunities goes beyond classes and socials at Bearwater, the Cognatum Estates development near the market town of Hungerford, Berkshire. Retirees have been part of an initiative to restore the banks of the River Dun, which runs through the grounds of Bearwater, a five-acre estate of two-bedroom cottages with landscaped courtyards and an ornamental lake where prices start from £385,000. Owners can fish in the river and go for a dip in the pond. As a bonus, the estate manager has a licence to trap crayfish.

But at the core of all these activities - whether for physical well-being, estate improvement or adventure - is the social element. Nowhere is this clearer than at Thamesfield, a Retirement Villages development at Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire, where owners can indulge in cocktail making and tasting sessions.

The activities coordinator at Thamesfield, where studio apartments start from £285,000, buys the ingredients and the residents mix up whatever they fancy. This culminates in them enjoying the fruits of their alcoholic efforts on the banks of the river. Apparently, their margarita really hits the spot.

nine-strong self-taught ukulele group, who have raised £500 for the Alzheimer's Society with a charity single. Recorded at a studio in nearby Eastleigh, *The Ballad of Grove Place* was written by Mike Lemon, a resident.

"I've written plenty of songs before, but it felt right that the whole group should record this one together."

This social aspect is just one reason retirement villages are increasingly offering unusual activities, which help owners step out of their comfort zones and try something more challenging than a game of bowls. "It's inspiring to see owners coming up with such great initiatives and village managers going the extra mile by offering more interesting and exotic activities," says Neil Mackichan of retirementove.co.uk, the retirement property website. "The modern-thinking retiree is more likely to be attracted to a development offering unusual events and activities that inspire and improve their well-being."

It's certainly worked in the case of Mills and his band of merry men. "The archery was good exercise and quite tiring," he says. "We are a pretty competitive bunch, and our arms ached the next day even though we had only fired about six arrows each."

At Millbrook Village in Exeter, Devon, the newest development from Renaissance Villages, a five-week trial of Tai Chi classes has just been extended. Residents pay £10 per week to take part in a 90-minute session. The Chinese martial art is practised in a



HIT THE BULLSEYE
Archery is one of the activities on offer at Grove Place in Hampshire, top, along with falconry and a self-taught ukulele group

'It's great we are still able to do things that we have never done before'

The skills and thrills of a life outside your comfort zone

Tai Chi or falconry? Retirement villages offer an array of experiences for homeowners to try, discovers Jane Slade

The thrill Ken Mills experienced when he pulled back the bow and let the arrow fly was palpable. "It was such good fun," says the 72-year-old. Most participants at Grove Place had never held a bow before, let alone tried archery. "There were about 30 of us, most pulling a bow for the first time," says Mills, who owns a two-bedroom flat at the Life-Care Residences retirement village near Romsey in Hampshire. "There were 80-year-olds giving it a go - and my wife, Kate, scored a bullseye."

The enterprising village manager at Grove Place, which is set in 27 acres around a 16th-century manor house, has introduced an 'Exceptional Events' programme offering owners the chance to try new activities. Last year, it was laser clay pigeon shooting. "It's great to think we are still able to do things we have never done before," says Mills, who ran a golf holiday business before he retired. "Another time we had a visit from a falconer and got to wear the glove so the peregrine falcons could land on our arms. It was an incredible feeling - and we learnt a lot about the birds as well."

The more musically inclined owners at Grove Place, where one-bedroom flats start from £295,000, are similarly enterprising. They practise regularly with the Strummers and Puckers, a



YELLOW
FELSHAM, SUFFOLK
PRICE: £1.5 MILLION
Between Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich is this rural, Grade II* listed, timber-framed Tudor farmhouse. Built in 1530, it has five bedrooms, a heated pool, extensive gardens with a pond, and a converted barn used as a games room and gym.
Agent: Bedfords (01284 769999; bedfords.co.uk) and Jackson-Stops (01284 700535; jackson-stops.co.uk)

HOTSPOTS

PAIN A RAINBOW

As the days grow dark and grey, **Lauren Davidson** searches for a splash of colour



RED
FULHAM, LONDON
PRICE: £900,000

Set in the heart of Munster Village, a short walk from local shops and cafes, is this two-bedroom house.

The ground floor has an open-plan layout, with a 26ft-long living area leading to a small kitchen and bathroom. There are two bedrooms upstairs.

The house, which is in need of modernisation, comes with a cosy courtyard garden. Bishops Park is a five-minute walk away.
Agent: Denters (020 7386 5386; denters.co.uk)



PURPLE
CHISWICK, LONDON
PRICE: £1.55 MILLION

This Edwardian house has been remodelled and extended to provide a spacious family home.

The wide entrance hall has original tiling and leads to two large reception spaces and a kitchen, which occupy the ground floor. Set over three floors, the house has four double bedrooms, of which two have en suite bathrooms. There are two off-street parking spaces and gardens to the front and rear.
Agent: Knight Frank (020 3757 6230; knightfrank.co.uk)



BEST OF THE BUNCH

BLUE
CAWSAND, CORNWALL
PRICE: £875,000

With direct beach access and panoramic views over Plymouth Sound, this four-bedroom house is the ideal waterfront home.

Marina House has been recently renovated but retains original features including oak floorboards and fireplaces. The 367 sq ft kitchen/breakfast room has an original period range and large bifold double doors.

PINK
IPSWICH, SUFFOLK
PRICE: £550,000

North Corner is a thatched period cottage overlooking the village common of Barham Green.

It is approached via double gates on to a shingle drive, and has a large fenced garden with lawn and decking to the side. The ground floor has plenty of family space, including a drawing room, study, home office, hobby room and garden room. There are four bedrooms upstairs.
Agent: Strutt & Parker (01473 214949; struttandparker.com)

leading to a huge area of beachside decking.
Agent: Knight Frank (01392 846822; knightfrank.com)



GREEN
KENSINGTON, LONDON
PRICE: £3.25 MILLION

This mews house has three bedrooms and three bathrooms over four floors, covering 2,182 sq ft. It also has a private terrace.
Agent: Strutt & Parker (020 3794 0747; struttandparker.com)



Places, People and Property with Strutt & Parker

With December fast approaching, this week we've featured some of our favourite properties currently for sale that are perfect for entertaining family and friends this Christmas.

All the properties we market are exceptional, but what makes them special is their individuality. Whether you're looking for a spacious family home with a swimming pool, an impressive country estate with a range of leisure facilities, or a farmhouse with a barn perfect for entertaining guests, our agents take the time to really understand what you're looking for in your property search.

At Strutt & Parker we have local agents throughout England and Scotland with experience of selling and letting a range of properties. Some clients have a long wish-list and our job is to find out what's important to you when looking for a new home. We will also ensure that you are the first to hear of any new properties for sale or to let that match your requirements, and provide you with expert advice whenever appropriate.

As one of the UK's largest property consultancies with a network of 60 offices across England and Scotland, including prime central London, Strutt & Parker is committed to offering clients unparalleled levels of expertise and the industry's most dedicated agents. We also provide an award-winning service across all of our offices, having been named UK Sales Agency of the Year in both 2016 and 2017 at the Resi Awards.

To view all available properties for sale and to let across the UK, visit struttandparker.com/telegraph

STRUTT & PARKER

THIS WEEK
Homes for entertaining

Beaulieu, Hampshire. Guide price £5,950,000. Salisbury office 01722 567905

WEST WITTERING, WEST SUSSEX
A magnificent, newly built house on the exclusive Roman Landing Estate, offering outstanding accommodation over three floors, with space for entertaining. Located a short walk from West Wittering beach and harbour, the property is set within 0.3 acres.
Chichester office 01243 884535

BLACKMORE END, ESSEX
A character oak house and barn restored to a high quality, providing a unique fusion of elegant period and contemporary features.
Chelmsford office 01245 809882

SEER GREEN, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
A characterful farmhouse with a stunning entertaining barn, set in 15 acres of grounds with excellent transport links to London.
Gerrards Cross office 01753 202386

GRAFTY GREEN, KENT
An impeccably presented period farmhouse with exquisite gardens, orangery, swimming pool and stables with views across the Weald.
Canterbury office 01227 806873

CAMBRIDGE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
One of two magnificent and imaginative homes, set in landscaped gardens with flexible space for families and entertaining.
Cambridge office 01223 859745

INVERURIE, ABERDEENSHIRE
A secluded and highly attractive six-bedroom house with spacious family accommodation and extensive equestrian facilities.
Banchory office 01330 558723

ESSENDON, HERTFORDSHIRE
An impressive country estate with a superb leisure complex, including a bar, steam room, sauna, games room, cinema and gym.
Barnet office 020 8003 3515

CRANLEIGH, SURREY
An imposing wing of an Edwardian country house, with six-bedrooms, a tennis court, gym/cinema room and roof terrace.
Guildford office 01483 342533

SEVENOAKS, KENT
A substantial family house built in 2015 to provide stylish living and entertaining space, in a highly desirable location.
Sevenoaks office 01732 809328

Guide price £2,500,000

Guide price £950,000

Guide price £3,000,000

Guide price £1,550,000

Guide price £2,250,000

Offers over £890,000

Guide price £5,000,000

Guide price £2,850,000

Guide price £1,850,000

OnTheMarket.com

60
60 offices across England and Scotland, including Prime Central London

exclusive affiliate of
CHRISTIE'S
INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

Sales Agency of the Year 2016 & 2017

For more properties visit our website struttandparker.com