

RETIREMENT SCHEMES DESIGNED TO THRILL

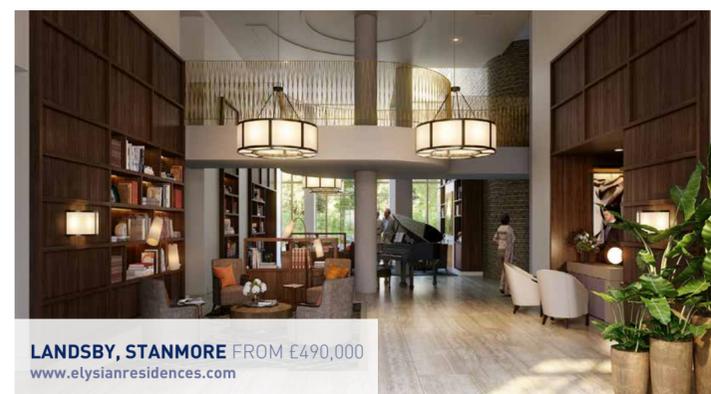


By Jane Slade, founder and director of the retirement property website Retiremove



Artists of The Royal Ballet in Swan Lake, The Royal Ballet (c) 2018 RCB. Photograph by Bill Cooper

Jane Slade, founder of the retirement property website Retiremove, discovers stunning libraries, live-streaming of operas and ballets, digital workshops and exotic spas among the facilities in today's modern retirement developments



LANDSBY, STANMORE FROM £490,000
www.elysianresidences.com

London developer Elysian Residences which is building two retirement villages in the capital has teamed up with the iconic bookshop Foyles.

It is an industry first for Foyles which will create and curate libraries in Elysian's villages in Hampstead and Stanmore with future ones planned in Surrey, Hertfordshire, Kent and Essex.

"It's the first time that the renowned bookseller has worked with a housebuilder," said an Elysian spokesman. "And it's the first time they have ever agreed to create a library within a residential scheme and provide ongoing curation and book provision."

Sir Tim Waterstone, the father of the modern bookshop Waterstones which now owns Foyles, thoroughly approves. "I think it is an excellent idea," he says. "It can't be a great commercial move but there is nothing like a library staffed by people who know about books and can recommend titles."

Sir Tim, 80, who has recently downsized himself, published his memoirs *The Face Pressed Against A Window* earlier this year. "I couldn't live without books," he says. "I still have boxes of them waiting to be unpacked."

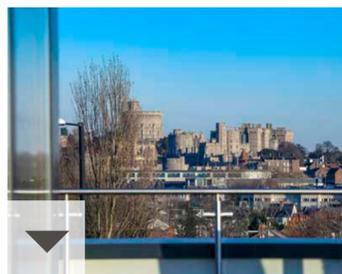
The first Foyles library will open at Elysian's art-deco-style Landsby development offering 102



AUDLEY BINSWOOD, LEAMINGTON SPA FROM £319,950
www.audleyvillages.co.uk

Unlike some villages where libraries double as events spaces, the award-winning Castle View in Windsor has made theirs an oasis of calm; a quiet room where residents can sit and read a Kindle, book or newspaper and have a coffee from the adjoining cafe. And on warm days they can open the bifold doors onto the terrace and garden.

Castle View is hosting an open weekend on 17 and 18 November from 10am to 4pm. For more information visit www.castleviewwindsor.co.uk



CASTLE VIEW WINDSOR FROM £375,000
www.castleviewwindsor.co.uk

one-and-two bed apartments in Stanmore priced from £490,000. www.elysianresidences.com

So are libraries becoming the new showcase features in retirement properties? High-end operator Audley Villages thinks so. The library at Audley Binswood in Leamington Spa is packed with wow factor, occupying the heart of a stunning vaulted converted school. www.audleyvillages.co.uk



BOWES LYON COURT, DORSET FROM £260,000
www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk

In recent years, McCarthy & Stone has introduced libraries into its Retirement Living Plus developments including Bowes Lyon Court in Poundbury, Heritage Place in Ickenham, and Augustus House in Virginia Water, providing homeowners with a mix of biographies, novels and poetry books.

"Libraries are key to building vibrant communities at our developments," says Geoff Bates, the housebuilder's head of sales and marketing.

"They offer a space for relaxation, learning and discovery. Many of our homeowners use the space to do things like puzzles, jigsaws or even painting.

"Having access to quality books has proven hugely popular and is something as a business we will be continuing to invest in." www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk



AUGUSTUS HOUSE, VIRGINIA WATER, SURREY FROM £400,000
www.mccarthyandstone.co.uk

Another ground-breaking first is thrilling owners at Lifecare Residences' London retirement village Battersea Place, which is broadcasting live productions from the Royal Opera House direct to its private cinema.

Using the same technology as mainstream cinemas, homeowners are set to enjoy Puccini's *La Bohème*, as well as the ballets *Coppélia*, *The Nutcracker* and *The Sleeping Beauty* performed live from the comfort of their cinema.

Carolyn Henderson, Battersea Place General Manager enthuses, "We are really excited to have installed the technology because culture is something the residents get such enjoyment from, not just because of the performances themselves, but also the conversation and passion it provokes.

"We also want to provide enjoyment to those who wouldn't be able to get to these venues. It's wonderful to be able to bring residents together to see such top-end productions." www.lifecareresidences.co.uk

Neil MacKichan, director of the retirement property website Retiremove says, "Retirement housebuilders are making a great effort to offer new and exciting facilities to homeowners. They are listening to what they want and making life easier for people so they can enjoy a wonderful cultural experience a few steps from their apartment."

Cutting edge technology is at the forefront of operators thinking in other ways too.

Churchill Retirement Living is helping homeowners become more tech savvy by linking up with Google to offer them digital workshops. Google Digital Garage offers free digital skills courses in the owners' lounges of Churchill's developments.

Gwyneth Grimshaw, manager of Churchill's St John's Lodge in Timperley near Manchester where the first workshop was held, said the day was so successful one gentleman has asked to do it again.



SACHS LODGE, TORQUAY, DEVON FROM £261,950
www.churchillretirement.co.uk



"There was a really good turnout of men and women including some from the local community," she said.

"The trainers were mostly local which was nice too, and were very patient explaining how people can protect their devices from scams, what to watch out for to prevent fraud, and how to pay for things securely online." The plan is to roll out workshops at other villages.

Churchill has 57 developments across the country with brand new apartments available to buy, plus a further 20 locations with developments coming soon from Penzance in the south west to Penrith in the north. Prices start from £198,950. www.churchillretirement.co.uk



BETJEMAN LODGE, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE FROM £198,950
www.churchillretirement.co.uk



BIRCHGROVE, SIDCUP FROM £695 PER WEEK
www.birchgrove.life

Apartments at Birchgrove, a rental retirement development in Sidcup, have been fitted with a digital telecare console which fully integrates with the door entry system and gives access to all of Birchgrove's support services at the touch of a button.

Tenants can keep updated on what's going on in the village, look up menus at the restaurant and read details of upcoming events. They can also tap the screen to check in every morning to tell the team they are awake and don't need assistance.

Elizabeth Hill whose mother Rosemary, 90, lives in one of Birchgrove's Queensgate Apartments said, "What I loved when I went around is that they have tablets in every apartment. I said to Mum she would be able to look up what she wants for dinner that day. It's the little things like that that means so much." www.birchgrove.life

Inspired Villages is making a name for itself staging big attractions in the grounds of its retirement villages. This year it hosted several Antiques Roadshow style events called The Grand Antiques Tour, the most recent being at Austin Heath, which has 167 homes priced from £253,000 in Warwick.



BBC TV presenters, valuers and auctioneers Christina Trevanion and David Harper gave free antiques valuations to residents of the village and the local public.

Retiree Anthony King, 75, who attended the event with his wife Diane was impressed.

"The antiques event is a wonderful idea for the community, mixing together residents and those from the local area.

"I can see Austin Heath becoming an important part of the wider community as the general public becomes more aware of the village and all it has to offer."



AUSTIN HEATH, HEATHCOTE, WARWICK FROM £211,000
www.inspiredvillages.co.uk



And Great Aine Park, Inspired's village in Alcester, Warwickshire, hosted a jazz festival in its 78-acre grounds in July where owners mingled with locals enjoying hot air balloon rides, and music from 4 Puffs and a piano – the house band on Jonathan Ross's chat show.



"We inject life and soul into our villages," says James Cobb, co-founder and director at Inspired Villages.

"We run regular community events, from festivals to fashion shows."

On the wellness front, things don't get more exotic than the Nordic indoor spa at PegasusLife's Steepleton development near Tetbury in the Cotswolds, where 113 one, two-and-three-bedroom apartments are priced from £348,950.

The spa looks out over aquaculture gardens and an outdoor swimming pond. There is also a salt-inhalation room and steam room, as well as a herbal sauna in which owners can infuse the air with herbs they have grown themselves. www.pegasuslife.co.uk



STEEPLETON, TETBURY FROM £295,000
www.pegasuslife.co.uk

The days are gone when retirees have to live in pokey warden-care flats. There is now more choice than ever before with options to buy or rent and fabulous facilities available. Today, retirement really can be the best days of our lives. 🏡