

MOVING TIMES

An Occasional Newsletter from
DAKIN ESTATES LTD

Very Best Wishes for 2017 to all

2016/2017



Tripper Go Home!

On Saturday 23rd July 2016, ND was in Cambridge City centrebut not for long.

It was so appallingly crowded that it was impossible to walk around. Some streets were completely blocked by columns of what used to be called "Trippers", (i.e. tourists who had come to Cambridge by coach for just a few hours). ND counted over a hundred such "trippers" in one column alone.

Later in the week, an article in the Cambridge News advised that 140,947 tourists had passed through Cambridge on that Saturday. The story was accompanied by the headline "TOURIST DISASTER". How such a very exact number of 140,947 tourists was arrived at remains a mystery but, assuming it to be true, the enormity of the invasion can be put in context by referring to the last census which gives the indigenous population of Cambridge as 123,867 (2011).

Great for the local economy though? Not so – unless you own a tacky gift shop in the city centre or a punt company. These are poor quality



tourists arriving by coach with a packed lunch and stay only for a few hours. They don't eat in restaurants, stay in hotels or do any major shopping. All they do is get in the way of people who would. Their coaches are allowed to park at designated parking spaces in the city centre at no charge whilst people living just outside Cambridge are expected to use the Park and Ride to access the city, (and pay for doing so).

Anyone who thinks tourism in Cambridge is a good thing should google "Tourists Barcelona" where they

will find websites about the "tourist disaster" and in which city there is a growing backlash against what some people are starting to describe as "Tourist Pollution". Tour guides conducting columns of tourists are frequently the subject of verbal abuse by locals and a popular market has banned large groups of tourists from entering it. It is even possible to see graffiti saying "Tourist Go Home". There is a real danger that what has already happened in Barcelona could happen in Cambridge.

Soon.



DAKIN ESTATES LTD
Developing Tradition

Do you have buildings or land with planning potential?

Long established and experienced property consultant and developers could help
Contact Dakin Estates Ltd for a no-obligation chat
01223 354979 Email N.Dakin@dakinestates.co.uk
See our website for details of present and past projects as well as previous copies of Moving Times Newsletters.
www.dakinestates.co.uk

THE DAKIN MANAGEMENT TEAM

Nicholas Dakin (ND)
Sales & Acquisitions
N.Dakin@dakinestates.co.uk
James Dakin (JAD)
Construction & Admin
J.Dakin@dakinestates.co.uk
Thomas Clayton (TC)
Consultant

CHAIN REACTION.....

The search for the Holy Grail

A new service “Viewmychain” has recently been launched which offers agents and conveyancers the facility to view all the transactions in a chain of house sales, when the contract went out, when the survey was done, preliminary enquiries, searches etc. All visible for every transaction in the chain on a screen at the touch of a button rather than the endless chasing by telephone. What a good idea!

Will it work? – Technologically, it should be possible but such a concept has been a sort of Holy Grail for the property industry for many years thus far without result.

Dakin Estates were involved in market

research for a similar system, Chainchecker, but were told, aside from any other drawbacks, that it would be impossible to patent due to many similar concepts that already existed both here and in North America none of which were sufficiently successful to be universally adopted.

No-one has yet managed to come up with a “Holy Grail” that could be made to work. Many blame solicitors for being reluctant to embrace new technology that might speed up the archaic process of conveyancing. Yet, two years ago, The Law Society itself, in partnership with an Indian high tech company, invested heavily in just such a concept called “Veyo”. The project collapsed, at a cost of millions, with the



company citing “software difficulties” and “over ambitious timescales”.

So the search for the Holy Grail continues.

Meanwhile, back to quill pens and sealing wax!

On the side

Interesting hunt meet of the Cambridge University Draghounds in November. Unusual because it was designated a side saddle meet with a number of immaculately dressed ladies hunting and jumping whilst riding side saddle.

Riding side saddle goes back thousands of years with ladies originally standing on a platform with a step strapped to the side of a horse to

watch, but not participate in, hunting whilst being led by a groom.

Over the centuries the side saddle evolved with the addition of first one then two pommels on one side of the saddle that could be gripped with the thighs whilst riding and jumping thus giving stability.

For women to ride astride was deemed vaguely improper but during the first world war many women were recruited to train cavalry horses at remount depots in the U.K and, in order to do so, had to ride astride and the practice became widely acceptable. Oddly enough, side saddle riding enjoyed something of a revival in the aftermath of the war as it enabled men who had lost or injured their lower legs to ride and hunt.

They say side saddle is no more dangerous or unstable than riding astride...it just looks a bit alarming!!



... of Kings

In 1987 ND, touring the Troodos mountains in Cyprus by car, came by chance to Podromos, an otherwise unremarkable village overshadowed by a colossal and quite extraordinary building. It looked vaguely 1930ish – almost like something The Third Reich might have built.

Curious, ND got out and walked around the outside of the huge building. Its grounds were somewhat overgrown but there were small signs of maintenance – a path swept, a lawn mown. Clearly somebody cared about this place.

ND concluded it must be either a hotel or some sort of mountain sanatorium. What wasn't clear was whether it was open or closed but an empty swimming pool full of wet leaves suggested the latter. At close quarters the massive building resembled an enormous fortress watching over the mountain village. It had an eerie, ghostly, unworldly feel to it. ND stood, looking up at it in wonder.

"Hello my friend!"

The voice made ND jump as a Cypriot man appeared from nowhere – an older man with the sort of splendid moustache you see in old photographs of the Ottoman Empire. He was wearing an immaculately ironed white shirt and peeling an apple with a horn handled pocket knife.

"Oh..er..yes good morning" stammered ND uncertainly, aware that he may well be trespassing but the Cypriot seemed affable enough and proffered ND a slice of apple from the tip of his knife.

"What on earth is this place?" ND asked him.

"This"... said the Cypriot proudly indicating the building, "... is The Berengaria Hotel, The finest hotel in the Middle East. They call it The Hotel of Kings. King Farouk himself stayed here regularly."

"...but closed down now?" ventured ND.

"Awaiting refurbishment" corrected the Cypriot, a hurt look on his face, and



went on to tell how he had been at the hotel all his working life, one of once hundreds of employees but, now, he alone was left in the role of caretaker. His father had helped build the hotel back in 1930. Perhaps ND would like to look around? A large key was produced and a massive wooden door unlocked. "Welcome to The Berengaria Hotel" announced the Cypriot throwing open the door with a flourish.

If the outside had been eerie, the interior, smelling like an old damp house long shut up, was positively surreal. ND stooped to examine the many bits of paper littering the floor and found they were all postcards showing photos of the hotel in its glory days. As they moved through huge marbled salons and chandeliered lounges, ND felt much as the first rescuers to board The Marie Celeste must have felt. There were paintings and mirrors on the walls, tablecloths on the dining room tables, crockery and utensils in the kitchen, chairs in the lounges, beds in the bedrooms, linen and glasses in cupboards. Everywhere was fully furnished in a slightly old fashioned opulent 1950ish style.



The Berengaria Hotel was named after the wife of Richard the Lionheart whom he married in Cyprus. Building it in 1930 must have been a herculean task lugging materials up primitive mountain roads. Once completed, however, the hotel, complete with nightclub and casino, became very popular with the

international set. Crowned heads, including Farouk had stayed there as had Churchill and numerous celebrities and film stars.

When the founder and owner of the hotel died, the hotel was inherited by his three sons who quarrelled acrimoniously. The hotel was neglected and finally closed down in the early 1980s. Very suddenly, by the look of it. All three sons died in mysterious circumstances as have several other people connected with the mountain resort hotel.

ND emerged into the warm sunshine somewhat subdued by his experience and bade a fond farewell to the last employee of The Berengaria Hotel. Some Cypriot pounds changed hands.

"Well, good luck with the renovation", said ND, awkwardly, for some reason.

"Thankyou – hopefully it should start soon ...you will have to come and stay when we reopen!" cried the Cypriot brightly but ND caught a look in his eye and realised that The Berengaria Hotel was never going to reopen. Furthermore, The Cypriot knew it too.....but it was all he had.

Today, 30 years later, the mighty Berengaria Hotel lies empty and derelict. Still impressive, even as a graffiti covered ruin, and still a brooding presence above the mountain village. Locals say The Berengaria is very haunted and that amongst the many ghostly noises emanating from it is the sound of three men arguing violently.

A sad end for once the finest hotel in the Middle East.

"The Hotel of Kings" they called it.

King Farouk used to stay there you know.....



The last post

ND recently read that the last time postmen made deliveries on Christmas Day was 25th December 1961....and ND remembers it! (Just).

On a very cold, frosty Christmas morning, (we had proper weather in those days), the postman duly arrived and was invited in for a festive glass.

Even the young ND noted that the postman was absolutely exhausted, barely able to stand in fact, and ND assumed that he must have been working jolly hard in the Christmas rush.

In 1961 JAD, ND and their parents lived on the edge of a wood at the end of a very long lane in a house which was the postman's last port of call before he finished his round.



“Port” perhaps being the mot juste as, that day, many householders along the way had also invited “postie” in for a festive glass most of which invitations he appeared to have accepted.

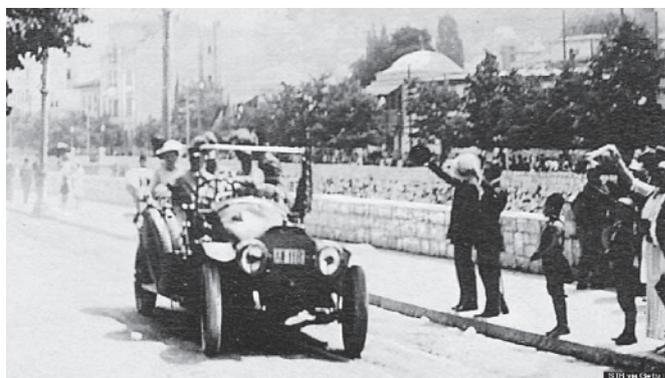
Could this danger of “exhaustion” be an early example of ‘health and safety concerns’ and be the reason behind the curtailment of the Christmas Day delivery?

The Left Hookers

Many comments about our photo of the car (Reg 11.11.18) in which the Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo in 1914 thus triggering The First World War. The car, despite being in Eastern Europe, appears to have the steering wheel on the right hand side and to be driving on the left hand side of the road, (as we do in the UK).

So we had reversed the negative? Not so - actually, many countries in the old Austro Hungarian Empire and elsewhere drove on the left before World War One.

After the fall of the Austro Hungarian Empire, some of those countries switched to driving on the right to harmonise with neighbouring countries, (who themselves had been forced to drive on the right by the conquering armies of Napoleon).



Some countries, such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia, stayed driving on the left until coerced into switching by the Nazis in the 1940s as were the German occupied Channel Islands who then switched back to the left “British” side after the war.

A number of countries have switched from left to right in recent years including The Gambia and Sweden. There are now only four European countries driving on the left, Britain, Malta, Cyprus and Ireland. It is no accident that these are all islands with no need to harmonise with neighbouring countries.

A survey in 1969 concluded that countries driving on the left have fewer accidents perhaps demonstrating that left is the natural side to drive on – after all, apparently even the Romans drove on the left!



**POINT TO POINT
at Cottenham Racecourse**

Saturday 31st December – First race 12 noon

Saturday 11th February – First race 12 noon

www.cottenham-racecourse.co.uk

