



## Dear Diary

by Rosalyn St Pierre

### Day - 1

I like to refer to today as -1, the last day of my old life and tomorrow the great adventure will start. We give a final drinks party. I do regret it fell on the same day as the village bridge club and so few of my councillors and neighbours could accept our invitation. I may miss those evenings in the chilly sports hall when the issues coming before the Parish Council centred around litter or applications for building a garden shed, when the councillors of many, many years' experience rarely challenged my directions as Chair. All changed recently. Developers moved in, and the old PC is expected to lobby the County Council, even write to the MP. Ridiculous, when old Archie told me that the developers were sound men and it would bring jobs to the village. A suggestion that one of the new cul-de-sacs would have my name.

### Day + 7

Well, we have survived the move, and the last of the boxes have been unpacked. It was Hilary who spotted the advertisement, but when we made our initial visit to the Retirement Village I knew I had the right choice, though on the pricey side. I left Hilary to do the unpacking; women have a knack for sorting things out, so I have found a very nice group of chaps, mostly with a background in the City or the armed forces. I keep quiet; I do not want to brag, but I was someone of consequence in the village and the bank, before the branch was closed.

Day + 50

I have lost 2 stone since moving in. Hilary says I look very trim, and I must say she definitely is brighter and very jolly. The reason is the lift has been out of order for 3 weeks. I have raised it with a young man who claims to be 'Estate Manager'. Estate! Does he think this is the grounds of Sandringham? He says the contact with the lift company 'is in hand,' and 'needs clearance from Head Office.' He says the same when we noticed Japanese Knot weed emerging in the garden.

Day + 100

The bad weather persists. Although the lift was recently fixed, I am not tempted to go out, or even to the bar downstairs. Three days ago I tried to alter the thermostat on the central heating. The government do not understand that while there might be climate change and fossil fuels will kill us all, in the meantime us older people, who I will add have worked hard all their lives and paid taxes, need extra heat. I told Hilary that if we waited for the Estate Manager to give us advice, we would freeze. Surely I could do it myself. I remember the lessons given by old Mr Watts in elementary physics. How funny I can recall his name easily but cannot remember the name of the Estate Manager. Anyway, it would seem wires are not arranged as in my day, and I caused a blackout, embarrassingly not just our apartment but the entire building, including the heating system. I will say the Estate Manager was very understanding, though the chaps were not pleased when they could not see their way along the darkened corridors to the bar for their evening tipple.

Day + 103

Well, life here is far more exciting than all those years in the village, or should I say different. We were all blinded yesterday morning when the power was resumed, though it was 3 am. Lights came on, TVs and radios blared through the Village, the central heating roared as it sprang into life. Hilary was not pleased and uttered words I have not heard from her since I crashed her car in Worthing.

She insisted I got up to turn off all the appliances and said unnecessarily loudly not to touch the bloody central heating dials, which I did not take to kindly as I had only been applying rules learnt in my school days, when physics was taught properly with explosions and electric shocks.

Day + 111

The excitement continues. No water! Tunbridge Wells. The Estate Manager tells us the us a large reservoir above our apartment that will flush toilets, but we must not drink the water. A huge lorry fills our car parking area, unloading crates of bottles of water donated by the water company, so at least some return on our huge charges. The Estate Manager has a youth to carry packs of 30 bottles to each door. 'Good thing you got the lifts fixed,' I joke as he unloads them outside our door, but he seems too busy to reply. The bar is very busy, but the barman said we could either drink from the bottle or bring our own glasses. I offer to drink directly from the draught beer tap, but only one chap thought that was amusing.

Day + 200

I believe I am happy because I am not ambitious, though I was surprised I was not elected to the residents' committee.