

The Peace of Mind is Priceless!



Spitfire Lodge, Southampton



Pam and Ron Yendall

Pub visits, good friends and help when it's needed. Ron Yendall, an 84-year-old retired stevedore reveals what it's really like to be an Owner at Spitfire Lodge, Southampton.

By Cheryl Markosky

I wake up and get breakfast - tea and toast for me, a banana for my wife Pam - in our ground-floor apartment. Everything's electric, so we don't have to be anxious about gas prices or forgetting to turn the gas off.

We've lived here for three years, thanks to our daughter Hayley, who one day said, "Get your coats, I have somewhere to take you." We had no intention of moving from our four-bedroom house where we lived for 50 years, but coming here is one of the best things we've done.

I had a massive garden before, but it's nice not to have to worry about the maintenance anymore. In summer, I sit out with Pam on the patio that faces south, so we get the sun most of the day.

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If the weather's nice, we'll go for a drive and have lunch at The Hop Arms in town, The Lamb in Nomansland, or further away to The Hatchet in Sheffield English, near Romsey.

Today, we went for lunch at The Chilworth Arms with our son and family, who live close by, to celebrate my granddaughter's birthday. As I don't have to fix or maintain anything, I can just get on with my life and whenever we go out, we know everything's secure.

There's lots going on in the Lodge - Tai Chi exercises, knitting, croissants and coffee on Saturdays. You can be as independent as you like but if you want to be included you just put your name down, it's that simple. I go to coffee mornings, play bingo and do jigsaws in the Owners' Lounge and there's no pressure to do things if you don't want to. The hairdresser does Pam's hair every week in the Wellbeing Suite, and every three weeks a chiropodist comes in too.

We're friends with everybody. We communicate really well with one another, but at the same time we're not in each other's way. My friend Ken Reid also lives here. We used to work together at the docks and like to reminisce about those days.

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To help Pam I make up the bed, do the laundry, Hoover, dust and unlike our old house it takes me no time at all. I shop at Sainsbury's, a few minutes up the road, and get our prescriptions from the local chemist, it's all so easy.

Recently, I had a cataract operation and had to get new glasses, so I asked the Lodge Manager to keep an eye on Pam while I was at the optician. When I got back, she said, "Oh, I checked on her a couple of times. She's fine." This peace of mind is priceless and it's never a bother.

We watch TV in the evening and go to bed around 10pm. It's lovely and warm, and we feel safe. Everything about this place is ideal - I'd recommend it to anyone - and we have our daughter Hayley to thank for getting us here.

■ For more information about Spitfire Lodge, Southampton please call us on 02380 984610 or visit crl.co.uk/spitfire-lodge