

Langley Marsh Social Club

ON Wednesday 5th April at the Three Horse Shoes, Mr Pradeep Madhavan, Senior Consultant Spinal Surgeon, attended a meeting of the Langley Marsh Social Club.

During the past year, the LMSC had been raising funds in support of the spinal unit at Musgrove Park Hospital. The club was delighted to present Mr Madhavan with a set of Operating Loupes to use during spinal surgery, valued at over £1,000.

Pictured is Mr Madhavan being presented with the surgical loupes by Mr Maurice Sandford, Treasurer of the LMSC.

The LMSC meets monthly for social events, often with fundraising for a cause chosen for the year. The beneficiary for the 2006/7 year will be the Wivey Link, which provides a community based dial-a-ride service for the Wiveliscombe area.

For details of membership, please contact Mrs Val Walking on 01984 623019.



Petrol too expensive? Take a tip from this car owner in the Gobi Desert, Mongolia

Photo: Hilary Miller

New image for fathers

MODERN dads are six times as likely to play an active role in bringing up their kids as fathers in the 1940s.

Researchers have also found today's dads are much more active than their own dads - reflecting the "new man" culture.

Nowadays, men don't just attend the birth - unheard of in the 1940s - but are also more likely to play with, bath their children and take them to school.

They are also more aware of who their child's best pal is and the names of teachers,

details that used to be left for mums.

The research, to mark the release of Disney sequel Bambi 2 on DVD, involved a survey of 1000 dads from the 1940s, 50s, 60s and 70s.

It found 97 per cent of men now change nappies, for example, compared with 11 per cent in the 40s and 38 per cent in the 70s. More than nine in ten modern dads take time off work to look after their kids, compared with 24 per cent in the 60s, reflecting the increase in working mums.

The original Bambi was released in 1942, when attitudes to fatherhood were very different. Its most tear-jerking moment saw Bambi's mum being killed.

The sequel shows him being raised by his dad. Disney brand manager Ruth Beman said: "It's not just Bambi whose dad strived to be a better father - now we have a nation of hands-on dads."

The survey also found that a substantial percentage of men said being a good role model was the most important quality of fatherhood.

South West fathers rights activist Rich Adams welcomes the changing attitudes highlighted by the survey: "This research shows that fathers' roles are really changing and that children, mums and dads want it that way."

"This also shows the importance of dads in children lives and the need for this continuation after family breakdown".

"In the 21st century dads deserve the right of automatic access after family breakdown unless the child is at risk and not the present system that sends them into poverty, broken court orders, depression, and a bias family court system shrouded in secrecy."

"In all other aspects of law people are presumed innocent until found guilty but in family law it is the other way around. Dads are immediately found guilty and forced by CAF/CASS and the family courts to prove their innocence and the love they have for their children, which usually takes at least 6-9 months and sometimes years, during which time the child and fathers contact is denied".

The popular image of feckless fathers who leave the marital home and refuse to pay any money towards

the upkeep of their former wife and children has also been much exaggerated, according to new figures from the Child Support Agency.

Latest returns from the government agency show that a marginally higher proportion of women than men persistently refuse to pay child maintenance.

The CSA's figures show that in the three months to the end of last year, some 30% of non-resident parents failed to pay. Of women, 31% were nonpayers, while 30% of men did not pay. The figures were released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Detailed figures released show that it is still predominantly men who leave the family home. But they show that previous figures from the Government and CSA claiming 70% of men refuse to pay anything are the reverse of the situation - 70% of all absent parents are paying some maintenance and this is a misinterpretation which the Child Support Agency has tried to correct.

"Is it any wonder that fathers' groups target these organisations who misrepresent the truth and caring hard working dads?"

"This includes the Church of England and their representatives including the equivocating Rowan Williams, who has said that moral leadership is not the business of the Church. Is it not hypocritical to say that when 28 unelected Bishops sit in the House of Lords passing moral judgement of Bills passing through Parliament?"

At least the Pope seems to be well aware of the political destruction of the family and has made a stand in his Easter message.

For more information contact Rich Adams 01984 623434 mobile 07875 748807

PROPERTY MATTERS

Questions, questions and more questions

I'M often asked why does one house sell and not another, and how do people choose which one to buy?

Essentially, it's about supply and demand, two sides of the same coin, and frankly it all depends on the buyers.

When you are looking for a home to buy there will be an initial set of requirements to be met. Some of those will be "must haves", others will be desirable.

One thing is for certain, from the time you start searching to the time you move in, these criteria will undoubtedly have shifted.

Matching properties to people is a complicated process, subject to numerous different requirements.

The first and foremost would be location i.e. where the village or town is. Is there good access to work, schools and leisure pursuits?

In fact, when there is a wide area of search, it is sometimes harder to focus on what is really suitable.

However, having established a target area, the next thing to address is what you want in that place. Is it modern or older, or possibly either? Is it aesthetically pleasing and the right style? Is it detached, or would a terrace or semi be the thing?

Are there essential things about the property i.e. the right number of bedrooms or is it ground floor living rooms that matter more? Does it need an independent dining room or combined kitchen/diner or lounge/diner? Do you need a study or home office?

Is there a ground floor cloakroom or just a first floor bathroom, or is just a first floor bathroom sufficient? Does it have a gas central heating system or other form of heating, or is there a fireplace, with a real fire for example?

Where will you be able to park - is there a garage or a drive, or must you rely on on-road parking outside or nearby?

The filtering process continues apace, consciously and subconsciously with the focus then shifting onto condition.

Are the windows up to scratch, is the roof sound, are the electrics and plumbing in good order, or are there any problems such as damp or timber infestation?

The owners would presumably decorate and furnish it to their own taste, but does it appeal to a potential buyer, or is it too bold a statement? Has it been done well or could it have been done better?

The crucial qualifying factor will certainly prove to be the price. Is it within budget or

will it be a stretch financially? Is it good value in relation to what else is available and what has recently sold? Does the price reflect the condition? How much will the mortgage repayments or council tax be?

In theory, when some of these questions have been answered and it meets most of the requirements, it could be worth a viewing.

Just when you thought the logical approach was working, then the emotional factors will kick in. As you approach the property, can you put your finger on what it is you "like" or "dislike"? Or will it be a compromise?

When you go in the property what does it feel like? What do you look at from the windows? Is it a pleasant outlook? Will you look forward to coming home at the end of the day or on the weekends and enjoy living next to your neighbours?

Is it quiet or busy? Will the kids have friends to play with, or will kids playing be an aggravation for quieter pursuits? Has it been cherished or is it neglected? Does the garden catch the sun at the right time of day, and is it private?

And then, just when you thought it might be the one, there is the awkward situation of negotiation. What would be a fair offer and not offend the owner, or should I offer the asking price to secure it to stop people from seeing it?

What timetable will the owner be able to offer and is it compatible with your own? What about the chain - who else is involved and who is moving where and when, and how many people are involved?

And then, having reached an agreement and having a complete chain, it's time to appoint a solicitor, check the paperwork and take the transaction through to completion. It's time to have a surveyor check the house, but then what level of survey should you choose?

Questions, questions and more questions. As agents we will help answer as many of these questions as possible. But the point is, if we knew all the answers, then life would be easy.

Part of our job is to help guide potential purchasers through the maze and eventually arrive at the right home to buy that meets (most of) the requirements. Hopefully you'll end up with that perfect (well almost) blend.

If you have any questions relating to the local property market, please feel free to call me on 01984 623023, or call into our office in Wiveliscombe.

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