

THE NAKED TRUTH

Do you remember 'The Man from the Pru'?

I'd like to say I broke the mould! Working in the Prudential's claims department in 1988, I was one of the few women promoted to become part of the company's new team of Claims Assessors. Their own in-house Loss Adjusters. We were given company cars with phones and at just 27, I wore jackets with shoulder pads and impossible high heels! The height of sophistication.

My most memorable incident in my 10 years as an assessor happened one hot Friday afternoon in July. I was phoned by the office to attend an urgent claim near St Albans. I called the policyholder,

"Hello Mrs Johnson, my name is Helen Nicell, I'm phoning from the Prudential."

"Oh yes dear, are you making the appointment for the gentleman to call round?"

I was more than used to this response.

"It will actually be me coming and I can be there by four O'clock today."

I found out the washing machine had leaked which was causing problems with the wooden suspended wooden floor, hence the urgency.

"Wonderful," she said, "we live at 35 Speilplatz , Bricket Wood."

I'd never heard of the address. She spelt it out.

"Do you know what Speilplatz means?"

"No sorry."

"It's German for playground my dear. Speilplatz is a nudist colony."

I resisted spluttering down the phone,

"Park in the main car park and walk round to the left. Don't worry, we'll have our clothes on!"
The irony of dealing with a leak from a washing machine in a nudist colony!

The first sight that greeted me in the car park was a man aged 70 plus getting something from the boot of his car, wearing a Panama hat, socks, sandals and nothing in-between. Overdressing with the socks maybe?

I then made my way to the Johnsons, past the swimming pool where everyone was naked. Past the tennis courts where everyone was naked. Four neighbours sitting behind the hedge playing cards, yes you've guessed it, naked! I was wearing sunglasses but didn't know where to look. I felt like it was the set of a 'Carry On' film or an advert for Danish bacon- but I think that came later!

True to their word the Johnsons had their clothes on, Mr J was also wearing a toupee, comfortable with walking around naked, but not comfortable with baldness?

The kitchen was not useable, Mrs J asked if the policy would cover them for eating out whilst the kitchen was repaired?

"Nothing expensive dear, we can eat in the clubhouse," she winked before adding "we won't have to dress for dinner then!"

My experience travelled around the Loss Adjusters' team and the company. It was immortalised with a story and a cartoon in the Pru News. I was presented with the original drawing and a bottle of champagne at the next works' conference, I was still blushing....
Happy days and just one of many stories from my time as a Claims Assessor.