

JOURNEY'S END

There comes a time when coping at home alone is not a proposition. A time of carefully choosing the right words. When that moment arrives, becomes a great pain to the ones near and dear to you, a difficult moment of explaining why you must leave the surroundings after decades of choice and expecting to be there forever, not realising that forever is not infinite.

Luckily for me I was fully aware. I understood that the time had come as I was unable to safely cope without twenty-four-hour assistance. An aged care home it had to be.

My only experience of aged care was many years ago. My company, IIC, was offered the opportunity to purchase ten nursing homes. After visiting one, I decided it was not an industry in which we could be involved. I had bad memories of that type of institution for many years so my entry to Maurice Zeffert as a Low Care resident was a surprise.

The efficiency and cleanliness are that of a five-star hotel crossed with a hospital. Being in Low Care provides me with the level of independence I need. Meals are served in a hotel-style dining room or can be delivered to my room. My table is set for four people and I sit with a South African gentlemen; a Bulgarian lady who speaks only a little English so we converse using a few words in Yiddish and German; and an Israeli gentleman who speaks Hebrew and Russian. We manage with expressive gestures.

I think the reason there are foreign speakers here is an inflow of Israelis who have few dependents in their old age and this place becomes their place of refuge?

We eat breakfast at 8.30am, lunch at 12.30pm and dinner at 5.30pm. I was surprised to find my cutlery is silver and of superior quality – perhaps a donation from some benefactor?

My single room is spacious and I'm able to hang my clothes in the roomy built-in wardrobe and put my smalls in the drawers. My room has a single hospital-style bed which is tightly made each morning. Attached to my room is a large bathroom with a toilet and shower. There is space for my painting easel in my room although I can't paint at the moment because of the damaged nerves in my fingers, which I hope can be

successfully treated. The accommodation is like home in all respects and I can have visitors at any reasonable time.

One Sunday, my son Stuart took me to Cottesloe. A good afternoon out, eye candy for an old man and back in time for dinner.

The facility has an amazing array of communal spaces, reading and meeting rooms, a hairdresser, a gym and many other features. The nursing staff are most caring and efficient, as are the general staff who perform other duties. In all, the facility is well staffed.

I never thought I would ever replace Rosie, who was my remarkable companion for eighteen years. I thought I could never live without her so I am so happy she, and my other friends and relatives, can visit me often.

In conclusion, if the reader of this essay has doubts when the time comes to make that final decision about what comes next, remember there is a good option.