



## **Andrew Penman and Nick Sommerlad Daily Mirror Reporters**

# **Diamond Resorts sends in debt collectors as the fee strike spreads**

By [Andrew Penman](#) on April 6, 2011 11:00 PM [in Timeshare & holidays](#)

There are two words that members of the Diamond Resorts holiday club detest even more than "Diamond" and "Resorts".

They're "Daniels Silverman", the debt collectors brought in to try to force poor members into coughing up ever-escalating annual management fees. Not that we can see Daniels Silverman having much luck, judging by the number of very angry Diamond Resorts members who say they're refusing to pay-up.

"They have had enough from us over the years," says Anne Lawrenson, of St Helens, Merseyside, whose annual fees have rocketed from £228 to £702.

"We were told when we bought the points that we would get two weeks anywhere. We have only ever managed to get one week and never where we wanted."

Barry and Anne Payne, of Grantham, Lincs, are being chased by Daniels Silverman for £3,844 in outstanding Diamond Resorts fees.

"They claim that they have the right to demand any amount, as often as they want, and no one may resign."

John and Wilma Sutherland, of Edinburgh, have tried to resign from Diamond after John, 73, suffered a stroke, heart problems and had knee and hip replacement surgery. Instead, Diamond has "generously" reduced its demand for unpaid fees from £2,958 to £2,366.

"We tried many times over the past years to book UK holidays and have never been successful as they are constantly booked up," Wilma tells us.

"It's not can't pay, it's won't pay - not when the rules were changed so blatantly," says Chris Skelton of Inverness.

After refusing to pay management fees three years ago, Neil and Valerie Andrew, of Bolton, have been told by Daniels Silverman that they owe £2,958 to Diamond Resorts.

"We have no issue with the quality of the resorts but this is irrelevant when you can't book a holiday," they say.

"We just want to surrender our points and then walk away."

Meanwhile, Steve Maughan and Helen Phillips, of Durham, paid £9,000 for membership and now face annual fees of more than £800.

"We were told the fees would not increase by more than inflation," said Steve.

"I should be suing someone for misrepresentation."

This firm, ultimately US owned, is run by Alan Bentley, Sarah Hulme and Suzana Gomic.

It says annual fees are affected by factors outside their control such as taxes and exchange rates - and they're not backing down on payment demands.

"It is imperative that each and every member meets their annual obligation for maintenance fees as failure to do so increases the cost of operations for all of the other members and owners."

As for no one being allowed to surrender their points, it said membership "is a long-term commitment".

What about the reported difficulties with booking holidays?

"We always try to accommodate a guest's request for a specific location and a specific time frame, but reservations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis."

We also contacted Liverpool-based Daniels Silverman - it's claimed "we are one of the good guys in the industry" - to ask if it has launched court proceedings against any Diamond Resorts members.

The evasive answer was "we don't comment on individual cases", even though we didn't ask for details of individual cases. We were just interested to know whether the prospect of being taken to court was bluff or had been carried out.

If you're a Diamond Resorts member and Daniels Silverman does sue you, let us know, we'll gladly give the case the coverage it deserves.