

LUROT BRAND

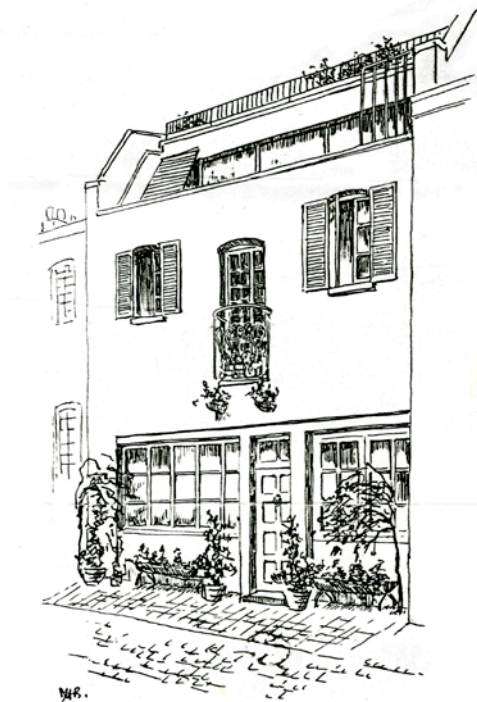


MEWS NEWS

AUTUMN 2010



LUROT BRAND IS 40 NEXT YEAR



contacted us because they wanted to buy a mews house in London as a rental investment. We found them one in 1997 and have been successfully letting and managing it since.

So back to dinner. Really nice small restaurant in a newish "boutique" hotel near Marble Arch. Very comfortable and a delightful menu. We finished ordering and out of the blue I hear the words ..."did you know that I think you sold us a mews house in the late 1970s in Pimlico?" Actually, no I didn't.

They couldn't remember the name of the mews and after much describing by them, I correctly deduced that it was Eccleston Square Mews. I got as much information as possible (they couldn't remember the number) from them and the next day set about investigating.

Lo and behold, in December 1976, we did indeed sell them No. 18 in the mews. They paid £46,000

for the house and remembered an ink drawing of the exterior (done by the Boss's mother D. H. Lurot Betjeman) which is reproduced to the left.

We do have the most amazing archives on all things mews - the original idea stemming from the Boss's rallying involvement as many rally car preparers worked out of mews. We have "Sales Books" which log information on every single property we have ever sold with the name of the purchaser. In looking through the book for the 70s I was amazed not only at the prices but at how many names I recognised.

I scolded our clients for not mentioning anything about this before. Not in Florida, not when we sold them their present house nor during any of the lunches and dinners we have had together since.

Are they our 'oldest' mews clients?

Kati Lurot

Nostalgia has already set in and I have started looking back at some of our favourite clients, stories, blunders, etc. This was prompted by something that happened recently.

I had dinner with one of our favourite clients and his wife. We first met them on holiday in Florida in 1987 and, some years later, they

CITROEN'S DS3 – A NEW ICON?

In 1955 Citroen launched the DS to so much acclaim that they took 12,000 orders on the first day of the Paris Motorshow. With styling by Flaminio Bertoni and technology that was years ahead of the competition, it was an immediate icon.

In 2010 Citroen have re-launched the DS brand with the new DS3 and Lurot Brand have a number of them. As well as being very eye catching inside and out, we feel that the DS3 suits our image very well. Modern and progressive, but with solid links to the past. There is also the "French" connection!

In 1999 we were the very first

London agent to have branded vehicles with our small fleet of Smart cars and, after 11 years with various incarnations of the Smart, we thought this was an excellent replacement.

In the Sunday Times, Jeremy Clarkson has been waxing lyrical about the DS3 and has described it as being "The best of the small cars by a very, very long way", better even than the Mini or the Fiat 500.

Keep an eye open for these Lurot Branded [sic] cars driving around our usual mews (and non-mews) haunts.

We hope you like them.



MEMORIES BY JOHN SPRINZEL FROM MOLOKAI ISLAND

We started our tuning business – John Sprinzel Racing Ltd, in 1960 in the old stable on the ground floor of 32 Lancaster Mews. Many famous names connected with racing cars had been there at some time or other, all overlooked by the headquarters of England’s Football Association. There were also three brothels, the Stables drinking club, and two Members of Parliament; Conservative Jeffrey Archer and Socialist Les Huckfield. The brothels closed quite soon after our arrival, and the house of one, which was bought by a stockbroker acquaintance, still had a cupboard full of whips and chains, though I suspect this is more information than you want to hear. Gulio Ramponi tuned Alfa Romeos with skills learned as race car driver Tazio Nuvolari’s riding mechanic, Alf Brown, labored over many of London’s elegant Alvis cars, while Bill Moss roared up and down the Mews in one or other of his ex Prince Bira’s vintage ERA racers. From another lock-up, Malcolm Clube seemed to be selling most of the very evil looking Porsche Speedsters in town.

There was also an American voice coach, Chuck Mallet, who lived opposite to our workshops, and the steady flow of film and stage stars getting training for an upcoming role which involved singing, certainly added some flavor to this unusual place. The character of the mews even appealed to Brian Robbins who ran that wonderful BBC motoring programme ‘Wheelbase’ and got me to interview the automotive element of this motoring Mecca to fill an entire half hour of one of his shows. That you entered the narrow cobblestone lane between a pub and a betting shop in Craven Terrace was not lost on the viewers.

Originally the premises stabled the horses and carriages for the prestigious homes in Lancaster Gate, and the apartments above no doubt housed the grooms. The top floor hay loft had a central shaft through the building to deposit the day’s feed down to the horses below, and a fully opening top floor doorway with the device for hauling the bales of hay



into the attic, was all very picturesque.

I managed to buy one of these houses, with a great deal of help from my bank manager together with the owner’s personal mortgage for fifteen thousand pounds. It recently sold for two million pounds, and the last time I visited London, the entire street seemed to have changed into a very upper class residential district. Over the years I bought a total of six of the premises, the last one from our original landlady for twenty-five thousand pounds and I had moved into one of the flats above the showroom. Eventually though, I sold off all of them and retained long leases on the ground floor workshops and showrooms as the best way to keep rents to a minimum, but I do sometimes wonder if I

should have concentrated on mews properties and given up on the motor trade, which was always something of a headache.

Somehow or other we attracted a large number of characters from the film and music scene, who liked to have their cars done out in special colours and with fancy trim and sound systems. With all that extra added weight, they naturally had to have the cars tuned up a bit, though most of them never drove out of London. They also liked their privacy for which the Mews was really ideal as there were no gawkers passing by. Our mechanics soon became quite blasé at the appearance of yet another ‘star’. However, when Ursula Andress bought a Mini Cooper from us, there wasn’t a single employee who didn’t at least peer around the workshop or office doors to see this beauty come to collect her car. Among other visitors were the ‘Girl from Uncle’ star, Stefanie Powers, Susannah York, Sarah Lawson, Isobel Black, Patrick Allen and ‘Deadwood’ star Ian McShane. Tessa Wyatt actually lived in the mews so husband-to-be Tony Blackburn also often drove by in his E type, and Michael Crawford, well



before his 'Phantom' days, while he was still doing his regular soliloquy on 'That Was the Week That Was', bought his modest Morris 1100 in for service. When we had our annual Christmas party in the showroom, some of our regular customers took part and the Walker Brothers and Peter and Gordon even brought their guitars. Brian Jones, one of the founders of the Rolling Stones, turned up one afternoon with a bunch of folks in a huge open American car – a Cadillac I believe, but I don't think he remembered much of why he was there as he appeared well out

of it. Ringo Starr tried to sell me his Facel Vega, but you can imagine that was not on the top of our 'cars to buy' list. We even built a very special Mini Moke for the Dave Clark Five movie 'See How They Run'.

I do believe that the downfall of motoring activity in Lancaster Mews began when yellow lines were painted around both sides of the cobbledstoned

road and parking wardens became a part of our day – and our overheads. I did try and resist by lying in the road to prevent the dreaded yellow liner machine from doing its job, and even the Times newspaper covered this small rebellion, but they just painted around my prone body. I am fortunate to now live on the tiny Pacific Island of Molokai, with just sixty miles of paved road and absolutely no problems with traffic or parking, but there is no doubt that our years in 'The Mews' were as exciting and fulfilling as anything one could ever wish for.

John Sprinzel



A BEAUTIFUL MEWS SURGERY



Jody Doyle from our local doctor's surgery in Kynance Mews has received a very well deserved award from the Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea for her ingenious and beautiful planting in front of the Kynance Medical Practice.

Congratulations Jody!



The popularity of mews for model shoots and television programmes continues. Spotted on Britain's Next Top Model (the new series fronted by Elle Macpherson) were the competitors walking along Lexham Mews to the photographer's studio on the corner of the mews and Stratford Road in Kensington.

You tube link (Cycle 6, Episode 4, Part 2, 1.45mins):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kISSrgAUQqw>



The Egypt Exploration Society was founded in 1882 but had rented various properties in the Bloomsbury/West End area until 1969 when the Society purchased the freehold of 2-3 Doughty Mews. This is an ideal location for the Society being close to both the British Museum and the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology at University College London, so members have easy access to the three main Egyptological centres in London. In 1996 the EES also purchased the freehold of 4 Doughty Mews which now houses the Library. The three houses are interconnected internally but still look quite distinct on the exterior with shrubs and flowers planted and cared for by the tenant at No. 2. Originally stables and later garages for the houses in Doughty Street, whose residents included Charles Dickens, Doughty Mews is now mainly residential and since it is closed to traffic at one end is very quiet, providing a peaceful haven in the centre of London for members and visiting scholars to pursue their research.

The premises house the Society's administrative headquarters, a Committee/meeting room, the



Library - one of the best collections of Egyptology books in the country and the only one that is freely accessible to members of the public - and the Archive which contains almost 130 years of records of excavations and surveys in Egypt. The Society has about 2,500 members worldwide, many of whom are not professional



Egyptologists as membership is open to anyone with an interest in ancient Egypt.

The EES organizes and funds fieldwork and research in Egypt, and occasionally in Sudan, and has been responsible for many of the major British archaeological discoveries in the Nile Valley, including excavation at the major



cities of Memphis, Sais and Tell el-Amarna. The EES has also excavated and recorded many tombs and temples in Egypt and initiated the 'Delta Survey' to record the sites in the north of the country which are under threat from urban expansion and climate change.

The Society makes its work known by publishing the results in its colour magazine, *Egyptian Archaeology*, and also through a full programme of lectures, seminars, and conferences. Details of all EES events and activities can be found on the Society's website: www.ees.ac.uk where anyone interested in ancient Egypt can also join the Society or make a donation to help its important research to continue.

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MEWS WORLD QUEST - GIRLS IN PEARLS

It was a decision which doubtless caused many tears, but Princess Margaret was resolute. "We had to put a stop to it," she said, "every tart in London was being presented." Even half a century ago, the debutante season caused controversy. The royal element was phased out in the late 1950s and, despite the Princess's apparent candour and robust language, the official reason given was "a need to modernise".

Traditionally, the season would begin when well-to-do young girls were presented to the Queen at Court. Having been officially introduced to high society, the "gels" could begin their hunt for a suitable husband. Debutantes for more than a century have graced the pages of Country Life magazine. Each edition usually featured a young woman from a landed British family, often referred to as "Girls in Pearls", showing upper class British rural life in its most ideal light.

Miles End, a quite unique and charming mews conversion, is the setting behind two pages in Country Life [November 1947 and January 1948] featuring Debutante Maureen, daughter of the Hon. Mrs Critchley-Waring and



friend, Patricia Phillip, wearing twin-sets by Lyle & Scott. Dating back to the mid 18th century Miles End was formerly the coaching house, grooms quarters and stables to White Lodge Estate. During the 1930s, 40s and 50s, White Lodge was the country seat of the Critchley-Waring family, part of the renowned furniture makers Waring & Gillow. In the 1960s the Estate was divided up with the land and stable area being separated and developed to



create four quite unique dwellings.

The current owners, Denis & Anita Wright (who are now selling Miles End), moved in 1994 and have extensively developed the property with the aid of an interior designer. They renamed their part of the conversion 'Miles End', after Bernard Miles who was the head boy and lived in the grooms' quarters in the 1930s - Bernard was so popular in the village that the bottom of Vicarage



Lane where the property is located was often referred to as 'Miles End'.

The original cobble stones in the once stable area and grooms' quarters now create a focal point with a Mediterranean feel as olive trees and tropical plantation adorn the communal inner courtyard.

The mews is located in the village of Dunchurch, Warwickshire just three miles south of Rugby. It was once the main coaching route on the road from London to Holyhead with over 40 coaches a day passing through. Due to its popularity as a coaching village many famous people are known to have passed through - including Princess Victoria (later to be Queen) and the highwayman Dick Turpin.

Today, Dunchurch has become a haven for city workers who are drawn to the Capital for work commitments but within an hour of leaving Euston can be back home enjoying the peace and tranquility of a country retreat away from the hussle and bussle of city life.

*Denis & Anita Wright -
Mews lovers and owners*

LUROT BRAND

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