

Mews News

No.2 Jan 2003

**News of the mews from Lurot Brand - The London Mews Company.
The only estate agency specialising in the sale and rental of mews properties.**



Galloping Horses, Galloping Prices.

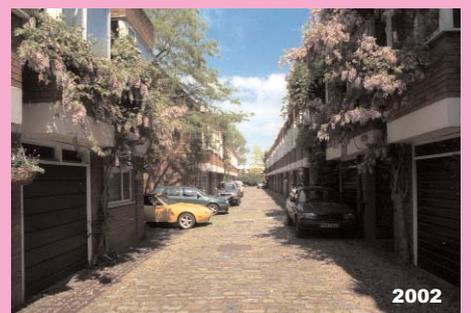
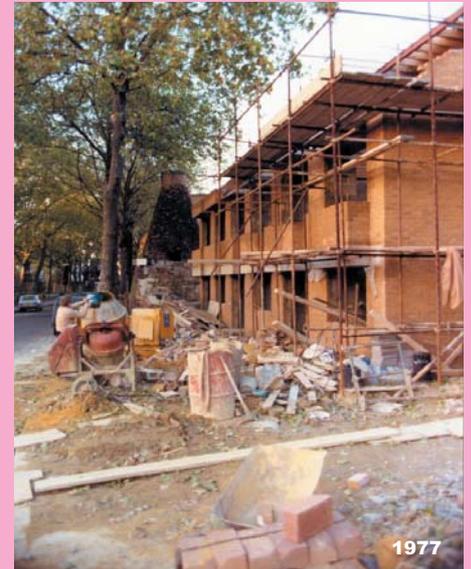
Hippodrome Mews W11 is situated on the site of a 19th century racecourse and riding school, founded by a Mr Whyte.

The course, pictured in the contemporary print above, opened on June 3rd 1837 with Count D'Orsay and the Earl of Chesterfield attending as Stewards.

At the side of the course stood the pottery kiln that has been preserved to this day. It has lasted considerably longer than the racecourse which ran out of money and closed in 1841.

In 1977 the "outstanding development of twenty six luxury three bedroom town houses designed and constructed for modern living" began and our pictures show the work in progress. Prices then were around £38,000 - a far cry from today when values are well over £550,000 for the standard houses.

If readers have stories or old photographs of any mews we would be delighted to hear from them.



CRYSTAL BALLS REQUIRED

"How's the market?" is the most frequent question to an estate agent, be it over the dinner table or during a valuation meeting. 2002 was a difficult year to read and 2003 may be equally difficult.

It is awfully confusing for sellers when they see headlines talking about 25% rises in values and then find their own properties have not followed the trend. Equally, buyers hear the Bank of England talking about the 'unsustainability of house price inflation' and then wonder why their low offer has not been accepted.

The answer to 'how's the market?' is, 'changing' and in times of change it is all the harder to tell what lies in store.

The mews market is active but buyers are being very choosy and an over-optimistic price will put them off even bothering to look. Mews houses tend to hold their value better than

general property because they are in very limited supply, are mostly in the very best areas of town and are perennially popular.

We therefore expect 2003 to show modest price growth and a fair volume of transactions though much will depend on events abroad. Will prices fall significantly? Unlikely. Will they rise by a double digit percentage? Very unlikely. The only thing we can say with absolute certainty is that little is certain about the future behaviour of the UK property market. London is the powerhouse of the market and trends usually start here. That being the case, the rest of the country should soon be seeing fewer buyers around and more property coming up for sale. As a result the pressure on prices will ease. Interest rates are set to remain low and so long as employment is secure buyers should feel positive about purchasing.

The image in the crystal ball is encouraging and we expect a steady start to the New Year in the mews market.

*The first Aston Martin factory was situated in
Hemiker Mews SW3*

BUSINESS IN A MEWS? Who are you? What's your line?

In future editions of this newsletter, we would very much like to feature articles of local interest about some of the more unusual types of commercial activity carried out in many of the mews in London. If your business is 'different' and you think Mews News readers would be interested, please drop us a line or an email.

Careless Talk Costs Sales

In this follow up article on successful home selling Sarah Rosser, from our sales team, passes on some sound advice about how to build teamwork with your agent - and protect the sale.

Viewings

We accompany all viewings and advise clients of them as far in advance as possible. If you do not own an answer machine, now is the time to invest in one, or to instruct BT to activate their voice mail service on your line. This service costs a minimal amount per quarter. It is also sensible to ensure that we have your mobile number and/or work number as well as email addresses.

Being able to contact our clients is particularly important where people relocating to London are concerned. They may have a very tight time frame in which to view properties and if we feel your house fits their needs we may have to view it at very short notice. If offers are made, it is even more important that we can contact you in a timely fashion.

During viewings we prefer our clients to 'take a walk' or if it's raining to stay in the background as much as possible. 'Bonding' between seller and purchaser is for subsequent visits. The secret of our job is to find out exactly what our prospective purchasers really want and what they really think of the property. Buyers may be inhibited from

speaking their minds openly if the owner is within earshot. Questions about the neighbourhood, amenities, atmosphere, etc usually come at the second visit when it is time for you to be on hand to meet the prospective purchaser. Remember, you are selling a dream so it is important to paint a happy and relaxed picture.

Keeping Your Agent Informed

It is always useful for us to be informed of changes in your circumstances. Without wishing to pry, knowing about forthcoming holidays or extended absences, marriages, divorces or babies will allow us to exercise diplomacy and to market your property according to such changes.

Chit-Chat in The Mews

One of the main attractions of living in a mews is the village-like atmosphere that abounds. We frequently advise would-be purchasers to drive around a number of mews to acquaint themselves with the properties offered for sale and to generally soak up the mews ambience. But beware.

It is not unusual for such prospective purchasers to bump into the seller of the property, and for them to get talking. Whilst this may seem (and often is) innocent and innocuous, it is a situation that we have known to cause problems...

A gentleman who had made an offer on a house through us, decided to wander past for another look. He had been informed that another bid had been put in on the same

house (also through us). The gentleman was having another look before deciding whether or not to increase his bid. Whilst passing the property, he came across our client who invited him to have another look at the inside.

The subject of the other bid came up. Unprepared and caught off-guard, our client, perhaps rather embarrassed, denied all knowledge of the other bid. Justifiably feeling somewhat deceived the man was most reluctant to increase his bid and it took all our powers of persuasion to assure him of the veracity of the other offer. He did ultimately increase, but not to the level that he had previously been considering.

This anecdote highlights how a seemingly innocent conversation can have a negative outcome. In this case it cost our client about £10,000. We suggest to clients that if confronted by a prospective purchaser, they politely refer them to us for viewing arrangements. Any genuinely interested person will respect this professional attitude and comply.

And finally...

These suggestions have been mapped out to smooth the way through what can be a trying and traumatic time. Moving home, as we all know is a great upheaval.

What we hope to achieve is a spirit of 'team work' between us and our clients. We will actively market your house and introduce as many appropriate, would-be purchasers as possible. On the other hand, we need you to be well prepared for the sale and help us present your house in the best light. Ultimately we will both benefit.

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In the 1720's, around Grosvenor Square W1, stood streets named after Adam; Blackburne; Reeve and Shepherd - men who owned stables there. The streets, now Adam's Row; Shepherd's Place; Blackburne's Mews and Reeves Mews, exist today.

From the Archives

"Britain's magicians are to hold a secret ballot to decide whether women shall be admitted to their enclosed circle. The reason why the Magic Circle's 81 years of robust sexism is in danger of vanishing into thin air lies in the persistence of Fay Presto, who for nine months was, oddly enough, a member of the men-only club. Then, with some embarrassment, the Magic Circle's secretary, Mr Chris Pratt, said to her: 'We have reason to believe you are a woman' and asked her to leave. Actually Fay Presto was formerly a motor-cycle messenger boy but switched to magic after she has started changing her sex, a transformation act which seems to have baffled the Magic Circle..."

But the result of the Magic Circle's ballot will not be known until the end of the year. Mr Pratt fears that it will destroy the gentlemanly nature of the Magic Circle and wreak havoc with lavatory arrangements at its premises in London's Chénies Mews, its home for the last 20 years..."

'Bystander' writing in the Sunderland Echo in 1986.

Those bloody wardens are clamping everywhere!

Winner of the last caption competition is Anthony Wills of Elizabeth Mews NW3 who emailed us this heartfelt sentiment to which many of us can relate.



Not Amewsed...



Our colleagues in the Flat & House department based at our office in Kynance Place SW7 were deeply miffed that we didn't give them a mention in the last issue. So here is a picture of their office - and they asked us to say that they would be delighted to help if you want to buy, sell or let a home that isn't in a mews!

MEWS TO RENT



Wellington Close W11

Tucked away in a small mews off Ledbury Road and well situated for trendy Westbourne Grove and Portobello Road market.

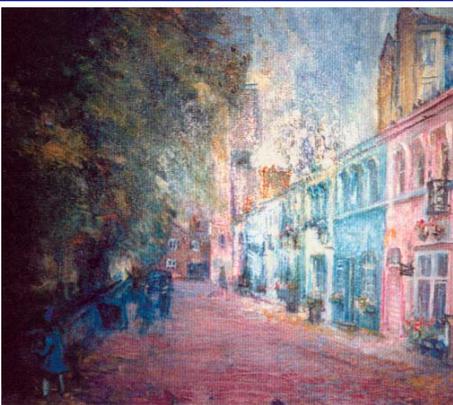
Split level reception room with access to a terrace. Small but fully fitted kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, 2 bathrooms (1 en-suite), bathroom, cloakroom, garage.

£625 per week. Unfurnished.

Standpipes in Adam & Eve Mews W8 bear the name of Thomas Crapper, inventor of the water closet.

Oops!

Our story in the last issue about Prince's Gate Mews SW7 and the war-time experiences of Florence Dickson brought a letter from an eagle-eyed resident who spotted something amiss...



Dear London Mews Company,

I enjoyed your 'Mews News'...especially the bit about Florence Dickson and Prince's Gate Mews. However, artistic licence or not, I think you will find that the painting reproduced at the foot of that piece is not actually Prince's Gate Mews.

It is Ennismore Gardens Mews, Holy Trinity Brompton Churchyard trees being clearly visible on the left, as is the new, then, red-brick, now-painted house on the corner at the end, and the Imperial College Hall of Residence is clearly depicted behind.

With kind regards,
Nigel Wills
Prince's Gate Mews SW7

Gardiner's Tips

Gardening ideas from Ian Gardiner - a member of our letting and management department.

As winter's blanket clothes the soil, you may think that there isn't much to do in your garden. But use the time wisely and the benefits will show in Spring. On paper, it is a great time to plan ahead, look at seed catalogues for ideas and new varieties and plot and plan where you would like things to grow.

If you received a Poinsettia over Christmas, keep it blooming by providing proper care. They need good drainage, so if the pot is still wrapped in foil, remove the foil or make a hole in the bottom to allow the water to drain. Keep the soil moist but do not over water. Place your plant in a cool (60 to 65 degrees F) location that gets plenty of light. Keep it out of warm or cool drafts and fertilise once a month (your other houseplants will also benefit from fertiliser applications once or twice over winter)

Containers and tubs are an easy way to bring colour in the garden over winter. Violas are colourful and hardy as are Winter Pansies (don't forget to deadhead to promote longer flowering periods). Plant Primulas for spring colour, either classic or some of the unusual varieties. Hopefully you will have already planted your bulbs, as a sure sign that spring is on its way is when Snowdrops, Tulips, Daffodils and Crocuses begin to poke their heads out the soil. If you haven't already planted your bulbs your nursery should have some pre-planted ones. Take care if it is particularly cold that your clay pots do not chip and crack in freezing temperatures. It is also a good idea to store you hosepipe away.

Many deciduous (leaf dropping) plants that bear fruit and flowers in the spring will need pruning now. Prime candidates include fruiting and flowering trees, vines and roses of every kind.

MEWS TO BUY



Pindock Mews W9

At some 2,500 square feet this is one of the largest houses in this very pretty, Little Venice mews. The impressive master bedroom suite takes up the entire top floor. 1/2 reception rooms, 3/4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, shower room, kitchen, cloakroom and garage.

Freehold £1,150,000

Archery Close W2 stands on the former site of the practice butts of the archers of the Royal Taxophilite Society.

Caption Competition



After the horses have passed it's time for the great clear-up to begin in Hyde Park Gardens Mews W2.

Send us a caption for this picture. A bottle of champagne to the winning entrant - which we will publish in the next issue.

Entries close on February 28th 2003. Address details on back page or email to: caption@lurotbrand.co.uk

Keep in Touch

Keeping in touch with the properties we have for sale and rental is easy.

If you have internet access MOST of our properties can be found at www.lurotbrand.co.uk. The site is updated daily. We are also able to email the Mews Update and our full colour details in .pdf (Acrobat) format.

Our printed Mews List is updated regularly and is supplemented by our Mews Update - both can be posted to you on request and contain details of ALL our properties.

We advertise widely in the pages of The Sunday Times; The London Magazine; London Agents; London Property News and Ici Londres

Where in the Mews?



Tell us which mews style cul-de-sac is home to this lamp post and the first correct entry out of the hat will receive a bottle of champagne. Entries by post or email: mewsworld@lurotbrand.co.uk
Clue: Named for a Duke's small abodes?

COTTAGE TO RENT



Elm Park Road SW3

A unique cottage, full of character and charm, in the heart of Chelsea. Presented in immaculate order.

Reception room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, study area. Master bedroom with a large terrace and en-suite bathroom. 2nd double bedroom and bathroom.

£1,500 per week. Furnished or unfurnished.

MEWS TO BUY



Buckingham Mews SW1

This pretty, three storey mews house is so close to Buckingham Palace that you could throw a stone from it into the Royal Mews - though we don't suggest that you do! With 2/3 bedrooms this superbly located home is unlikely to be on the market for very long.

Freehold £795,000

The Royal Mews was demolished in 1830 to make way for the National Gallery and was replaced by the Nash designed Royal Mews behind Buckingham Palace.

MEWS IN BLOOM 2003

CALLING ALL GREEN-FINGERED MEWS OWNERS

Lurot Brand is once again sponsoring The Chelsea Gardens Guild 'MEWS IN BLOOM' competition.

The competition, which encourages community spirit by inviting individual owners to get together and beautify their unique streets with window boxes, planters, shrubs and trees, is open to any mews within a three mile radius of the Old Chelsea Town Hall. Past winners include Spear Mews and Hesper Mews in SW5 and Sussex Mews East in W2. Kynance Mews in South Kensington fought off the competition admirably to win in 2002. Perhaps your mews may be next?

The winning mews holds the solid silver Lurot Brand armada plate for one year following a presentation at the Guild's annual prize-giving at the Chelsea Physic Garden in July. Entry to the competition is free once you or your mews has become a member of the Chelsea Gardens Guild.

Membership costs just £16 per year and full details of the competition are available from the Guild's chairman, Mrs Penny Pocock on 020 7352 2729. **What is more, Lurot Brand will pay the membership fee of the first 10 mews to enter the competition - so hurry up!**

Judging will take place on Saturday 28th June 2003 and the prize-giving takes place at the Guild's summer party on Monday 28th July 2003.

Remember that a beautiful and blooming mews enhances the quality of living for everyone and will go a long way to maintaining or indeed increasing the value of your home!



In 1860, mews houses in Holland Park W11 are recorded as having sold for between £87 and £147. Today's prices are somewhat higher.

MEWS TO BUY



Norland Place W11

This very light and spacious house in a private mews features a stunning first floor studio room and a part galleried reception room.

Open-plan kitchen, 2 bedrooms, en-suite bathroom, shower room, roof terrace and garage.

Freehold £1,100,000

HOUSE TO BUY



Kendal Street W2

If your family has outgrown its mews house, here is a splendid alternative. 2,441 square feet of Grade II listed, period town house on the prestigious Hyde Park Estate.

1st floor double reception room, dining room, kitchen, gym/reception room, 4 bedrooms, en-suite bathroom, 2 shower rooms, study, cloakroom, patio, terrace, vaults.

109 year lease £1,275,000

Please call 020 7590 9955 for full details

MEWS TO RENT



Pont Street Mews SW1

Newly refurbished house tucked away in an exclusive, private mews behind Harrods.

1st floor double reception room, study, kitchen, master bedroom with access to terrace and en-suite bathroom. 2nd bedroom and bathroom.

Small garage/store and private parking for one car.

£1,100 per week. Furnished.

In 1859 Dr Hillier wrote 'On Mortality in the Mews'. In it he revealed that twice as many infants died in mews as elsewhere.

Sellers' Pack? - No Thank You!

One of our directors, Nick Salmon, is joint co-ordinator of the SPLINTA campaign. The acronym stands for 'Sellers' Pack Law is not the Answer' and the organisation has spent the last 18 months lobbying the government to change its mind about the sellers' pack.

Under the government proposals, before a property is marketed, every home seller would have to prepare, at their own expense, a pack of legal information about the property including, for example, a draft contract, lease details, service charges, planning consents and guarantees. In addition they would have to commission a 'Home Condition Report' that would indicate the structural condition of the property but will not contain an estimate of repair costs, nor a valuation.

The government estimate the average cost of the pack at £600 but SPLINTA believes the cost for London homes could be well over £1000. The many critics of the

proposal say it is expensive and will not deal with the real causes of stress and frustration in the home buying and selling process. *It is likely to cost consumers well over £500 million every year - for little real benefit.*

Of much more potential benefit are the plans to develop 'e-conveyancing'. In a few years time homes will be sold using electronic media. Deeds will be paperless, searches will take place on-line, lenders will transfer loans by electronic banking. The transfer of title will be authorised by your electronic signature. Most excitingly, in a chain of sales every party will be able to see, on-line, the progress of each sale and where any hold up is occurring.

If you would like to know more about why the Sellers' Pack is not the answer log on to the campaign website at:

www.lurotbrand.co.uk/splinta/home.htm

LUROT BRAND - THE LONDON MEWS COMPANY LTD

37-41 Sussex Place London W2 2TH
5 Kynance Place London SW7 4QS

Mews House Sales: 020 7479 1999
Rentals and Management: 020 7479 1988
Houses & Flats: 020 7590 9955
Email: info@lurotbrand.co.uk

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