

Mews News

No.5 January 2004

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

MRS MEWS ON THE MOVE

Kati Lurot, a director of the firm, has finally broken a 28 year tie with South Kensington by selling her apartment in Cornwall Gardens and moving to a mews house just north of Hyde Park.

The sale of the lower ground floor unit was handled by our House and Flat department in Kynance Place (who have made selling in Cornwall Gardens a speciality) and the sensible asking price of £740,000 soon had potential buyers queuing up to view.

Happily a purchaser was found in a matter of just two weeks and terms agreed. "The key to selling is in getting the asking price right and making the property make the right first impression," says Kati. "An over-optimistic asking price simply puts people off viewing. Get it right and they don't need persuading to come and look. Once they are through the door you need to have cleared away all clutter to make the rooms look spacious so they can more easily visualise their own possessions in the place."



Kati's purchase turned out to be a two storey mews house being sold by another agent (well, we may sell most mews but we don't claim to sell all!) in the ideal spot, a minute from the north side of the Park.

Its rather unloved condition means that Kati, known in the firm and by many clients as 'Mrs Mews' will be able to bring her considerable design flair to the interior.

Parting may be such sweet sorrow but it is hard to break long time habits. "It was a terrible wrench moving from an area that has been home for so long but I have immediately settled into living on the Hyde Park Estate and I'm loving every minute in the new house," says Kati. "However, I do have to remember to go there and not to South Kensington on autopilot as I did the other evening!"

MEWS IN BLOOM 2004

In a change from its past format, this year's Mews in Bloom competition will not require you or your mews to make a formal entry.

Instead, every mews street receiving copies of Mews News (and that is just about every mews house in Central London) will be automatically eligible to win.

We know that no other estate agency travels around the mews as widely or frequently as we do so we consider that our staff are ideally placed to make the nominations.

So between now and the beginning of June we shall be compiling a list of the mews that we think are the prettiest in terms of their trees, shrubs,

flowers, planters, tubs, window boxes and vegetation.

In June that list will be whittled down to a shortlist of 20 entrants which will then be visited by three judges who will decide the winner.

The shortlist, the winner, and the prizes awarded will then be announced in the next available issue of Mews News.

We hope that many of you will continue with your sterling efforts to beautify your mews and that others will be inspired to have a go.

Even if you don't win, a prettily planted mews goes a long way toward enhancing the value of the properties in it. Propagate the flowers and you'll propagate the price!

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.

CONSULTING THE CRYSTAL BALL.

"The Autumn market is likely to continue 'steady as she goes' and that should suit everyone - even estate agents." - This is what we said in the last issue of Mews News. As it turned out we underestimated just how well the sales market would perform during those last months of 2003.

We were able to arrange sales of near record numbers of mews houses and to achieve strong prices in many cases.

That does not mean that the market overheated. Far from it. Most sellers set realistic asking prices and most buyers realised there was no purpose to be served by holding back. Any jitters over the Iraq war had subsided; the economic outlook appeared stable; and there was a natural desire to have a move completed before the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Putting all these factors together made for a focused, relatively balanced market of willing sellers and willing buyers - a state of affairs we have not enjoyed for some while now.

In contrast, Lettings suffered from an acute shortage of potential tenants throughout the Autumn. Some very large agents were touting around for tenants at even the lowest rental levels, a clear indication that the market was getting very difficult.

Nevertheless, large, high quality properties in the best areas continued to find tenants at realistic prices and by Christmas the market for smaller properties had started bouncing back - with several cases of competitive bidding by would-be tenants for particularly desirable flats and houses.

Predictions usually have a 50/50 chance of being right, so peering into the crystal ball we anticipate that 2004 will see Lettings continue its recovery but increases in rental values are most unlikely. Steady prices rises in London sales will be driven by a modest shortage of properties but we do not expect any violent swings in demand or in values. All in all we start the New Year in a comfortably optimistic mood.

MEWS TO BUY



LANCASTER MEWS W2

A really well modernised, three storey mews house a few minutes from Hyde Park.

Reception/dining room with part open-plan kitchen, master bedroom with dressing room and en-suite bathroom, 2 further bedrooms, bathroom, shower room, garage.

Freehold £1.15 million Subject to Contract
020 7479 1999

LONDON FRENCH RFC



Given the current enthusiasm for all things rugby this is a good opportunity to report Lurot Brand's ongoing sponsorship of the London French Rugby Club.

London French RFC is an open club drawn from a cosmopolitan blend of French, English, Scottish, Irish, Kiwi, Australian, South African and Dutch connoisseurs of Champagne Rugby. The club was formed in 1959 when a group of older stagiaires from the French Lycée in London decided that the unadventurous style of English rugby was not to their liking. Today, London French RFC is a relaxed and friendly club with an active social scene.

They are always looking for new players and anyone interested in joining should contact Antoine Lurot (a founding member of the club) - either through us here at Lurot Brand or by emailing: antoine@lurotbrand.co.uk

MEWS TO BUY



GREENCOAT PLACE SW1

A stunning, 1729 sq ft freehold house created by joining two properties via a double height atrium. It may be a discreet frontage, but the depth is over 50' plus a terrace!

Reception room, dining room, kitchen, atrium, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, cloakroom, patio terrace.

Freehold £925,000 Subject to Contract
020 7479 1999

WHY DOES THIS GOVERNMENT PUNISH HOME OWNERS?

It's a valid question to ask when you look at this government's record.

* First we see them hitting home owners right in the wallet with large Council Tax increases brought on in part by centralised government actions.

* Then Mr Brown makes sure that home buyers get to pay up to 4% of their purchase price in Stamp Duty Land Tax - effectively a tax on moving. No doubt he'll be back for more in the future.

* **Now John Prescott's office is pushing ahead with proposals to make home sellers fork out at least £635 just to put their houses up for sale. Overall it amounts to £500 MILLION EVERY YEAR in extra costs to home sellers.**

Government says that the Home Information Pack (a package of legal info and a condition survey of the property to be sold - paid for by the seller) will significantly improve the home buying process and that fewer sales will fall through as a result. It won't. Critics point out that even Government research shows that the Pack is incapable of solving the root causes of failed transactions. What is more, you may have to wait up to two weeks whilst the Pack is prepared before your property can be put up for sale. In that time you will probably lose the property you want to move to! This is an infringement of your right to sell your home when you want to.

Voluntary changes already under way - most importantly electronic conveyancing - are set to have a far more beneficial effect than the Pack ever could. Critics say that this government is conning the public when they hold out the Home Info Pack as a worthwhile imposition. Major groups - The Council of Mortgage Lenders, National Association of Estate Agents, Law Society and others keep telling the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister that the Pack is not the way to go. Even a Select Committee of cross-party M.P.'s slated the proposal saying: "it is unclear to what extent the Pack will serve the Government's objective of speeding up the process of residential property sales, and of reducing the proportion of sales falling through."

Yet the ODPM dogmatically presses on, deaf to criticism and using outdated research statistics to back their case. **The Home Information Pack is set to cost YOU a great deal of money for no real benefit.**

It has started on its passage through Parliament, contained in the Housing Bill. If you want to do something to stop it you need to write to your MP to express your concern - NOW!

GO NORTH TO MAKE SAVINGS...

With only a mile gate to gate, properties north of Hyde Park are not so very far from the highlife of the Royal Borough and can, in some cases, represent better value for money than their southern counterparts.

Our letting department has several properties within hailing distance of the Park - including three in Lancaster Mews W2. There is a very funky 3 bedroom maisonette asking £795 per week; a spacious 3 bedroom house at £725 per week; and a little 2 bedroom flat with a garage, all for £475 per week. Lettings are on 020 7479 1988.

Catherine's Cookery

Catherine Holmes is our Lettings Manager and in her spare time, a very keen cook. Here is her suggestion for a delicious, easy, and extremely quick winter dessert.

Chocolate Cookie Log

2oz peeled chopped almonds
40z softened butter
4oz caster sugar
1 egg
2 tbspcocoa
8oz digestive biscuits, crushed
1 tbspcandy
6 fl oz double cream
Grated chocolate

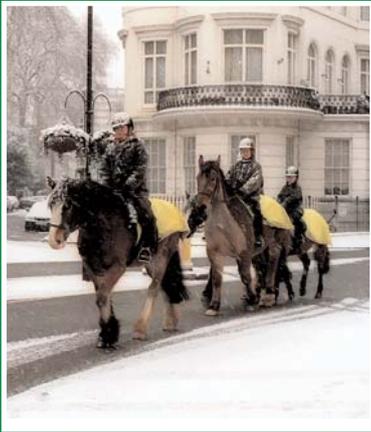
Toast almonds to a golden brown. Cool and then chop finely. Beat butter and sugar well together. Add egg and sieved cocoa and beat again. Mix in the biscuit crumbs, nuts and brandy.

Roll the mixture in foil to form a 9 inch long roll. Chill well.

Cover with whipped cream and decorate with whirls of cream and grated chocolate.

Serves 8.

Where in the Mews?



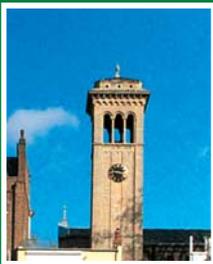
In the midst of last winter's snowfall a group of riders return from Hyde Park.

Can you tell us the names of the only two mews in Central London where there are stables from which you can hire horses to go riding.

Entries by post (address on back page) or email: mewsworld@lurotbrand.co.uk

First out of the bag will win a copy of 'Mews Style' a beautiful hardback book of mews architecture by Sebastian Deckker.

Entries close 28th February 2004



The winner of the last issue's 'Where in the Mews' is Archie Thomson who lives in Atherstone Mews and correctly identified the view looking north from Ennismore Mews.

A bottle of champagne and our congratulation are on their way to Mr Thomson.

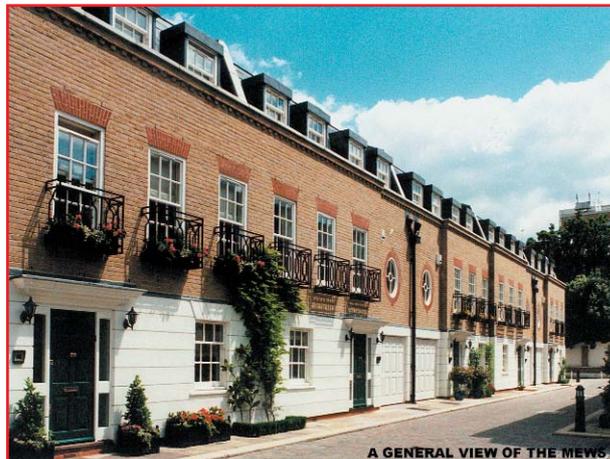
CRISIS? WHAT CRISIS?

Nick Salmon, one of our directors, says that his decision to take on a vintage car restoration project must be seen as a manifestation of the mid-life crisis that he has been working hard toward for many years.

Nick has just acquired this 1936 Austin 7 Ruby (very many thanks to Orchid Cars in Amesbury, Wilts who usually deal in rather more exotic models - www.orchidcars.co.uk) in running but run-down condition and would be delighted to hear from mews house owners who currently own late A7's or who have personal anecdotes about times spent with these cars. Email: nick@lurotbrand.co.uk



The Austin Seven, introduced in 1922, was the first proper large car 'in miniature'. Made of first class materials and steels, just under 300,000 Sevens were produced by the time production ceased in 1939. About 7,000 vehicles survive worldwide.



A GENERAL VIEW OF THE MEWS

MEWS TO BUY

FARRIER WALK SW10

A three storey, 2 bedroom mews house of 1,240 sq ft in a gated, portered development built in 1997 just off the Fulham Road.

Drawing room, dining room, kitchen, cloakroom, utility, bathroom with bath and shower, roof terrace, garage.

FREEHOLD
£875,000 Subject to Contract

020 7479 1999

IMPRESSIVE SPREAD

A random sampling of our sales book for just two months at the end of 2003 shows how widely we cover the mews of London. We set up sales for properties in each of these mews (and more besides) and in some cases we sold two or even three properties in the same mews during the period.

Elvaston Mews
Queen's Gate Mews
Colbeck Mews
Stanhope Mews East
Eaton Mews West
Groom Place
Lancaster Mews
Bathurst Mews
Queensborough Mews
Upbrook Mews
Hyde Park Gardens Mews
Victoria Mews
Holland Park Mews
Elizabeth Mews
Farnell Mews
Charles II Place
Logan Place

SW7
SW7
SW7
SW7
SW1
SW1
W2
W2
W2
W2
W2
NW6
W11
NW3
SW5
SW3
W8

TAKE UP OUR OFFER...

We receive enquiries from all over the world from people wanting to buy or rent a mews house in London but unlike most estate agents who deal only in the immediate area round their offices, we cover all of central London.

If your mews house is in the north, south, east or west of the Capital we want to help you, so to start the process we will provide you with a pre-sale or pre-renting opinion of the possible sale price or rental value of your property.

To take up our offer - and there is no obligation to ultimately use our services - just call 020 7479 1999 and mention Mews News.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

"Some of the houses in Bathurst Mews were fairly substantial, being shown on old leases as having a depth of 47ft 3in.

Yet the yearly ground rent on leases issued in the 1840's averaged only £2 on 92 year leases, to be paid in three instalments of 13s 4d each.

Bathurst Mews first appears in the Post Office Directory for 1845 with the following inhabitants: No1, Ed Munn, Corn and Coal Merchant; No 2, Thos Durrell, veterinary surgeon; No 5, Thos Odell dairyman; No 17, King Henry Livery Stables; No 18, Wm Dear, Fly proprietor; a fairly typical collection of mews dwellers."

From: 'The Mews of London' by Barbara Rosen & Wolfgang Zuckerman. (Pub. 1982. Webb & Bower)

Does anyone know what trade a 'Fly proprietor' was engaged in? Ed.

**LUROT BRAND -
THE LONDON MEWS COMPANY LTD**



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

www.lurotbrand.co.uk



Consult a member here.



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Member Firm

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FLAT FOR SALE

ELVASTON PLACE SW7

ONLY 'KEEP FIT' FAMILIES NEED APPLY...

Good news: 1,700 sq ft on 4th and 5th floor + a roof terrace.

Bad news: No lift. But if it had one this excellent flat would be at least another £200,000!

Double reception room, kitchen/breakfast room, 4 double bedrooms, en-suite bathroom, shower room, cloakroom, utility room, roof terrace and access to large flat roof.

96 year lease £925,000 Subject to Contract

Call 020 7579 9955



CAPTION COMPETITION



Can you think of a suitably amusing property/estate agency orientated caption for this picture of a well accessoried snow(wo)man

Send your entry by post (address on back page) or email: caption@lurotbrand.co.uk

Entries close 28th February 2004

LEGENDS IN THE MEWS

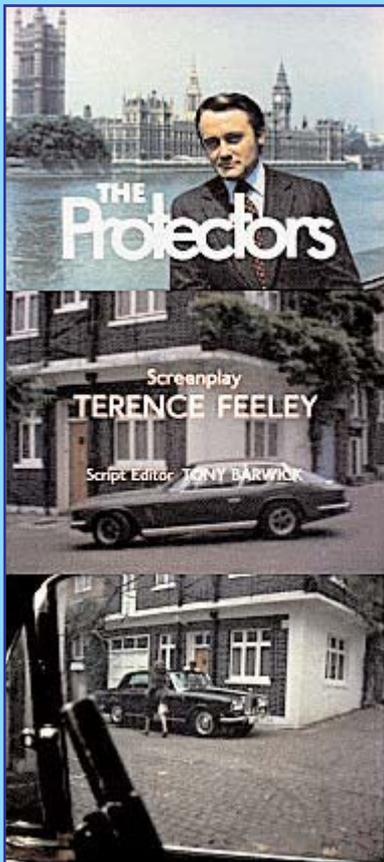
We received this letter from Lee Pearce who recalls a hit TV series of the 1970's with a strong mews connection.

I live in Courtfield Mews SW5 (subject of one of the wonderful Lurot Brand mews cards - thank-you) and noted your entry 'Legends in the Mews' in edition #4. Well, Jackie Stewart may have been deemed 'dapper' but we in Courtfield Mews have Robert Vaughan who starred in The Protectors. The 'headquarters' for the show was at No 2 Courtfield Mews.

The Protectors was a thriller/drama series that ran from '72-'74 and was created by Gerry Anderson of Thunderbirds fame. It co-starred Nyree Dawn Porter of the 'Forsythe Saga' and Tony Anholt of 'Space 1999'. Robert Vaughan was of course 'The Man From U.N.C.L.E' and was nominated for a Oscar for his role in The Young Philadelphians.

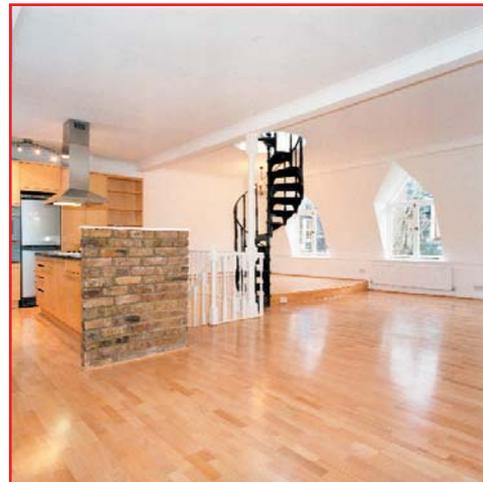
Neighbours have also mentioned that the property was featured in the filming of Cyrano de Bergerac and this is why the brick work was painted black (since repainted white).

P.S. Apparently there's an even more odd coincidence with The Protectors using the mews as the 'headquarters'. Neighbours report that M.I.5 leased two of the mews for their clandestine efforts during the '60's and '70's.



Opening screen shots of 'The Protectors', clearly show the Courtfield Mews property.

MEWS TO RENT



FULTON MEWS W2

Terrific house in a private mews within a short walk of Hyde Park/Kensington Gardens.

Double reception room, open-plan kitchen, 3 bedrooms, terrace, parking and garage

£900 per week unfurnished.

The business that we do as a result of the internet grows by the week.

Our superb new website gives you the facility to search all our properties on-line.

www.lurotbrand.co.uk