

# MEWS NEWS

WINTER 2013

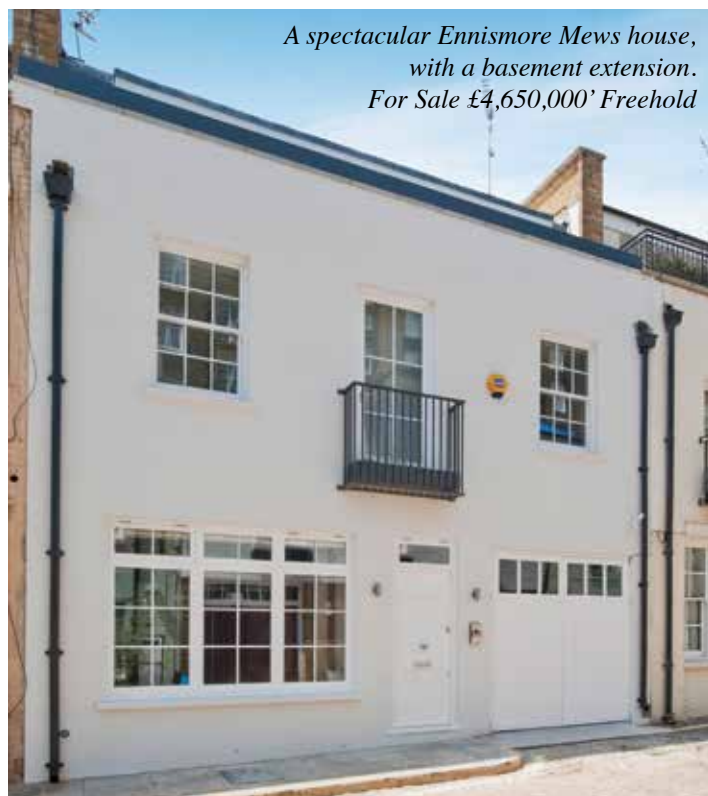


## LUROT BRAND



# “UPSTAIRS – DOWNSTAIRS”

The view from a Basement Constructor...



*A spectacular Ennismore Mews house,  
with a basement extension.  
For Sale £4,650,000' Freehold*

Of all the exciting things to do to a Mews house nowadays, adding an additional floor underground has to be the most popular. Increasing the accommodation by the size of the footprint can make a huge difference to the floor-space, creating a substantial improvement in lifestyle (and uplift in value) which, more often than not, can be carried out under permitted development. But, of course, there are pro's and con's... if you are the neighbour to a basement project, you might not see the upside quite as much as the owner. In the last couple of years there has emerged an underlying rumble of discontent, an almost 'politically correct' perspective, which causes people to turn against the very thought of a basement when they see a neighbour's planning application pop through the post!

The most common topics we hear from neighbours is about how inconsiderate the builders will be; how they haven't

been consulted by the owner; or how could the council let this happen in our road? In many cases there is simply a complete refusal to accept that anyone could possibly have the need, or even the right to express the desire, to increase their living space - "Surely that house is big enough?" they exclaim, in terms of taste or family size. Some neighbours even ask for money to stop complaining to the council. Recently, a television journalist was very vocal against a nearby basement project, even though he has one himself!

It may come as a surprise to dissenters that one of the most frequently asked questions, by mews buyers, is whether the immediate neighbours have dug basements. Having party walls that have already been built down not only increases the adjoining house's value but also increases its saleability. So, even if you never intend to dig down, successfully opposing your neighbours plans may be a financial own goal.

Living in London is great; it is the preferred location to live for millions of people, a thriving hurly-burly metropolis that has grown over centuries. The housing stock in many cases is very old, older than ever they were designed to last. Some wear well, others definitely need renovation and refurbishment, so why is it that people will buy a mews house in a classically smart locale, and then refuse to understand that nearby homes need refurbishment from time-to-time? Adding a basement underneath need not substantially increase the project duration.

We have discussed this paradox with several planning departments where, apparently, they hear this regularly. Somehow, it is more than 'nimby-ism'; although building noise, construction traffic, dust and delivery lorries are

as ubiquitous as sirens and Jehovah's Witnesses in urban London, as soon as a neighbour sees a planning application for a basement - "good grief, in our neighbourhood?" Is this just plain-old jealousy,

or have some constructors given basements a bad name? Obviously the press loves a good disaster, and one or two highly publicised errors have not helped, where safety has been compromised or false economies made.

Basement extensions will always remain controversial and will always divide opinions, however, in a city where we have lost so many historically interesting buildings to expansion, digging down allows our mews streets to grow and evolve while preserving their inherent beauty for future generations to enjoy.

Robin Knowles, of Knowles & Associates founded and ran The London Basement Company for twenty years giving him unparalleled experience and knowledge of residential basement construction in the smarter areas of London. Two years ago he created Knowles & Associates, a company dedicated to creating basements of the highest standards as demanded by the residents of the Boroughs of Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea.

*For advice on all aspects of basement extensions, call Alan Everett at Knowles & Associates on 01344 886 898.*







## DUNG HEAPS AND ELEPHANTS CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF A WORKING MEWS

There is a very special house in Hazlitt Mews W14, not just because it is an increasingly rare example of an unconverted London mews house, but also because it has a fascinating history. Joseph Webb, a carman, bought two mews houses in the early 1900's from which he successfully ran Webb's Haulage, later renting his surplus stabling to the Perrys who delivered groceries and coal.

his granddaughter who, along with her childhood friend Jill Perry, has wonderful memories of growing up in the mews. They remember mucking out the stables and polishing the brasses for pocket money and the pick of the fruit on the Perry's delivery cart.

Proving that getting along with neighbours is never easy Grandad Webb used to talk a lot about "The Battle of the Dung heap". As in all

### THE MEWS HOUSE RETAINS THE COACH HOUSE AND STABLING FOR THREE HORSES

The mews house retains the coach house and stabling for three horses in the form of two stalls and a loose box with all the original fittings and has been passed down the generations to



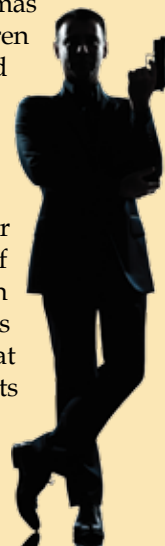
mews the dung was either stored on a cart or piled up in a manure clamp before collection but in Hazlitt Mews Joseph Webb shovelled it up against the side wall of number 6. The owner was less than happy to live with this and complained strongly as the dung rose ever higher and the seep ran into his house. The correspondence between the two survives and is an amusing insight into life in an Edwardian working mews.

Christmas was a very exciting time for the children as Bertram Mills brought his famous circus to London. On his return from the trenches of



World War I Captain Bertram Mills went with a friend to see The Wilkins & Young Circus and wagered he could form a circus company and, within a year, be as good as they were. A wager he collected by creating "The Bertram Mills International Circus" which tours culminated in a Christmas extravaganza at Olympia each year.

The circus was a Christmas treat for swathes of children growing up in and around London in the 1940's, 50s and 60's, Winston Churchill and the Royal family also loved going to Bertram's and were regular patrons. It brought a lot of trade to local businesses in particular to the hostelrys in the area, so much so that the local pub changed its name to the "Ringmaster" and some of the over-spill found itself in Hazlitt Mews.





"Little Bertha," the world's most talented performing elephant has been trained from her infancy by Jenda Smaha, a member of a three generation circus family. The 16 year old Indian pachyderm weighs 4,700 lbs. and is fed a daily diet of a bale of hay, rolled oats, carrots and 30 gallons of water. Jenda presents "Little Bertha" nightly in the Circus Room Theater Restaurant.

Over the years many acts stayed in the mews including Phyllis Allan, the famous dog trainer, Alex Kerr who trained the lions and in particular they remember a very charismatic animal trainer who, each year, stabled some of the circus animals downstairs and lodged above, returning in the evening to bathe in the kitchen which doubled as the bathroom.

This was Jan Vinicky (stage name Jenda Smaha) who was a third generation animal trainer with a gift for training animals from horses to big cats. From the early 1960's he concentrated on elephants the most famous being Bertha and Tanya with whom he performed all over the world including long stints on the Strip in Las Vegas. They regularly appeared on television shows including "The Steve Allen Show", "The Merv Griffin Show", "The Mike Douglas Show", "Those Amazing Animals" and were awarded the Entertainer of the Year Award four years in succession by the American Guild of Variety Artists.

Vinicky's friend Ross Hartzell, a fellow circus performer, said "He could walk an elephant through a crowded casino pit and most people would not even notice him. The customers were truly amazed as Tanya would throw the dice for them or pull the handle of a slot machine" a trick she performed for Tiffany Case, played by Jill St. John, in the 1971 James Bond film "Diamonds Are Forever" with Sean Connery.

He was known for his method of training animals with kindness and love. Having emigrated to Botswana in 1980 he fell in love with Africa and dedicated the rest of his life supporting the protection of vanishing species through his friendship with Dr Helena Fritchat, director of the of Center for Rehabilitation of Wildlife in South Africa.

Follow this link to watch Tanya the happiest elephant you are ever likely to see performing: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=30EvTcd8RAg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30EvTcd8RAg) or just search for Tanya the elephant.

## A SELECTION OF OUR MEWS HOUSES

### LETTINGS



**SW7**

**PRINCE'S GATE MEWS**  
£1,850 PER WEEK



**W1**

**MONTAGU MEWS WEST**  
£1,950 PER WEEK



**W2**

**ALBION CLOSE**  
£1,450 PER WEEK



**SW11**

**KERSLEY MEWS**  
£725 PER WEEK

### SALES



**W11**

**HOLLAND PARK MEWS**  
OIEO £2,950,000



**NW3**

**STEELES MEWS NORTH**  
£1,450,000



**SW10**

**BOLTON GDNS MEWS**  
£3,450,000



**SW1**

**CADOGAN LANE**  
£2,150,000



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# ASTON MARTIN, WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

## Henniker Mews

Aston Martin celebrated its 100th birthday, and started the company's centenary celebrations, by unveiling a plaque in Henniker Mews, Chelsea to honour the original partnership of Bamford and Martin.

The former London depot of Hesse and Savory Engineers in Henniker Mews, Callow Street, became occupied by Lionel Martin and Robert Bamford in late 1912. On the 15th January 1913, their partnership became incorporated as 'Bamford and Martin Ltd' and construction began on their first ever automobile. This car was affectionately named the 'Coal Scuttle', and was powered by a 1389cc Coventry Climax engine. Following Lionel Martin's success at the "Aston Hill Climb" in Buckinghamshire, it became the first ever Aston-Martin and was registered for the road in early 1915.

Production could not start because of the outbreak of World War I and shortly after, the small factory closed. Both the bosses and workers joined in with the War effort and all the machinery was sold to the Sopwith Aviation Company. Martin joined the Admiralty and Bamford the Royal Army Service Corps. Bamford and Martin survived the War and reformed the company at premises on Abingdon Road, Kensington designing a new car to carry the Aston Martin name. Bamford left in 1920 and the company was revitalised with funding from Count Louis Zborowski.



Speaking at the unveiling, Roger Carey, Chairman of the Aston Martin Heritage Trust said: "It's fitting, I think, that we have both the newest and oldest Aston Martins in existence here at Henniker Mews" where this remarkable story began 100 years ago.

Aston Martin Chairman, David Richards said: "It's great to be back at the place where it all started. Today's event in London marks the start of



This highlight of the centenary celebrations will be held in partnership with the Aston Martin Heritage Trust and the Aston Martin Owners Club will feature 100 of the brand's most iconic cars in a multi-million pound

## WE HAVE BOTH THE NEWEST AND OLDEST ASTON MARTINS IN EXISTENCE HERE AT HENNIKER MEWS

a year-long celebration of all things Aston Martin, with events taking place worldwide over the next 12 months.

In the UK, a week-long Aston Martin festival will take place from 15 July to 21 July. Designed to appeal to owners and enthusiasts of the brand, the Centenary Week will include 'open house' activities at Aston Martin's exclusive Gaydon headquarters, including factory-based events and driving tours and will culminate in a 1,000-guest 'birthday party' on Saturday 20 July and a spectacular Centenary gathering in central London on Sunday 21 July.

timeline display. The event will also see one of the largest gatherings of Aston Martins in the 100-year history of the great British marque.

In addition, appearances at iconic events throughout 2013 including Nürburgring 24-Hours, Silverstone Classic, Villa D'Este, Le Mans 24-Hours and Pebble Beach will ensure that the celebration is truly global.



'The Coal Scuttle'

## KYNANCE PLACE "RESTORATION" COMPLETE



BEFORE



AFTER

Readers may remember in our Summer 2012 issue we announced our expansion by joining together number 4 Kynance Place with our office at number 5 which we opened 12 years ago.

Being a former resident of Kynance Place, our chairman, Antoine Lurot, was determined to help improve the look of this already pretty street. To this end he instructed his architect to replace the ugly 1960's shop frontage at number 4 with a faithful reproduction of the original Edwardian shop front as designed by the architect, Paul Hoffmann, in 1907. Particular attention has been paid to the reinstatement of the fine fluted columns supporting the Art-Nouveau leaded windows, making the new office space feel contiguous with the old. We hope you approve.





MARYLEBONE



SOUTH KENSINGTON



HYDE PARK

## IMPERATIVE READING FOR ANYONE MARKETING A MEWS HOUSE

*Over the last twelve months...*

**1st**

Lurot Brand sold more than double the number of Mews houses than any other London estate agency.

**97 %**

We achieved an average of 97% of our asking prices.

**41%**

We sold 41% of the mews houses we brought to the market (also letting many) whilst our competitors sold an average of just 11% of theirs. (Rightmove statistics W1, W2, W11, SW7, W8, SW1).

**155**

International buyers from 155 different countries visited our website in 2012 with 101 countries visiting in January 2013 alone. (Google Analytics).

**47%**

International buyers bought 47% of our Mews houses compared with 25% in 2011.

**42+ yrs**

42 years specialising in selling and letting Mews houses has given us unrivalled experience, knowledge and a database second to none.

If you would like to find out how we achieve these astonishing results please contact

*Duncan Petrie*

Duncan Petrie | Sales Manager  
Direct Line 020 7590 2524

*Lajla Turner*

Lajla Turner | Lettings Manager  
Direct Line 020 7479 1992

Information sourced from Rightmove/Google Analytics/Lurot Brand Archives. If you have instructed an agent on a sole and or sole selling rights basis, the terms of that instruction must be considered to avoid the possibility of paying two commissions.

## LUROT BRAND

HYDE PARK 37 - 41 Sussex Place London W2 2TH T: 020 7479 1999

SOUTH KENSINGTON 4-5 Kynance Place London SW7 4QS T: 020 7590 9955

MARYLEBONE 57a Weymouth Street London W1G 8NW T: 020 7479 1900

[www.lurotbrand.co.uk](http://www.lurotbrand.co.uk)  
[lettings@lurotbrand.co.uk](mailto:lettings@lurotbrand.co.uk)



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