

Mews News



No.6 May 2004

smart people come to Lurot Brand...



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

SPRING INTO SUMMER

Mews houses sold very well throughout the Spring with the result that by April the choice available to buyers had become limited.

The 'also ran' properties - the ones with a negative aspect such as a busy road, noisy railway or lack of light were mopped up as buyers decided they would have to compromise in order to find a home.

However it wasn't a case of anything at any price and that sentiment persists today. Most buyers do their homework and are well informed about values. They will not consider anything that appears too high in its asking price - as a number of rather over-optimistic sellers have found to their cost. We have a little saying in this firm: "By all means be greedy but don't be bl*dy stupid." Set a full but not too full price.

A figure way above what might be considered reasonable is asking for trouble. Occasionally we do see sellers pitching too high, waiting months and months for a sale, achieving the figure they wanted and then saying: "Told you so", Sadly, they forget that the market went up during the months they were waiting for a buyer and in consequence their ongoing purchase is now that much more expensive.

Over the last 10 years the quantity of mews houses coming up for sale each year has diminished. This is partly due to a proportion being taken up by investors in the buy-to-let market. They are held long-term rather than turning over every 4-5 years in the manner of owner occupiers.

The other factor reducing sales volume is that owner-occupier turnover has lessened, not least because of the costs associated with moving. On top of legal fees, estate agent fees and removal charges (all bearing Vat, yet more tax) there is the swingeing level of Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT). To pay the government £40,000 for nothing when purchasing a million pound house is a disincentive to moving - unless you have to. The result is an artificially stagnated market. The level of stamp duty should be revised to take account of the very large increase in property values in the last decade, SDLT kicks in at 1% on a £60,000 purchase. If it had moved with inflation it should be starting at £130,000, and pro rata all the way up the scale.

Prices will continue their upward trend so long as supply fails to keep pace with demand. Proper mews houses are pretty much a fixed supply so that means that through the summer and in the foreseeable future their value is only going one way. Steadily up.

MYSTERY SOLVED

In the last issue of Mews News we mentioned the term 'Fly Proprietor' and asked if anyone knew what type of trade this involved.

Our thanks to Lucy Hornberger and Beryl Dewing,

both mews dwellers, who independently wrote in to tell us that a 'Fly' was a carriage pulled by a single horse. Dairymen used them as milk floats but the more common usage was as a taxi.

Mrs Dewing even recalled the name of one such operator - a William Dear.



MEWS IN BLOOM

Sponsored by Lurot Brand



2004



Excitement is mounting as this ever popular annual competition begins.

On Saturday June 19th our panel of judges will decide which mews is to carry off the prestigious title of Winner and have its name inscribed on the magnificent Lurot Brand silver armada plate.

The list of mews entered for this year's Mews in Bloom competition appears on page 3.

Over the next few weeks each will be visited several times to whittle down the numbers to a short list of six that will be judged in June. Good luck everyone!

Where in the Mews?



This is an unusual view of a famous London landmark. From which mews is the picture taken?

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

First out of the bag will win a bottle of fine wine.

Entries close 30th June 2004

• WINNER •



In the last Mews News we asked if you could 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.

Miss Christel Munster from Leinster Mews W2 correctly gave the answer: Bathurst Mews W2 and Elvaston Mews SW7

A copy of 'Mews Style', a beautiful hardback book of mews architecture by Sebastian Deckker is on its way to Miss Munster together with our congratulations. Thanks to all who entered.

MEWS TO BUY



LEDBURY MEWS WEST W11

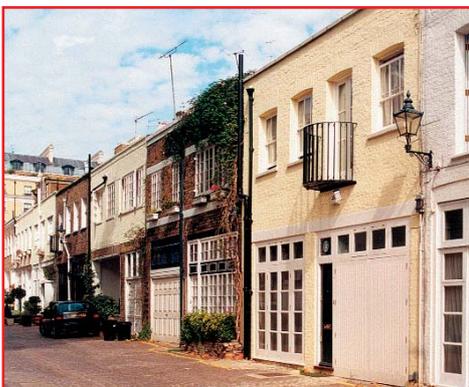
A charming 3 bedroom house with a garage in a private, cobbled mews.

FREEHOLD

£895,000 Subject to Contract

020 7479 1999

MEWS TO RENT



QUEEN'S GATE MEWS SW7

Stunning, 3 bedroom house with patio and garage.

£850 per week unfurnished.



ROLAND WAY SW7

Lovely 3 bedroom house with garage and private mews parking.

£1,250 per week furnished or unfurnished.

FLAT TO BUY



LEXHAM GARDENS SW7

Bright and well presented flat with a wide, south-facing terrace. 2 bedrooms, e/s bathroom, e/s shower room, recep, kitchen.

£560,000 Subject to contract

020 7590 9955

HIDDEN GEM IN GREENWICH

There's a wonderful treat in store for anyone making the journey to the old Royal Naval College at Greenwich.

The Painted Hall, a fabulous dining hall designed for William & Mary at the end of the 17th century is lavishly decorated with stunning paintings by James Thornhill. He is famous for his work on Blenheim Palace, Hampton Court and St Paul's Cathedral. Visit Greenwich and you will see why he was in such demand.

Thornhill's monumental decoration began in 1698 and took nineteen years to complete. He was grudgingly paid the relatively small sum of £1 per sq yard for the walls, £3 per sq yard for the ceiling.

In January 1806 the body of Admiral Lord Nelson was brought to the Painted Hall to lie in state. Soon afterwards the Hall became a naval museum. By 1939 it was once again in use as a dining room and it remained in daily use until the Royal Navy's departure in 1998. It is now one of the most spectacular function venues in the country.



The Painted Hall is open most days between 10am and 5pm. Admission is free but it's well worth while paying for a guided tour to hear the fascinating stories, the humour and the intrigue, behind the paintings and characters depicted.

PERSONAL SERVICE

Will Glynn, who provided us with a previous Mews News story - of Jackie Stewart's 1970's photoshoot in Prince's Gate Mews SW7 - has opened a new car advice and sourcing business that we are more than happy to bring to your attention.

Will says: "First Service is a new way to choose a car. Rather than you visiting countless dealers in search of the car to suit you, we will produce a shortlist of cars that fit with your individual needs, your life and your budget. We are not limited by particular brands, models or dealers, and offer genuinely independent car advice. We also find specialist vehicles.

We don't use computer programs to pick cars - we

do it on a much more personal basis, by hand, using up-to-date information. We cover factors from cost, size and use, to options, specification and even the labour rate of your local dealer. Whether you want a 4x4, a classic sports car, a trendy 'drop top' or the latest supercar, First Service can help you.

Alternatively if you know what you want we can use specialist contacts to source high performance and high value vehicles to a range of criteria, generally providing each client with a choice of vehicles to compare prices, specifications and conditions. We can often arrange to have vehicles delivered to your house for your personal inspection."

Will can be contacted on 07740 856946 or visit the website: www.1stservice.co.uk

CAPTION COMPETITION WINNER

We asked you for suitably amusing property/estate agency orientated captions for this picture of a well accessoried snow(wo)man. The winning entry is from Max Bitel of Greens Solicitors in Canonbury Place NI who gave us this deliciously tongue-in-cheek line:

"I am waiting for my solicitors to call back. I know they are slow but this is ridiculous!"

We are sending Mr Bitel a copy of 'Mews Style' with our congratulations.

Keep in Touch

The properties on these pages are a tiny taster of what we have on offer. 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.

HOUSE TO BUY



WALLGRAVE ROAD SW5

A delightful, 3 bedroom period house in a tree-lined street - with a patio garden and roof terrace.

FREEHOLD £865,000 Subject to Contract

020 7590 9955

Catherine's Cookery

Catherine Holmes is our Lettings Manager and in her spare time, a very keen cook. Here is her suggestion for a quick and easy mouth-wateringly-minty dessert.

After Eight Ice Cream

1oz (28 g) caster sugar
6oz (170 g) After Eight mints
1/4pt (142 ml) double cream
1/4pt (142 ml) water
3 egg yolks

Dissolve sugar in water and bring to the boil over moderate heat. Boil this syrup for 3 minutes. Allow to cool for a minute or two.

Put mints in blender and add syrup. Blend thoroughly and add egg yolks. Cool a little and then quickly blend in the cream.

Put in large bowl or small ramekins and freeze.

Best served straight from the freezer.

Delicious pudding and only takes 5 minutes to make!

Serves 4.

MEWS TO BUY



HYDE PARK GARDENS MEWS W2

A handsome, 2000+ sq ft, 3/4 bedroom house with windows on three sides and with a garage opposite. Wonderful!

FREEHOLD

£1.45 million Subject to Contract

020 7479 1999

ENTRANTS FOR THE MEWS IN BLOOM COMPETITION 2004

SW7

Kynance Mews, Roland Way
Ennismore Gardens Mews
Rutland Mews South
Osten Mews, Relton Mews

SW5

Spears Mews, Hesper Mews
Dove Mews

SW1

Belgrave Mews North, Chester Cottages
Lennox Gardens Mews
Moreton Terrace Mews North
Minera Mews

Warwick Square Mews, Wilton Row

SW3

Clover Mews

SW10

Hollywood Mews, Bolton Gardens Mews

SW11

Turnchapel Mews

W2

Albion Mews, Bathurst Mews
Hyde Park Gardens Mews
Westbourne Terrace Mews
Victoria Grove Mews

W11

Wilby Mews, Portobello Mews
Pembroke Mews, Hippodrome Mews
St Luke's Mews

W8

Stratford Studios, Campden House Close

Logan Mews

W9

Elnathan Mews

W1

Tarrant Place, Devonshire Mews North

W14

Napier Place

NW3

Old Brewery Mews

NW8

Abercorn Close

NW6

Wavel Mews

NW1

Albert Terrace Mews

If you feel that we have missed a mews that really should be included, do drop us a line to make the nomination.

We'll close the entry list on June 1st.

FAMOUS NAMES

The mews of London have always been popular with the rich and famous. In years gone by you might have spotted: **Michael Caine** in Albion Close W2; **Agatha Christie** in Cresswell Place; **Dame Thora Hird** in Leinster Mews; **James Hunt** in Normand Mews; **Douglas Bader** in Petersham Mews; **Guy Ritchie** in Queen's Gate Mews; **The Bee Gees** and **Dusty Springfield** in Spear Mews; **Jaqueline Du Pré** in Rutland Gardens Mews; **Christine Keeler** and **Stephen Ward** in Wimpole Mews; **Sean Connery** in Wavel Mews; and **Peter Cook** in Ruston Mews.

LAW AND JAW-JAW.

HOME INFORMATION PACKS.

This highly controversial proposal - to make home sellers pay for a pack of information about their property to give free to potential buyers - is making its way through Parliament and is due to reach the Lords at about the time Mews News hits the streets. Slated by the property industry as expensive, impractical and incapable of solving the real problems in the home buying process, HIP's are being touted by the government as good news for consumers. Critics say this is a con and that far more beneficial changes are underway in the shape of electronic conveyancing.

OFFICE OF FAIR TRADING.

Two-years in the making, the OFT published its report into estate agency in March. Predictably some ill-informed journalists took the opportunity to slate the agency industry but in their rush they clearly overlooked the fact that the OFT had actually found relatively little to condemn. The media myth of the wide-boy agent is a hackneyed theme used by lazy journalists who could write what they really know about the industry on the back of a postage stamp.

What professionals wanted out of the report, and had spent a lot of time lobbying for, was a firm recommendation for the licencing of estate agents and the introduction of basic standards of competency. Regretably the OFT missed its opportunity.

MONEY LAUNDERING.

Estate Agents are now covered by these regulations and are under a duty to establish the identity of all their new clients as well as satisfying themselves that the money used in a transaction is from legitimate sources. The penalties for us failing to report suspicions to the National Criminal Intelligence Service are draconian and include substantial jail terms. So now, acting unwillingly as the government's unpaid policeman, we have to see your passport and copies of utility bills before we do business and we have to know where your money is coming from. Strange requirement really when you consider that we never actually handle the proceeds of a sale. That's all done by solicitors, who have been covered by the regulations for the last 18 months.

SPEEDING ROUND BRITAIN



Spotted in the 30th Anniversary edition of 'Classic Cars' magazine, published in October 2003, these two pictures show racing driver Tony Lanfranchi in the lead of the Avon Tour of Britain in the mid 1970's. The event pitted stars of rallying and circuit racing against one another in a three day event that drew massive media coverage. A certain Antoine Lurot co-drove in 1974 and if you look carefully you'll see a well known estate agency was doing the sponsoring...



AUSTIN ADVENTURES.

Our invitation in the last Mews News, for readers to recall their experiences of Austin 7 cars of the 1920's and 30', prompted this enchanting letter from Mrs Meryll Bradley who lives in a South Kensington mews.

"I was delighted to read in the January Mews News of your project to restore a 1936 Austin 7 - it brought back many happy memories for me because our first car, in 1951, was a 1926 Austin 7 tourer.

I was married to a schoolmaster and at that time few of our friends had cars. When Richard (my husband) wanted to visit his sister in Chester in the Spring of 1951, he set off on his bicycle. On his return journey, somewhere near Maidenhead he saw this little Austin 7 parked by the side of the road, fell in love and persuaded the owner to part with it for £50. The lights were not working and he arrived back in Tonbridge long after dark - a nervous wreck because of the fortune he had spent!

At the end of that Summer term we had been to the Tonbridge/Clifton cricket match at Lord's and were returning late that evening when we were stopped by the police on River Hill just outside Sevenoaks. It seemed they only wanted to ask about the car, but when Richard got out he had to discreetly put his foot under the front wheel to prevent the car from gently slipping away - the brakes were not up to such a steep incline.

Continental Capers

During that summer holidays we set off to do the Continent. We had no money but we put our sleeping bags, a can of water and some provisions on the back seat and off we went.

We had a major problem of wheel-wobble on the Belgian cobbles but were hailed by mechanics as "La Vielle Austin" (well remembered from World War II for their engines) and, our problem solved, we travelled on through Germany, France, Switzerland, Andorra and finally to Barcelona.

On the Susten Pass we were overtaken by some Germans in a Mercedes - they waved and laughed at us - we must have looked a bit absurd. But not long after we turned a corner and found them stuck by the side of the road, having overheated. They had no water so we gave them some of ours. They sped off again and by the time we reached the top (2200 metres! Ed.) they had already had lunch there and were waiting with a box of chocolates for us.

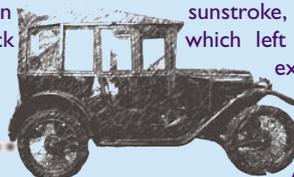
Vive Le Vouvray!

After Barcelona, where Richard suffered severe sunstroke, after having a hair cut which left the back of his neck exposed, we headed for home via the Loire Valley. There, looking round a chateau at Amboise we met another schoolmaster and his wife, decided we were not up to the chateau guide in French, and instead sampled the local Vouvray wine over lunch. Later I fell out of the car on the way to the next chateau. But with grassy ditches and a very modest speed capacity it was no worse than falling off a bicycle. How times have changed!

The following year we went to Scotland, which had its different excitements but nothing compared to Europe. Then, with children, we had to be sensible and sell 'Livingston' - for £50.

Alas, I have no photographs. I did catch a glimpse of our little Austin somewhere in London in the '70's and I would love to know if he is still around. Meanwhile I hope these reminiscences will amuse you, thank you for reviving them for me."

Our grateful thanks to Mrs Bradley. We would be very pleased to receive other readers A7 memories. Ed.



MEWS TO BUY



KYNANCE MEWS SW7

A 3 bedroom house for some updating, located in an incredibly pretty mews off Launceston Place.

FREEHOLD

£1.375 million Subject to Contract
020 7479 1999

SILK CITY SCARVES



Mews dweller, Lucy Hornberger, mentioned elsewhere in this issue, runs an unusual business.

She told us: "Our company, TASARAM Scarves, was founded in 2002 with the aim of revitalizing the classic silk scarf with a range of unique and original designs. We are based in London but we sell worldwide - many of our customers are in the USA and we regularly send scarves as far as Japan and Australia.

Our popular Map Scarves collection is inspired by the silk 'escape maps' issued to Allied airmen during WWII. We currently feature five of the world's most famous cities - with more to follow soon!

We also produce Art Scarves. Our inaugural collection features gorgeous designs and colours adapted from masterpieces of Asian art."

You can see Lucy's designs by visiting:
www.mapscarves.com or by calling 020 7631 0420

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EPSTEIN CONNECTION

Here is a tantalising glimpse of the interior of the stunning, 2,456 sq ft (228.2 sq m) three bedroom house in Queen's Gate Mews SW7 that stands on the site of sculptor Jacob Epstein's former studio.

The freehold is for sale at £1.85 million and we are the joint Sole Agents



SOLD