

# LUROT 1971-2011 40 BRAND



## MEWS NEWS

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

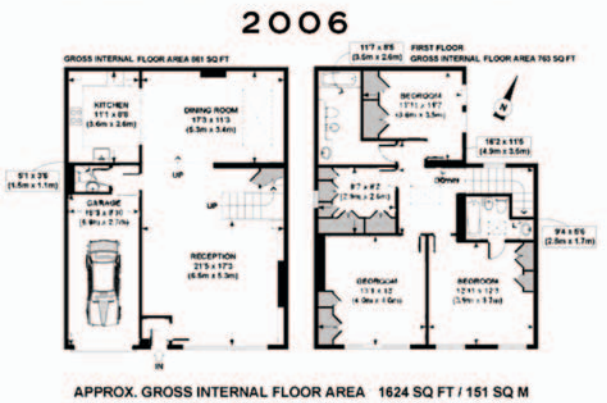
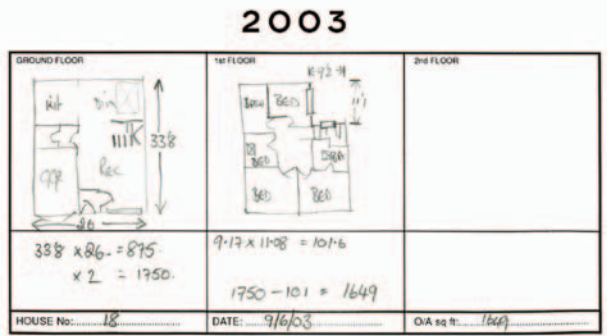
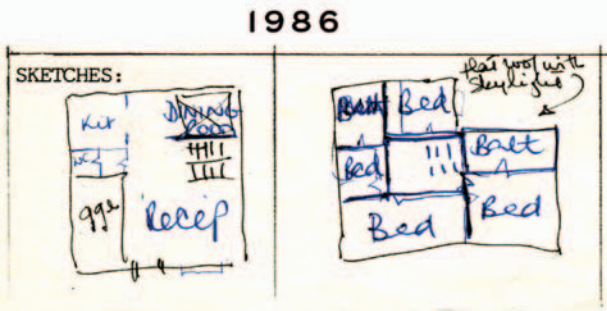
SPRING 2011





BLOWING OUR OWN TRUMPET IN OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

In 1985, when our Chairman Antoine Lurot decided to give a second big push to our Mews specialisation, it was logical for him to apply the £ per square foot method used in France (see box) to value all our Mews properties more accurately. For a moment, the thought of using cubic metres, as in Switzerland, was mooted as, of course, some properties have amazing ceiling heights but this idea was discarded as too complicated. From that moment on, every mews house we entered was measured and a simple layout drawing prepared and later updated if internal changes were made or an extra floor added. We have been lucky enough to find examples relating to the same house – No. 18 Bathurst Mews. The early drawings were, to say the least, pretty naïve – see 1986 example. They are much better now - see 2003 example. In the early days, every set of property particulars we produced had the gross internal square footage printed on the back.



It is interesting to note that other agents did not take up this idea for several years but, probably because of our innovation, buyers started asking other agents for square footages and they were forced to start thinking about it. From there began a new industry within estate agency – companies who not only took pictures but started offering square footage plans. This is now the norm – see recent floor plan for the same house.

We have found over the years that these simple sketches have had many uses benefiting our clients. For example: Evidencing to local councils just how long a mews house had NOT had a garage, thereby helping the owners to get a Certificate of Lawful Use. The number of potential sales we saved with our records is impressive.

Evidencing how long a property had had a roof terrace – again possibly enabling the owner to get a Certificate of Lawful Use.

Arguing 1982 (the year chosen as the moratorium) Capital Gains Tax (CGT) valuations with the Inland Revenue – one interesting example was when we acted for a famous rock singer. The Inland Revenue insisted that when he bought the house it was only on 2 floors but we were able to evidence that it was already on 3 floors. You can imagine the difference in CGT had the Inland Revenue got away with their assertion. Very low price when bought with 2 floors and much higher price when sold on 3 floors – ergo loads more tax to pay. One questionable side effect has been that people have started

digging basements in their houses in order to increase the square footage. This only works if some natural light can be incorporated – which with a mews house is difficult without dropping down a light well and thereby decreasing the size and usefulness of the upper floors. Also, it is an expensive exercise and basements do not, and never have, achieved the same pounds per square foot as the upper floors.

Finally, and coincidentally, we

first sold 18 Bathurst Mews for a developer client in 1976 well before we started doing square footages. This client has remained loyal to us throughout this 35 year period.

Over recent years, the media have been full of articles detailing the values in prime central London by area and they are all based on our Chairman’s original idea in 1977. CLEVER? *Kati Lurot*

THE STORY OF £/SQ FT

In the very early 1970’s I was working, from London, at converting into flats “Turn of the Century” rundown French Riviera hotels built in the heydays of Edwardian splendour.

I was impressed by the succinct way French property was described: for example Type2, 80m<sup>2</sup>, FFr. 400k, ie English equivalent: 1 bed, 1 recep, (+k & b, obvious, so not mentioned) or T3, 85m<sup>2</sup>, FFR 450k. It took seconds to realise the T2 was a spacious and good value 1 bedder, the T3 a tight squeeze 2 bedder... I found it very useful, it was not used in London residential agency although common practice in the commercial property world.

In 1977 a bright young man called Colin Pool was working for my firm and I sent him to Paris for a week to get a feel of French property and Agency. He loved the former, was no more impressed than I about the latter but he too picked up and liked the efficiency of the FFr/m<sup>2</sup> system.

Shortly after his return, we were having an evening drink in the smart sitting room of our friends, W.A. Ellis, with three of their partners, and raised this point. “Oh no!” they said, “only the established system of comparables would be safe, this will never take on, the Courts wouldn’t accept it, etc”. We were not convinced.

Later that year we were preparing a bid for a disused ILEA school in

Glebe Place, Chelsea on behalf of a client where we found the famous “comparables” such a muddle of leases, sizes, etc... as to be next to useless if not dangerous. To bring some order out of this chaos, we extracted the square footage of each and finally had a common factor of comparison. This story ends with Libyans buying the building for an astronomical sum, just before the shooting of Policewoman Yvonne Fletcher in St James’ Square and there it lay for decades...

But we had learnt something very useful: that with square footage, we could pick up the tremendous discrepancies that often occurred at the time. Whenever we could, we used square footage (as well as floorplans, which I know we were also the first to use).

A few years later, we were flattered to find that W.A. Ellis’ House Department was using square footage for their valuation database. But it was when we concentrated on Mews alone, where the square footage principle was immediately and easily applied and became the standard tool of valuation, well publicised by us, that it was then copied and used by all agents. *Antoine Lurot*

In 1981, John Birch and the late Neville Lee decided to set up an association purely for residential lettings agents that would raise the standards within the industry. On the 15th April 1981, they sent out a letter, mainly to lettings agents in London, and received back 56 positive responses. Things moved fast and on the 11th June 1981, the inaugural meeting was held at the Westbury Hotel, with 37 in attendance. Later that year, ARLA was incorporated and initially there were just 31 members including Lurot Brand compared with today’s figure of just under 6,000! At Lurot Brand, we are very proud to have been one of the first members of an association which has worked tirelessly to improve the standards for the benefit of agents, landlords and tenants alike.

ARLA 30TH ANNIVERSARY

LIST OF POSITIVE RESPONSES TO THE LETTER OF THE 15TH OF APRIL 1981

- A-C Frost & Company
- Academy Apartments
- Allen Bates & Co
- Ansonbe & Ringland
- Beauchamp Estates
- Berham & Reeves RLD
- Best Gapp & Cassells
- Birch & Co
- Britton Poole & Burns
- Cabban & Gaselee
- Chesterlons
- Charles Sanders & Son
- Church Brothers & Partners
- Cheval Estates
- Clayton Bennett Heycock & Co
- Cutless & Co
- Diplomatic Management Services Ltd
- Douglas Lyons Estates
- Douglas & Gordon Ltd
- Executive Homes
- Farley & Co
- George Knight & Co
- Gilliland & Co
- Greensacres
- Gross Fine & Kreiger Chalfen
- Harrods Estate Offices
- Home From Home
- Home Guide
- Hunter & Co
- Ironside Properties
- James & Jacobs
- Kathini Graham Ltd
- Keith Cardale Groves & Co
- King & Lockwood
- King Wood & Co
- Lipfriend & Company
- Lurot Brand
- Luxury Lets London Ltd
- Malverna
- Marler and Marler
- Mays of Oxshot
- Palace Properties
- Peredo
- Plaza Estates
- Phillips Kay & Lewis
- Politi & Co
- Potters
- Ruck & Ruck
- Shimon Associates
- Sue Richardson Properties Limited
- Townhomes Limited
- Winkworth & Company
- West Trend

Over the years we have discovered many hidden mews streets, not only in central London, but all over England and a few in the rest of the world. Sadly we have also found photographic evidence of past mews streets that no longer exist: Burlington Mews West, Bramley Mews or Talbot Mews. Thanks to the City of Westminster and The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea we have images of these mews - a testimony to the incredible transformation of existing mews streets and the history hidden behind the arches.

There is very little information available on Burlington Mews West and Bramley Mews but we have found this wonderful story of Talbot Mews. Our thanks to its author Stephen Hollier.

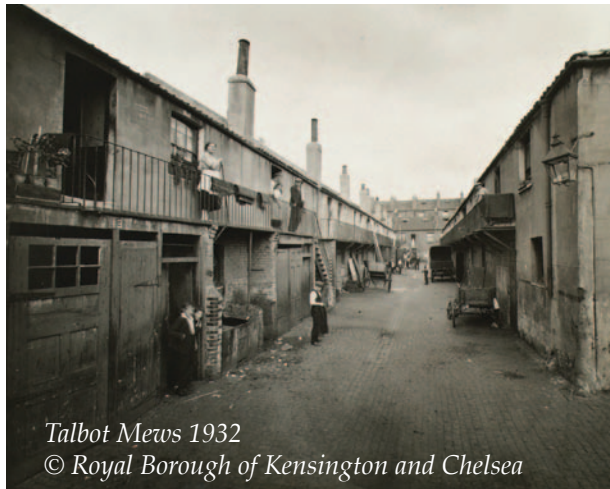
TALBOT MEWS, NORTH KENSINGTON by Stephen Hollier (ref. www.shelvey.com)

The Mews was originally built as the coach house and stabling for the large houses of Talbot Road. As horses and coaches gave way to the motor-car and the area began to go into decline, the stables were let out as accommodation and for business use. Life in the Mews was set apart from the rest of the area and was a community unto itself. A resident said that “it was like being in the country really”.

One set of stables was used as a fruit warehouse. Grapes and tomatoes arrived packed in cork dust before being laid out on the fruit and vegetable barrows. Sometimes banana spiders would come out of the crates and children would use the “banana rope” which bound the crates to swing on. Another stable was a hay store and yet another was a rag-pickers den full of strange old women. Down at one end of the Mews, horses were killed with a spike and hammer. At one time a quantity of condemned treacle was stored there; some of it had been attacked by rats.



# MEWS STREETS NO MORE



Talbot Mews 1932  
© Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

played “Blackin’ Toffee”- ten aside. When they could, they made “Scat Bangers”. You would get a key with a hole in the top, push a match head into it then get a nail and ram it up inside. When you threw it on the ground it went off with a bang! In winter, the night



Talbot Mews 1932  
© Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

People came to the Mews and bought it in large buckets. A few children were sometimes allowed to lead the donkeys back to their stalls and perhaps help with grooming and feeding. In the evening, the lamp-lighter would come around on his bicycle with a long pole and light the lamps.

Gambling was illegal on the streets, but men would often come in from the surrounding streets to “throw-up” pennies. A local kid would be employed to look out for the police. If they shouted “Copper”, the men would run away. Every week an old organ grinder would come into the Mews and the girls would come and dance the can-can, showing their knickers.

Children would play “Back and Fore Stones”, “Billy Bailey” or “Buttons”. The girls would sometimes play “statues” and sometimes to make money, they would make a little “cave” of shells and ask passers by to “remember the grotto” and wait for a donation.

The boys had “whip-up tops”. A “hopperty peg-top” was no good while a “steady” was. At nights the boys

watchmen had braziers and the kids would gather around it to warm up and if they were lucky he might give them a roast chestnut.

A home-made scooter was made by taking a “tarry loggo”- a tarred wooden board which had previously been laid on the road to make a good surface and attaching to it a couple of metal bearing scrounged from old motor cars with a couple of screw-eyes and a few bits of wood to finish it off.

At number one lived the Ingram family. They were Totters. After they moved, another family, the Haymans lived there. At number two lived the Tedders. They were also Totters and scrap dealers, specialising in breaking-up old motor cars. Other families who lived in the Mews at the time were the James, the Harwoods, the Mathews and Emily Bunting. In addition there were “Granny” Ibbs, who wore a bonnet and shawl, lace mittens and button boots, “Ol’ Greens”, an Irishman who always seemed to be drunk and “Lizzy” who wore long earrings and always had her hair up. Next to her lived the

Cousins family, the Stillwells, the Crawleys and the Smiths whose son Billy “was a bit simple”. There were also Mr and Mrs Teddy and their two girls, Kitty and Maisy. Another character who lived in the area was “Ol’ Blower”. He had acquired

a “wonky knee” in the Boer war and was a relation of the Tedders. He had a donkey which he took on his rounds. He made it wear a panama hat in summertime and when he stopped outside his local, The Roundhouse, it refused to move on until it had a bucket of beer. Once it had its beer, it would take him home, whatever his condition.

At the end of the Boer war in 1902, there was a victory parade through the streets of London. Because he looked a bit like the South African’s President Kruger, “Ol’ Blower” was dressed up for the part to lead it. His friends got him “well oiled” beforehand so that he wouldn’t object but he didn’t like it when the crowd booed him and threw things at him. The Mews was pulled down in 1932 and replaced with a factory. That in its turn was demolished and the site has since been redeveloped for housing.

*If you know about any of these old mews streets or any others that you would like to share with our readers, please contact us on 020 7590 9955 or [mewsnews@lurotbrand.co.uk](mailto:mewsnews@lurotbrand.co.uk)*



Burlington Mews West, 1956  
© City of Westminster Archives Centre



Bramley Mews, 1935  
© Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea



## Stay calm, it's the motorcycle mews hound

IF YOU are one of London's lucky residents of a mews home and you see a strange man prowling up and down on an ancient Honda motorbike taking photographs and speaking into a tape recorder, don't call the police. Antoine Lurot has already been chased by dogs, called to task by suspicious home-owners and labelled an eccentric.

But Lurot's bike rides around London's mews are entirely innocent: he's been compiling a comprehensive survey of London's mews. A specialist in mews cottages, he now has the largest list of any estate agent, from a two-bedroom cottage for £79,500, to a five-bedroom house for £700,000.

Lurot stumbled into estate agency after national service with the French parachute regiment. After a spell at Chestertons, he set up on his own agency and decided to specialise in mews cottages.

## Rife with disease

He soon found there was no proper record of these sought-after properties, so he got on his bike and began his own survey. To date he's located 500 mews cottages and says that there are about another 200 to discover.

Lurot revels in the rise of mews from unsanitary servants' quarters to today's mix of studios, workshops and smart homes. Dating from the early 18th century, many mews were rife with disease and remained so until the demise of their original function - the housing of servants and horses.

Today there are only two mews where horses are still stabled - Grosvenor Crescent Mews, SW1 (prices from £350,000) and Bathurst Mews, W2 (from around £275,000).

Further information from Lurot Brand on 402 3275.

INTERNATIONAL PRESS-CUTTING BUREAU  
224-236 Walworth Road,  
London SE17 1JE

Extract from  
London Daily News

22 MAY 1987

# TIME FLIES

I was asked to write a short “memory lane” introduction to this 24 year old article. Is it already that long ago?

The Honda ST70 Monkey Bike in the picture is still very much alive, sheltered in my garage, often looked at with fondness and sometimes talked to. The stables in Grosvenor Crescent Mews, our telephone number and the then statutory central London estate agent's Gucci shoes did not survive...

On re-reading it, I remembered that, despite having given them a crib-sheet with the figures, the journalist and sub-editor reduced the number of Mews houses ‘found and to be found’ from 5,000 and 2,000, to 500 and 200.

We now have data on about 9,000 Mews houses.

But they correctly quoted the prices prevailing at the time: £79,500 to £700,000. Today there are very few Mews houses in central London under £800,000 and last summer we sold one for more than £6 million. About 10 times the amount in just under 25 years. Extrapolate for yourself to 2035 and 2060!

I am not advocating a return to the Gold Standard, I only comment that it is the shocking proof of how successive governments have allowed the value of our money to erode. It is also proof that bricks and mortar are still the best hedge against inflation.

*Antoine Lurot*



## MEWS IN AND OUT

*BLOOMSBURY MEWS wallpaper was inspired by a vintage furnishing fabric purchased at Portobello Road Market. The designer particularly liked the illustrative, doll's house charm of the original; with added floral content to break up the symmetry of the terrace rows and with a little imagination you can almost picture 101 Dalmatians running along the pavement!*

*You can visit their website to see other colour ways and lots more exciting designs. Alternatively, if you have a favourite piece of fabric that you wish transformed into a bespoke wallpaper, contact them for more details:*

W: [www.wallpaperspace.co.uk](http://www.wallpaperspace.co.uk)

E: [enquiries@wallpaperspace.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@wallpaperspace.co.uk)

T: 020 8940 9685



Blossom



Summer



# LOCAL NEWS



## 1. HAMPDEN GURNEY SUMMER FAIR

For the second year running, we will be supporting the Hampden Gurney Summer fair by helping with the promotion of the event and by sponsoring the GO KART stall which should be a lot of fun for all the children participating! We hope that our support will help break last year's record attendance.

Join us on *Saturday 21st May from 11am to 3pm @ Hampden Gurney Primary School, 13 Nutford Place, W1H 5HA.*

Entry £1 per adult and 50p per child.



## 2. SAINT STEPHEN'S FESTIVAL 2011

We are pleased to support this year's festival, which runs from *Saturday 4th June to Sunday 12th June at St Stephen's Church, Gloucester Road, SW7 4RL.* The festival will once again offer a broad range of music and an art exhibition. This year's artists include Neil Pittaway RWS RE; Jo Barry RE, with her collection of etchings of the New Forest; Dennis Roxby-Bott RWS, vintage cars and automobiles; Alice Dickens, sculptor; and Doug Farthing, a soldier who paints and whose paintings of the war in Afghanistan were featured in the recent BBC1 TV programme: Sheila Hancock Brushes Up, The Art of Watercolours. All paintings and prints are for sale. Concerts include Passamezzo in Peasgood Time, music, words and song from the reign of Elizabeth I, presented in costume, and the dynamic Arensky Chamber Orchestra. Festival contact Adrian Edwards on 020 7289 3082.



## 3. MARYLEBONE SUMMER FAYRE 2011

The Marylebone Summer Fayre has been raising awareness and money for Teenage Cancer Trust for the past 6 years. Organised and run by the Howard De Walden Estate, the next Marylebone Summer Fayre is taking place on *Sunday 19th June between 10am and 5pm in Marylebone Village, W1.* For more details on the event and to make a donation please visit [www.marylebonesummerfayre.com](http://www.marylebonesummerfayre.com).

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