

# LUROT BRAND

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



## MEWS NEWS

SUMMER 2007

ISSUE 2/4





(Fabrics by the late Michael Szell with which he lined all the walls in Mrs M's house.)

# MRS. MEWS' MEWS

A continuing tale of planning and building and disagreements with Mr. Mews.

I am faced with many problems! No.1 is that I go into so many wonderful mews houses and pick up so many ideas that I am confused. No.2 is that I am an avid reader of "homes" magazines and every month (for many years), I have cut out photographs of ideas which appeal to me (the styles in some of my cuttings have come and gone and come back again).

I love white. I can't get enough of white. I collect Victorian linen – always white – and I have this picture of my wonderful bedroom all white. Different shades, of course. I also love Gustavian and French pieces of furniture which after all are usually a grey/white. I picture my bedroom with a matching pair of cream coloured Armoires, my king size bed with a white linen headboard and covered with white linen bedding, bedcover (monogrammed) and lots of varying sized white pillows with vintage pillow cases. All

very practical when my grandchildren and the dogs come to stay. (Must remember to get a lock fitted to the door whilst refurbishing.)

I also want a white bathroom. A French style dresser in which will sit the wash hand basins (got my cutting of this), white everything, including white limestone and then..... a very dramatic and large gold framed mirror.

Enough dreaming. Need to be practical first. My architect wants a list of "must haves" to incorporate into his working drawings so here are some of them:

- New solid wood sash windows everywhere (already in hand).
- Forbes and Lomax light switches and sockets.
- Air conditioning in my bedroom and the new top floor room.
- Burglar Alarm – I hate them but my colleagues say "it is a must have".

- A beautiful new front door, porch and stone steps.
- A double Velux skylight above my kitchen, electric and water reactive.

Finally, before any structural work starts, I will have to cut out panels of the silks with which my famous predecessor lined the walls. They are so beautiful and I have so enjoyed living with them (although far too theatrical for my "white" tastes) that I intend to frame a piece of each in ornate gold frames and hang them somewhere.

In June, my ugly Crittal windows are being changed for beautiful solid wood sash windows (permitted in my planning permission). This will immediately make my house look much prettier and will make watering and dead-heading my window boxes much easier. Picture in the next issue of Mews News!



# CRIME IN THE MEWS

St Luke's Mews, Notting Hill



St Luke's Mews today

In the early 1930's British crooks discovered gelignite. At about the same time, during one of his stints inside, Eddie Chapman discovered James Wells Hunt (Mr Mews went to school with his son) – the “best cracksman in London” – a “cool self-possessed, determined character” who had perfected a technique for taking apart safes by drilling a hole in the lock and inserting a “French letter” stuffed with gelignite and water. Chapman disguised himself as an inspector from the Metropolitan Water Board, gained access to a house in the Edgware Road, smashed a hole through the wall into the shop next door and extracted the safe. This was carried out of the front door, loaded into

the Bentley and taken to Hunt's garage at 39 St Luke's Mews, Notting Hill where the safe door was blown off.

Chapman ended up in prison in Jersey, thus avoiding the attentions of the judge in England. Unfortunately for him his detention coincided with the arrival of the German occupiers. He bought his way out of jail by offering to spy on the British and after many months at a training camp in occupied France he was dropped by parachute into Norfolk. He immediately went to the police and offered to help the British espionage effort by becoming a British double agent. After even more months of interrogation and training he

was sent back to France where the German Abwehr was completely taken in by his story and he was sent to assist them in occupied Norway. He later returned to England having assisted the British War effort enormously. At the end of the war the authorities took a dislike to his past (which they had been only too happy to exploit) and to his constant flow of female companions. As is so often the case he was “retired” rather ungraciously following the end of the war.

Chapman's story is told in “Agent Zigzag” by Ben Macintyre (published by Bloomsbury Publishing). It is a gripping story, and a recommended read.



Prince's Mews W2, Freehold £1,500,000



Kenley Walk W11, Freehold £540,000





# THE STATE OF THE MEWS SALES MARKET

The Mews market, along with the rest of the market for better London homes, has continued to see relentless price rises with just the odd falter in its pace when interest rate changes surprise us. The “will it / won’t it” debates about the market rage on with as many arguments for one view as the other. So what will make the prices suffer a fundamental earth shattering change? The general view is “that it can’t carry on as it is”. Well why not? And then again if it can’t, does this have to mean that prices will fall? Just because prices stop rising doesn’t mean they automatically fall – just that they have reached the point where there are no buyers willing to pay more.

In London, and in the Mews market in particular, one view is that interest rate changes have the least effect because few buyers are dependent on borrowed money – more properties being bought by investors (both UK and foreign) and some with those big city bonuses.

The real risk, it seems, is not the market where supply and demand will continue to balance one another. The real risk is that the politicians will try to meddle in the market (particularly following Mr Blair’s retirement from office). Let us hope they resist the temptation.



## SEE HOW THEY GROW

HYDE PARK GARDENS MEWS  
(the same house sold as follows)

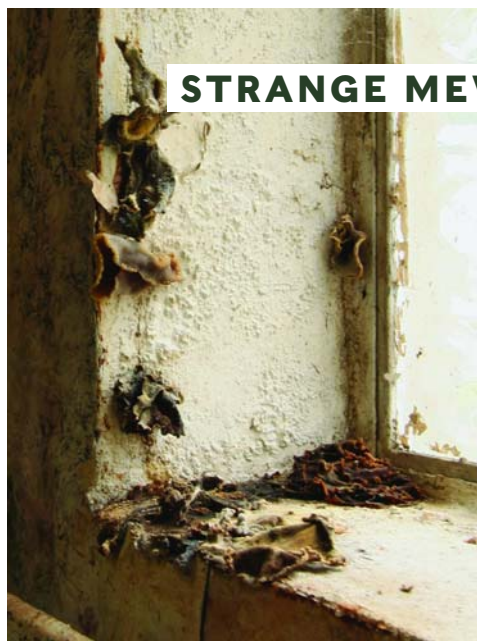
1984	£200,000
1988	£389,000
1992	£375,000
1995	£525,000
2003	£950,000
2007	This house has probably doubled in value since 2003 as we are now achieving £1,000 - £1,200 per square foot in the mews.

This house was first converted in the late 1950’s . It was described as a pokey four roomed flat over an enormous garage. It was converted by Miss Joan Gilbert, a famous television personality in the 1950s, into a 3 bed roomed “bijoux” cottage and interestingly, the exterior remains almost the same today with shutters etc as does the ground floor layout. Obviously a lady of some vision! We have on file the original parchment lease dated 10th September 1920 when the main house in Hyde Park Gardens and the mews house were held together. We also have a copy of the article in Homes and Gardens – Christmas Issue 1960 – on Miss Gilbert’s conversion of the house. Do pop into our Sussex Place office if you would like to see these historic pieces.

## LUROT BRAND TO OPEN NEW SHOP IN MARYLEBONE

We were thrilled to hear recently that our Planning Application for change of use from Retail to Estate agency on our new premises in Weymouth Street had been successful. We hope to be opening our doors late Summer after some fairly major refurbishment. We have always been very active in the Marylebone area with our mews sales but this new shop will give us the opportunity to bring our lettings expertise to the area as well.





## STRANGE MEWS SIGHTINGS

This photograph shows MUSHROOMS! Yes, mushrooms happily growing on the inside of the bedroom window in a mews house which we described recently in our sales particulars as follows: Unmodernised, with a leaking roof; the wiring is shot and the plumbing is historic; there is no heating (or lighting for that matter); it is damp and a wreck. The rush to buy it was frenetic. The mushrooms were huge.

## DID YOU KNOW?

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

The Grenadier public house in Wilton Row SW1 is reputed to be haunted each September by the ghost of an officer of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment who was flogged after being found guilty of cheating at cards. The beating was meant to teach the man a lesson but was so severe that he unfortunately and unexpectedly died.

## HOME INFORMATION PACK UPDATE

As we go to press with this issue of Mews News, we have just heard that the implementation of the Home Information Pack on the 1st June has been deferred until the 1st August. Not only that but from the 1st August, only houses with 4 bedrooms or more will require HIPs AND..... the pack does not need to be in place before a property is put on the market, only commissioned.

This begs the question – What constitutes a bedroom? We can deconstruct bedrooms into:

- A Study
- A Den
- A Games Room
- A Gym
- A Media Room
- We can black out the windows and turn it into a darkroom
- Even better, we can seal up the windows and make it illegal as a bedroom
- If you have done anything interesting with a bedroom which we could add to this list, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Finally, this is the second turnaround by the Government. The Home Information Pack is now so diluted that it really is a worthless exercise.



Junction Mews W2, Freehold £575,000



Caroline Place Mews W2, Freehold £1,650,000



Down Street Mews W1, Leasehold £1,750,000



# MEWS IN BLOOM 2007

Judging for this year's Mews in Bloom competition will take place on the morning of the 26th June. We are delighted that for the third year running Candida Lycett Green will be doing the judging. Not only do we have huge respect for her horticultural knowledge but we and those who read Mews News, love her comments on each mews street – both critical and complimentary.

We have recently written to all the mews on this year's short-list but just in case anyone has not received our communication, we list them below:

Adrian Mews SW10	Kynance Mews SW7
Albion Mews W2	Montagu Mews West W1
Bathurst Mews W2	Napier Place W14
Chester Cottages SW1	Osten Mews SW7
Cranley Mews SW7	Princes Mews W2
Ennismore Gardens Mews SW7	Shaftesbury Mews W8
Ennismore Mews SW7	Sussex Mews East W2
Groom Place SW1	Tarrant Place W1
Hyde Park Gardens Mews W2	

This year we are asking Candida to select, from the above list, one house which she thinks is exceptional and deserves recognition.

The results will be posted in the Autumn issue of Mews News.



## MEWS TO LET



Montagu Mews West W1 £575 pw Unfurnished



Dunworth Mews W11 £725 pw Furnished



Albion Mews W2 £775 pw Unfurnished



Hyde Park Garden Mews W2 £1,100 pw Unfurnished



Princes Gate Mews SW7 £1,400 pw Un/Furnished



Holland Park Mews W11 £1,150 pw Unfurnished

## LUROT BRAND

37-41 Sussex Place, London W2 2TH

5 Kynance Place, London SW7 4QS

020 7479 1999

020 7590 9955

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

Extra copies of Mews News are available on request; email: [info@lurotbrand.co.uk](mailto:info@lurotbrand.co.uk)



Member Firm



Founder Member



Member Firm



Member Firm



Sponsors of the  
London French Rugby  
Football Club