



MEWS IN BLOOM 2006 ELNATHAN MEWS TRIUMPHS

Elnathan Mews W9 has carried off the honours in this year's 'Mews in Bloom' competition and wins its place on the coveted, solid silver, Lurot Brand armada plate.

The competition was again judged by Candida Lycett Green, the author of several books on gardening, including 'The Garden at Highgrove' which was co-authored with HRH Prince Charles.

Elnathan Mews is a 1980's redevelopment of a 19th century mews that fell into disrepair. Over recent years the residents have made a collective effort to soften the modern architectural style of their buildings, a transformation that started with the planting of copper beech trees along the length of the street. Candida Lycett Green awarded them the runner-up prize last year and the residents' continued efforts have borne fruit. They have certainly carried out their 2005 vow to win in 2006!

The runner-up is Sussex Mews East W2, a mews that won the title in 2001 and is clearly in the running for first prize again in the future. This year Candida has noted that "the planting and maturity of some of the shrubs has enhanced it beyond compare"

Lurot Brand's Chairman, Antoine Lurot, said, "We are very grateful to Candida for agreeing to judge the Mews in Bloom competition for the second year running and for taking time out of her very busy schedule organising celebrations to commemorate the 100th anniversary of her late father, the Poet Laureate, John Betjeman. We are delighted that so many mews house owners have taken the time and effort to create such attractive streets, which enhance their properties and are such a joy to residents and passers-by. Congratulations to Elnathan Mews, it is a well-deserved win."

THE SECRETS OF WINNING MEWS IN BLOOM? CANDIDA LYCETT GREEN'S JUDGING NOTES, with marks out of 10

Elnathan Mews W9 - Overall Winner

Imagine this mews without the planting and it would be a gloomy place indeed. The impact of the large copper beeches transforms the architecture and the obvious community spirit that the team effort has engendered is a brilliant thing. The structure of the trees by no means dictates any conformity around the individual houses and there are good individual displays. A fantastic effort. 9.5

St. Lukes Mews W11

Some good planting, particularly on roof terracing where box and lavender have been imaginatively used. Some very pretty individual displays, voluptuous vines, wisteria, ivy and roses but the mews as a whole is let down by the odd neglected house and an over-abundance of wheely bins. 6.5

Napier Place W14

A pleasant fan shaped mews with an intimate and backwater-ish quality. No. 4's roses on either side and geraniums particularly good. I like the informal approach, the picnic tables, benches and suggestions of communal bar-b-q's. 7

Shaftesbury Mews W8

60's brutalist architecture which is hard to dress with plants but there have been some particularly good efforts considering the large expanses of concrete balcony. Perhaps the most successful remedy might be an abundance of trailing ivy. 6.5

Kynance Mews SW7

A picturesque mews with an informal atmosphere and an exceptional level of maintenance in most of the displays. I liked the bikes leaned-up here and there, the sideways sheep and the completely different sorts of planting outside different doorways. Number 16 particularly good. 8.5

Cornwall Mews South SW7

A cosy mews to come home to, countrified and informal. 7.5

Osten Mews SW7

I really loved this triangular mews with its working garage whose plant displays and smart paintwork were exceptional. One or two houses sadly let the place down but overall this mews had a good and

quirky atmosphere which its planting had a lot to do with. Liked the two trees leaning out from the front door step at number 4. 8.5

Courtfield Mews SW7

Gay and bright but not exceptional except for the display of red geraniums at number 11. Probably the best geraniums I have ever seen in my life. 6.

Thurloe Place Mews SW7

Pretty disappointing with a blank and dirty wall at the end of it - a wonderful roof garden on number 18 and number 11 had a very smart display of green and white. 6.

Grosvenor Cottages SW1

Neat, discreet, ultra conventional, unflamboyant. There was no soul to the place. 5.

Tarrant Place W1

Perfect harmony, symmetrical perfection - clipped box and bay mixed with shocking pink geraniums. I would have preferred a bit of individuality among the background of evergreen. 7.5

Junction Mews W2

Quiet, discreet stock brick mews. No flash, no geraniums. Liked the bench at the end but otherwise I found the planting pretty dull. Why no window boxes on the East side? 6.5

Sussex Mews East W2 - Runner Up

A country atmosphere. Spectacular individual displays. Not an unhealthy plant anywhere. The architecture of this mews is dull and the planting and maturity of some of the shrubs has enhanced it beyond compare. 9.

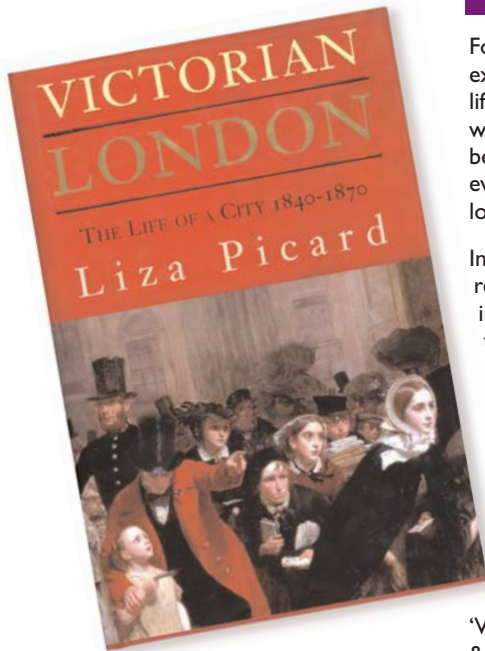
Bathurst Mews W2

Some good olive trees create a classy impression and give the mews some bottle. A particularly pathetic window box at number 24 (owner should be admonished). 7

Hyde Park Gardens Mews W2

A great general impression - leafy, pleasant and with varied displays, some discreet, some brightly coloured. One of the best mews' of today. 8.5

SMELL THE VICTORIANS...



For Londoners, the years from 1840 to 1870 produced dramatic change. As suburbs expanded and roads multiplied London was ripped apart to build railway lines, stations and life-saving sewers. A start was made on providing housing for the 'deserving poor'; there were significant advances in medicine and education; the Thames became contained between bankments; and the Great Exhibition of 1851 managed to astonish almost everyone. But there was also appalling poverty and exploitation, long working hours and low pay.

In 'Victorian London', Liza Picard explores the reality of daily life at this time, taking the reader into schools, prisons, churches and cemeteries. She explains the practical innovations - flushing lavatories, underground railways, umbrellas, letter boxes, driving on the left. And she details the horrors of the age - cholera outbreaks, public executions, the workhouse where children could be sold by their parents for just £12, the streets where sparrows were sold for a penny, tied by the leg for children to play with. Cruelty and hypocrisy flourished alongside invention, industry and philanthropy.

This is a book for those who like fact-filled narrative so vivid that one can almost smell odour of the streets. It wonderfully recreates the splendour and misery, inventiveness and energy, vices and pleasures of that extraordinary time. If all history books were this well written, detailed and interesting, one suspects that the subject would rise to be the most popular of subjects in schools.

'Victorian London - The Life of a City 1840-1870' by Liza Picard is published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson. ISBN 0-297-84733-3

THE REAL CHITTY BANG BANG

***"Bang Bang Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
Our fine four fendered friend..."***

The words of the catchy Sherman Brothers song may reflect the sound of the eponymous car in the famous 1968 movie but parents might want to think twice before explaining the true origin of the name to their young children. It comes from a bawdy World War I soldiers' song about officers in France who would obtain a weekend pass or 'chit' so they could go to Paris to enjoy the 'favours' of the ladies. Hence "Chitty Bang Bang".

Yet there was a real 'Chitty Bang Bang' motor car. In fact, there were three of them.

In the 1920's, Count Louis Zborowski who lived at Higham Park near Canterbury in Kent designed and built four aero-engined cars with assistance from his engineer, Captain Clive Gallop. Three were known as "Chitty Bang Bang".

Chitty I was a chain-driven pre-1914 Mercedes chassis fitted with a six cylinder, 23-litre Maybach Gotha bomber engine purchased from the WWI Disposals Board. First appearing at the Brooklands Easter meeting in 1921 it was described as 'a brutal car put together by a madman', Brutal it may have been but on its first outing, it won two races. At later meetings the car was recorded at almost 120 mph (192 kph) on the straight.

Chitty I was last raced by the Count at the September 1922 meeting at Brooklands. During practice he crashed after shredding a tyre and although he rebuilt it, Zborowski never raced the car again. In 1924 he was invited to drive for Mercedes and it was while competing in a Mercedes 2-litre car in that year's Italian Grand Prix at Monza that the Count was killed after crashing into a tree. Legend has it that when he died he was wearing the same cufflinks that had brought about the death of his racing-driver father, Eliot Zborowski, when one of them had caught up in the hand throttle of the car during a hill climb in 1903 at La Turbie in Provence.

After Louis Zborowski's death Chitty I was bought by the Conan Doyle brothers, Adrian and Denis, playboy sons of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle the creator of Sherlock Holmes. They subsequently ran the car at a speed trial in the 1930s and it was then exhibited at Brooklands but subsequently abandoned outside. The weather took its toll but the end came when someone sawed the chassis in half to get the gearbox out for use in another car. Apparently the gearbox was found not to fit but this was the last of Chitty I and the remains went for scrap.

The picture shows Chitty I in Lancaster Mews W2, presumably some time in the 1930's. The picture is captioned as showing the Conan Doyle brothers in the driving seats of the cars but as there was only a year between them in age we rather doubt the attribution. It has also not been possible to identify the make of the relatively tiny racing car on the right, with the exceptionally wide front track. If any reader can put a name to it - or to either of the drivers - we would be delighted to hear from you.



Picture purchased via Ebay from www.simonlewis.com

Lurot Brand helps win the fight. GOVERNMENT BACKS DOWN OVER HOME INFO PACKS.



Regular readers of Mews News will have seen our ongoing reports about the government proposals to introduce mandatory Home Information Packs (HIPs) for all residential property sales from June 2007 and will be aware that Lurot Brand's managing director, Nick Salmon, heading up the SPLINTA campaign, has led a five year industry battle against the scheme. In the last issue we ran a headline saying 'Ditch the Defective HIP' but we could not have expected that this David v Goliath struggle would reach such an extraordinary watershed so soon afterwards.

On July 18th housing minister, Yvette Cooper, (presumably under orders from her boss, Secretary of State, Ruth Kelly) announced that the most contentious and expensive part of the HIP, the Home Condition Report, was no longer going to have to be included in the Pack. The statement caught the entire property industry by surprise and provoked a furious backlash from firms and individuals who had invested millions of pounds setting up to cash in on the new billion pound a year HIP industry. Those on the other side of debate, who had said all along that the HIP was an expensive waste of time for consumers, rejoiced at the news.

The SPLINTA campaign has been in the forefront of the debate since 2001, arguing that the HIP was not the correct vehicle to bring about cost-effective and beneficial change to the home buying process. SPLINTA worked tremendously hard lobbying MP's, successive housing ministers, civil servants, newspapers and the media buoyed up by support from over 1,700 firms of estate agents, solicitors and surveyors from across the country as well as many members of the public. In the end the government was forced to concede that the HIP as they proposed it was unworkable.

However the HIP has not gone away entirely. As things stand today, from June 2007 it will be necessary to have a pack, paid for by the seller, available when marketing of a property commences. The HIP will contain a variety of legal documents including title deeds, the lease, warranties and guarantees, and Searches. It will also contain an Energy Efficiency Report and Energy Rating. The first of these two items is required by a European Union directive, the



second (which will grade a property's energy efficiency from A - G, rather like the ratings on fridge/freezers) is a UK government requirement. The cost of the HIP for an average property is likely to be around £350 - £450, far less than the £1,000 + VAT predicted for a pack with a home condition report in it.

SPLINTA is continuing to lobby the government over the issue of Day One marketing, so that a seller can put their property up for sale without any delay whilst the HIP is prepared. Under the present rules there could be a delay of up to 14 days. They are also reminding the government that under the EU directive the Energy Efficiency Report does not have to be in place until a property is 'sold or let'. It therefore seems logical to make the report a voluntary item during the marketing of the property and only make it mandatory by the time a sale is recorded at the Land Registry.

A major battle has been won but there are further battles to be fought before HIPs come in (if they come in at all). When the matter is concluded it will be time for the property industry to come together and propose alternative ideas that will really help to make home buying and selling a less stressful and more certain process. And to make the government bring in formal regulation of the estate agency industry. You can keep in touch with developments by visiting the website www.splintacampaign.co.uk or there is a link to it on the lurotband website.

THE STATE OF THE MEWS MARKET

The 2006 market has been characterised by a continuing shortage of mews properties for sale. That does not mean that sales have not been taking place - on the contrary those properties coming to the market have found ready buyers. But the general volume of transactions is down on previous years and is part of a continuing trend. In 2005 the number of sales in the U.K. dipped under the million mark for the first time in many years.

This helps to explain why your doormat is regularly covered with acres of estate agents' begging letters telling you that they have a queue of people with cash in hand just waiting for your mews house to come up for sale. The level of this direct marketing has reached almost epidemic proportions and the public are right to question just how genuine some of these estate agents 'cash buyers' really are.

In recent weeks we have experienced a new phenomenon that is a result of the supply/demand imbalance. The sale of mews houses before they ever come to the open market and before any advertising has appeared.

In several recent cases we have suggested strong asking prices to owners, mentioned the property to prospective buyers before the open marketing begins, and then found that one of those buyers is willing to offer even more than the proposed asking price. In each case the owners have decided that a 'bird in the hand' is well worth having and the sales have gone through both quickly and smoothly.

This is an indication of the sentiment among serious buyers. If they see what they want they are prepared to pay over the odds to secure the deal. Normally we would suggest full open marketing in order to achieve the best possible price, but there is a saying in estate agency that 'the first offer is often the best offer'. Therefore, if the agreed price is at the highest realistically optimistic level it can make good sense to go with it.

The shortage of sales stock is unlikely to alter in the foreseeable future so we expect more of these 'pre-marketing' deals to take place. The message to sellers is, by all means be bullish with asking prices but don't be unrealistic in your expectations. For buyers the message is, if you pay a little over the odds to get the house of your dreams just remember that the trend of values for property in prime central London only ever goes one way - upwards.



HEWER STREET W10

The last of three newly-built, two bedroom mews houses in a smart, cobbled courtyard
 FREEHOLD. £695,000 Subject to contract. 020 7590 9955



LEINSTER MEWS W2

A most elegant and spacious, three bedroom mews house of over
 1,500 square feet on three floors.
 FREEHOLD. £1,050,000 Subject to contract. 020 7590 9955

DEFEATING DEPOSIT DELAYS

We have written in a previous edition of Mews News about the forthcoming requirements regarding tenant's deposits. Under new rules such deposits will have to be held by agents registered in a government approved scheme. Individual landlords and agents outside the scheme will not be able to hold the deposit monies which will have to be placed with an approved body for the duration of the tenancy.

Originally the rules were to come into force in October of this year but the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has recently announced a six month delay that means the scheme will be introduced on April 6th 2007.

Well over 1,100 regulated letting offices are already involved in a voluntary tenancy deposit scheme which means that deposit protection and alternative dispute resolution is readily available. When the scheme becomes mandatory it will cover the whole of the private rented sector.

In the Lords, Baroness Andrews said that the protection of tenants' deposits was one of the most important of reforms. "The private rented sector involves some £740 million of assured shorthold tenancy deposits...and the government has given a commitment to make sure that tenancy deposit protection works, that it fully benefits tenants, landlords and agents, and that the days of unfairly withheld deposits are ended."

The Dispute Service has been running the voluntary Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDSRA) for over two years. It was launched with the backing of all three professional bodies that are active in the private rented sector: The Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA), the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA). Lurot Brand Lettings is a member of both ARLA and NAEA and has been a member of the deposit scheme since its inception.

Our experience has been that the TDSRA is an excellent body of 'last resort' if a deposit dispute arises. Most landlords and tenants are inclined to settle if they know the matter could end up with independent adjudication.

DID YOU KNOW?

That...

- Richard Branson lived in Vernon Yard W11
- Michael Faraday lived in Jacobs Well Mews W1
- Lulu rented a house in Lexham Gardens Mews W8
- James Hunt lived in Normand Mews W14
- David Essex lived in Eastborune Mews W2
- Douglas Bader lived in Petersham Mews SW7
- Sid Vicious lived in Pindock Mews W9
- Germaine Greer lived in Ruston Mews W11
- Jaqueline du Pre lived in Rutland Gardens Mews SW7
- Dusty Springfield lived in Spear Mews SW5
- John Profumo lived in William Mews SW1
- Lady Falkender lived in Wyndham Mews W1
- Michael Caine lived in Albion Close W2



RYDER'S TERRACE NW8

A very attractive and well presented two bedroom mews house with both a garage and a roof terrace. Located in a quiet street off Blenheim Terrace, St John's Wood.
 FREEHOLD. £750,000 Subject to contract. 020 7590 9955



SIGN OF THE TIMES...

A Mews News reader alerted us to this sign in Doughty Mews WC1. No further comment needed really...



PRINCE'S GATE MEWS SW7

A contemporary, freehold, two bedroom mews house with a reception room running the full-width of the first floor and a stainless-steel eat-in kitchen on the ground floor with picture window overlooking the mews.

FREEHOLD. £1,650,000 Subject to contract. 020 7590 9955

KEEP IN TOUCH

The properties in Mews News 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 on our website:

www.lurotbrand.co.uk

The site is updated daily.

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. The mews list is also downloadable from our website and we can email the Mews Update and our full colour details in .pdf (Acrobat) format. Of course, if you prefer, just call us.

MRS. MEWS' MEWS

A tale of planning, building, - and disagreements with Mr. Mews.

Chapter 1.

IN THE BEGINNING...

Having dealt with mews houses for more years than I like to remember, buying an unmodernised house in W2 - for me to ultimately live in - seemed like a good idea. I decided to live in the house while schemes were prepared, and moved in during July 2003.

The house was perfectly habitable (except for the roof which was patched up for me), utterly enchanting (previously owned by a very famous Hungarian fabric designer with all the walls lined in silks designed by him) and in a wonderfully quiet spot 100 yards from Hyde Park (and our Sussex Place office).

Quite unexpectedly, one of my new neighbours told me that she had tried

to persuade the previous owner to put up a mansard roof addition - which had never crossed my mind! So not unnaturally I decided to apply for planning permission for a mansard roof addition and terrace on what is at present a vast flat roof that is trying very hard to leak.

Three years later, I am still trying to obtain consent; my roof has been patched again and is still trying hard to leak.

I am the first to admit that the first application was WRONG (Mr. Mews does not agree with me). I thought it might be nice to mirror the house which I abut and which has a gable roof end. Therefore I asked my architect to prepare some drawings reflecting this. The application was refused and

wrongly I took it to appeal and lost. In retrospect, quite rightly so (Mr. Mews disagrees - again!).

The great thing that came out of the refusal and appeal was that the Town Planners and Design Team gave very explicit reasons for the refusal and indicated not only that my house could and should have a mansard roof addition but where it should sit and where there might be a terrace.

In April of this year we submitted a new application after much discussion with the planners. Again they told us precisely where to put the extra floor and where to put the terrace. The number of changes my architect has had to make to satisfy the planners is surprising and expensive. So, I now

have drawings which the planners are recommending for approval by the Planning Sub Committee. BUT... We have had to remove all requests for a roof terrace, so, if I get permission this time round I will have a marvellous extra room on top of the house with a flat roof area measuring 16' x 8' which I probably will not be allowed to use.

So much for Westminster's various statements about encouraging people to use outside space - "We have become more aware in recent years of the potential of roofs and roof gardens and that is why we encourage them." I know that 'overlooking' is of the greatest concern for Planners but guess what, we are all overlooked in Central London.

I will know the Committee's decision by the next Mews News. More then - and also more about "Objections and Objectors"

Kati Lurot - 'Mrs Mews'

A LONG TIME AGO THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN A COMMON SIGHT IN THE MEWS!



Pictured in Hyde Park Gardens Mews W2, just round the corner from our Sussex Place office, the carriage and horses of 'Westways Carriage Horses' which are available for private hire. You can find full details on their website, www.westwayscarriagehorses.co.uk or you can call them on 020 8668 7825. What a grand way to arrive at a formal dinner or the opera!



LANCASTER MEWS W2

A stunning mews house with a huge double reception room, three bedrooms, and a garage.
UNFURNISHED £985 per week. 020 7479 1999



OSTEN MEWS SW7

Comprehensively refurbished mews house with two bedrooms and a garage.
FURNISHED £1,250 per week. 020 7479 1999

BUTCHERING A BUGATTI

In Bathurst Mews W2 in the late 1950's there lived a butcher who had a Bugatti in the garage and regularly worked on it with the garage doors open. One day an American walked buy and seeing the Bugatti offered to buy... just the engine. He offered so much money that the butcher sold it, retaining the now engine-less body. We wonder what happened to it? Depending on the model a Bugatti **with** its engine could easily fetch half a million pounds today.

GETTING THE HUMP

In the mid-1970's the Church Commissioners' then managing agent was approached by some Middle Eastern gentlemen wanting to buy Dick Brigg's riding school in Bathurst Mews (it is actually for sale today...) to house racing camels which would be exercised in Rotton Row. Permission was refused but it would certainly have been quite a sight!



QUEEN'S GATE PLACE MEWS SW7

Extensively refurbished, three bedroom mews house with a garage.
UNFURNISHED £1,600 per week. 020 7479 1999

MEWS MEMORIES

We are always delighted to hear the anecdotes and reminiscences of mews dwellers from years past and are therefore indebted to Clare Seligman, from the USA, who dropped into our Sussex Place office one afternoon to tell us that she had lived as child in neighbouring Hyde Park Gardens Mews W2. She remembered that at the time our office had been a sweet shop and that the man who ran it was very scary. 'Ladies of easy virtue' plied their trade on the corner of the mews and whilst she she did not know just what that trade was she recalls that they were very friendly to her.

In the 1950's Clare Seligman lived at 29 Hyde Park Gardens Mews before her parents moved to America. Clare's 85 year old mother now lives in Costa Rica, and recently told her daughter that they paid 2,500 pounds for the mews in 1953. At that time it was either owned or rented by the American Consulate and was used to hold their carriage. The young Clare arrived at the house and finding that a horse-drawn coach was still in the garage and straw on the floor was horrified and alarmed that they were going to live in it! A ladder reached up to the second storey where the coachman slept.

Remembering their time in the mews Clare said, "My parents gutted the cottage and it took a year to complete the renovation. In 1956 or 1957 my parents were very proud to have the mews put in the yearbook of Good Housekeeping magazine."

If anyone knows how we could get a copy of the Good Housekeeping feature we'd be delighted to hear from them.

LUROT BRAND

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mews specialists

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