

Village Matters



Autumn-Winter 2011

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Liz Thomson Head of Lettings

Welcome back to our Village – summer really is over now although she hung on as long as she could! We want to introduce you to some of the ardent campaigners in our villages who work hard to keep them the special places they are to live – so, we welcome back John Scott and Tim Burke and the resolutions of the Notting Hill Improvement Group. We also thought you should know about the diligent efforts of the Edwardes Square, Scarsdale & Abingdon Association. A new season has just started for KCMS at the beautifully restored



Michael Wilson Head of Sales

Leighton House who we are happy to sponsor for the sixth year running. There is lots more – read on and enjoy!

Renaissance man

To describe Martin Miller as a Renaissance man almost does him a disservice, as he's spanned so many different areas of expertise he's almost gone beyond the polymath stage.

Miller is probably best-known for his successful Lyle and Miller's antique guides. But he has also published an etiquette book, run a B&B in Sussex, reinvented himself as a property magnate (Mountgrange Heritage are currently marketing two of his properties on Westbourne Grove), headed up a boutique hotel – Miller's Residence, invented his own brand of gin and an arts-and-science Academy modelled on an old Victorian salon.



His latest venture is Miller's Hideaway at Great Brampton House on the Welsh borders near Hay-on-Wye, where guests can do a

Downton Abbey and enjoy time in a

British country house. "We will have a literary centre in conjunction with the Hay-on-Wye Festival, hold contemporary art exhibitions and have artists in residence," explains Miller. "It's simply a pleasing spot for people to amble about in wellies and raid the pantry if you fancy a midnight snack."

So, how does he get his unusual ahead-of-the-game ideas? "The ideas are easy, it's just doing them that's the hard bit," he declares.

"But if the right project comes along that can be linked to the right property, I'm happy to take a look at it."

Miller's Hideaway at Great Brampton House, Madley, Herefordshire HR2 9NA 01981 250 912

www.millershideaway.co.uk



Hello deli

St Helens Foodstore opened six years ago and has managed to weather the storm of the recession. The café/deli has a full-on meat and cheese counter, as well as fresh salads and soups produced in its kitchen.

"We get people coming in

to order dishes such as Eggs Benedict or blueberry pancakes for brunch, mums like to pop in after dropping their children at school and the elderly enjoy a cuppa in the afternoon," explains owner Sarah Rowden.

Living in nearby Harlesden, Rowden says it's terrific being in a residential spot where she knows all of her regular customers' names. As well as catering to the locals, she says her staff are especially adept at providing quick business lunches.

The mainly organic, fresh menu changes daily. Today's special is a salad of Borlotti beans, beetroot, butternut squash and goat's cheese.

"People like coming in to get fishcakes or beef bourguignon for supper or to pick up dishes they can store in the freezer to eat on days when they can't be bothered to cook."

For those who want catering for a special event or produce delivered contact Sarah Rowden at St Helens Foodstore, 55 St Helens Gardens W10 020 8960 2225

Opening hours: Monday to Friday 8.00-6.00, Saturday and Sunday 8.30-5.00.



PUT A
TEA CUP ON
YOUR HEAD –
SEE PAGE 3

What are values doing in the village?

Along with the 'Indian Summer' came a revival in the sales market after the August lull. We anticipate that the next quarter will be quite telling; we will know fairly quickly whether or not the global financial crisis will impact on the property market here in central London. Early signs show no indication of softening prices, in fact quite the contrary.

We have been extraordinarily busy in the last few weeks with several properties attracting competitive bids and exchanging above their asking prices, more often than (continued on page 2) ▶

MOUNTGRANGEHERITAGE mh



Scarsdale Studios, W8 £1,400,000 Freehold

Truly unique architect designed home tucked away in this private collection of character properties, originally artists' studios. Featuring a large mezzanine bedroom, south-facing terrace, stylish bathroom, charming reception room with fireplace, dining area that opens into a country-style kitchen, plus a further bedroom, currently used as a large study, with ample storage.

020 7937 9976 tamara@mountgrangeheritage.co.uk



St James's Gardens, W11 £5,000,000 Freehold

A delightful five bedroom family house on this pretty garden square in Holland Park. The house faces south with beautiful views over the square and benefits from its own 60 ft garden. Large double reception room, fantastic kitchen with ample space for dining and French doors leading to private garden, five double bedrooms and three bathrooms. **Sole Agents**

020 7221 2277 tarik@mountgrangeheritage.co.uk



Cambridge Gardens, W10 £3,000,000 Freehold

Extraordinary freehold family house packed with period features. Kitchen/reception room, two conservatories, study area, master bedroom suite with large en-suite bathroom, two further bedrooms, family bathroom, double height top-floor studio reception room, roof terrace, a well stocked garden, plus a self contained one/two bedroom apartment. **Sole Agents**

020 7221 2277 michael@mountgrangeheritage.co.uk

► (continued from front cover) not selling to cash buyers. We have no crystal ball but the mess in the Eurozone and the uncertainty in other markets would appear to be playing out well for the prime London property as well-heeled international buyers continue to align their wealth in tangible assets. The price of gold continues to rise and so does the price of central London property. In times of uncertainty bricks and mortar provide security and stability.

On the lettings side companies appear to be less keen to throw their money around and the demand for high-end rental properties and family houses has fallen as fewer senior management people are being relocated into London. As ever there is buoyancy in the market for one and two bedroom flats to rent. ●

Got it nailed

Just coming up to its eighth birthday, Minx Beauty and Beyond has become far more than simply a place to get your nails buffed. Offering everything from the usual manicures, pedicures, massages, facials and waxing, the 10 staff at the Stratford Road salon go that extra mile for grateful and loyal customers, some of whom come all the way from Switzerland.



Owner Nasrin Aghaty says, "Our clients know we will bend over backwards for them. For instance, we opened up early one Saturday to help one woman with her hair and make-up after she was let down by her make-up artist on the day of her wedding."

The salon specialty, according to Aghaty, is eyebrow shaping. "We will thread, tweeze and do whatever we need to do to get perfect eyebrows." She adds that Minx is the best salon in London when it comes to taming unruly eyebrows.



Minx also holds birthday parties for children – "we give them pedicures, manicures and little goodie bags to take home" – hen parties, baby showers and visits from groups, such as the American Women's Club of London.

9 Stratford Road, W8 020 7937 8844 Opening hours: Monday and Saturday 10.00-7.00, Tuesday to Friday 10.00-8.00, Sunday 11.00-5.00
www.minxbeauty.com

Save our community

Being a member of ESSA (Edwardes Square, Scarsdale and Abingdon Association) is about engaging with the community on many levels and in many ways, according to chairman Anthony Walker.

Covering an area roughly between Warwick Road to the west and Marloes Road to the east, with Kensington High Street as its northern boundary and Cromwell Road to the south, Walker says ESSA doesn't confine its interests to only that area. "We consider anything we feel could affect the quality of the environment in the ESSA Conservation

Area, whether it involves helping a member combat an inappropriate air-conditioning unit on a nearby roof, protesting against disturbance from subterranean development works, or an overwhelming towering block of flats. Our objective is to help preserve the qualities of the place, which means so much to those who live there."



With the advent of 'localism' which will soon be formal legislation and the proposal for a new Planning Policy Framework in favour of development unless it can be proved to be harmful and contrary to local policies, the role of local amenity societies will become increasingly important in protecting our environment. "Over the next year, our Council is proposing to make use of local knowledge and expertise to review and hopefully strengthen the protection our conservation areas provide." ►

▶ Although planning is the most visible area of activity, it's not the only one, adds Walker. "We also take an interest in protecting trees and open spaces, traffic congestion, licensing hours, pollution, graffiti, shop-fronts and helping local traders, that all add so much to the character of our surroundings."



If you're interested in supporting these activities do contact us, adds Walker. "Even if you'll be in the area for just a short time, remember that only by being able to demonstrate a good level of support can we have a real influence on the future."

essaW8@gmail.com

Dear diary

Perhaps The Big Society-friendly David Cameron should check out what Mary-Lu Bakker and Amanda Waggott are achieving with local website Pavlova Diaries. As well as campaigning on serious issues, such as retaining the charm of Portobello Market and keeping our public loos open, this dynamic duo also introduces a bit of jollity to our lives.

This autumn brings the Notting Hill Popular Front, a crusade to determine how digging out mega-basements can harm the community. "Besides putting up with the din, dust and drilling, I think it's appalling people don't get compensation towards damage caused by careless neighbours," explains Waggott. "Some of these projects are on a commercial scale in a residential area and a contingency fund should be set aside when doing works to recompense those affected."

"Perhaps more pressing to many is the fact that although the public loos at Talbot Road were officially re-opened, the bad news is they're open only on Fridays and Saturdays, which mainly benefiting tourists. "If residents need to spend a penny they have to nip into Kitchen & Pantry or the Coffee Plant, defeating the whole purpose of revamping the loos," suggests Bakker.



To escape from upsetting global news this eclectic website offers us favourite local recipes to encourage us to buy ingredients and do our Christmas shopping in the market. "We list the five things we like to buy and tell people about things like a pop-up market stall featuring bird boxes and cups and saucers designed by students for the London Design Festival," Bakker adds.

Along with campaigns to make the neighbourhood a better place, Pavlova is urging us to enjoy an intellectual autumn. "Go to The Print Room for talks and plays and to The Lexi to see Jane Eyre," prompts Waggott.

So, log onto the Pavlova Diaries, a meringue of unmissable news and tidbits that's hard on the outside and delightfully squidgy on the inside.

www.pavloviaries.co.uk



C'mon baby, light my house

A common complaint is how Britain no longer manufactures anything and what is produced isn't up to scratch. Those who are grumbling are obviously not aware of Peter Bowles, founder of lighting company Original BTC, owner of five factories and a savvy landlord (Mountgrange Heritage looks after his London rental portfolio).

"It's all in the blood," explains Bowles, whose grandfather was

chairman of Minty Furniture, his father owned Cosmo Lighting and his son Charlie now works for the family firm. "I started out in France selling cutlery and discovered what people wanted, so began designing my own," he says. He then moved on to (Continued on back page) ▶



Holland Park, W11 £1,650 per week

A stunning architect designed flat situated in one of the handsome villas in this prime London location only a short walk from the tube station on Holland Park Avenue and moments from Holland Park itself. Wonderful entertaining space with two reception rooms, study, three bedrooms, three bathrooms, kitchen, two patios and shared garden. Furnished. **Sole Agents**

020 7221 2277 susie@mountgrangeheritage.co.uk



Upper Addison Gardens, W14 £1,000 per week

A superb first floor flat with views and access to the most beautiful communal gardens. Located a short walk from Holland Park and the local shops of Holland Park Avenue, a five minute stroll from Westfield shopping centre and with easy access to many transport links. Two double bedrooms, large reception room, bathroom and kitchen. Furnished. **Sole Agents**

020 7221 2277 charles@mountgrangeheritage.co.uk



Pembroke Gardens, W8 £3,500 per week

A beautifully presented family house set over three floors and located in this delightful corner of Kensington only minutes from Kensington High Street and the gates of Holland Park. The spacious accommodation with parquet flooring includes five double bedrooms, four reception rooms, five bathrooms, kitchen and a large private garden. Unfurnished.

020 7937 9976 amanda@mountgrangeheritage.co.uk



Spot the wall competition

Did you look long enough to recall where this wall is? If so, email us now and you could score a hamper from our friends at Piccolo Dely in Stratford Road, Kensington. Answers before 30th November 2011. win@mountgrangeheritage.co.uk

Great Scott

After 18 years, John Scott, co-founder and project leader of the Notting Hill Gate Improvements Group, has stepped down and passed the baton on to Tim Burke.

Property consultant John Scott is well known to locals as the man who helped smarten and preserve Notting Hill. He says his most beautiful project while at the helm of the NHGIG was creating the Czech Embassy's corner garden. "It cost nothing, as all the professional people involved didn't charge fees. Now, the trees and ivy coverage look wonderful and have made a huge difference to the area."



Scott points out that some of his efforts came to fruition – and then were undone. "We managed to put back railings and bollards at Notting Hill Gate, but then the Council decided to take them all down again."

The Group's mission statement from 1993 certainly prophesied the impending ultra-groovy spot Notting

Hill would become. Yet, there are pros and cons when it comes to living in such a popular enclave. John says "It's a small area, prices have gone up and up, and the character of the place is changing."

What would Scott like to see happen in the future? Ever original in his thinking, he believes the Council should let rundown Newcombe House be replaced with "a wow, avant-garde building similar to the Gherkin. No one can do it better than Notting Hill, so we should stick it to them." He also wants the Coronet to be restored, useful independent shops, such as Tylers, protected; and the march of the "boring clone centre" halted.

And don't forget the loos. He wants the Talbot Road loos to be manned by someone as caring as Cherie, who tends Queensway's lavatories. "They're so clean you could eat your ice-cream off the floor. The Council abhors such personal touches, but that's what makes or breaks an area."

Tim Burke can be contacted on – 020 7792 9626 or 07949 381 819

Music at Leighton House

The Kensington and Chelsea Music Society 2011-2012 season of recitals includes seven concerts performed at the beautifully restored Leighton House, and we are proud to sponsor them again for the sixth year running.

The season opens on 20th October with the Navarra String Quartet playing works by Haydn, Britten and Beethoven and ends in May with an evening of Beethoven, Bruch, Brahms and Rota performed by the Williamson Clarinet Trio.

Jayson Gillham plays piano pieces by Bach, Beethoven, Granger and Liszt in November, while the Rhodes Piano Trio start the new year with a concert in January. The recitals continue with Adam Walker



playing pieces for flute accompanied by James Baillieu, a programme of piano duets by Meng Yang Pan & Thomas Neubauer, followed by Njabulo Madlala & Kitty Whately ▶

The Williamson Clarinet Trio



The Navarra String Quartet will play the first concert at Leighton House ▶ singing the Kathleen Ferrier Award Prizewinners' Recital with Simon Lepper as accompanist.

Drop in to either of our offices now to pick up a programme with full details of all the concerts or for more information on KCMS go to www.kcmusic.org.uk



▶ (Continued from page 3) sell lighting designs to Habitat, and now his creations are sold ready-wired for individual markets worldwide.

In these difficult times, Bowles believes people want value and "more than just cheap imitations. Our products give a great deal of pleasure and we haven't been affected by the recession at all."

Completely self-taught, Bowles says the trick is having what people want when they want it. "Nowadays, there is more awareness of how lighting can improve your home and life."

As well as launching new products at 100% Design in London, Bowles is working on a range of glass lighting products, which will be produced in a glass factory he's just taken over. "I just develop what people like to buy," he sums up modestly, making a difficult job look deceptively easy.

The Old Rectory, Church Hanborough, Oxford, OX29 8AB
01993 882 251 www.originalbtc.com

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MOUNTGRANGEHERITAGE

Estate Agents Sales, Lettings & Management

Kensington Office
13b Stratford Road,
London W8 6RF
020 7937 9976

Notting Hill Office
153 Notting Hill Gate,
London W11 3LF
020 7221 2277

mountgrangeheritage.co.uk



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