



## START SPREADING THE MEWS

MARYLEBONE is perhaps the perfect London locale. Bang in the middle of town, smart, with period houses, a multitude of shops both chic and useful. Tubes, trains and parks at your fingertips, and yet neither flash nor toytown twee. It's not cheap, of course, but it's still shabby enough to be properly interesting.

Those who hanker after a cobbled mews street, but recoil from the pastel friggery of Notting Hill, might consider a new development in Chagford Street, a mews tucked behind Baker Street Tube station. Mews streets originally house the horses of the wealthy, then their motor cars, and now the wealthy themselves. In 1919 W.O. Bentley built his first car in a garage on Chagford Street (now blue-plaquetted), then called New Street Mews.

In 2003 the neighbouring garage was bought by Sean Quinn, of Q Developments, and turned into six modern five-bedroom townhouses called The Brooklands, after the racing track where Bentley first tested his cars. Five sold for between £2.2 million and £2.4 million last March, and Quinn has now put the final show house on the market for £2.5 million.

Chagford Street is cobbled and quiet, with a Lancia garage still operating at one end. Next to The Brooklands is a listed Georgian building, Chagford House, and on the corner a Victorian Gothic church, St Oyrrian's, opposite Frances Holland School for girls. The Brooklands is overlooked by the rear elevations of towering Victorian terraces, which contrast well with the sturdy concrete houses with their soaring glass roofs and pale grey walls patchworked with dark wood slats, so Q Developments worked hard to get as much light as possible into the houses.

Each has 3,000 sq ft of space spread over five levels, a garage and five outside terraces. Most rooms have french windows and the living room has a huge, double-height glass ceiling (the show house has a vast mirror that had to be lowered in by a crane). A dining area leads through to a high-quality kitchen kitted out with much inbuilt gadgetry. A separate living area sits above on a mezzanine near the glass ceiling, and the lower three floors are taken up by the five en-suite bedrooms and a home cinema.

Marylebone's eclecticism is well represented by The Brooklands' buyers, who are involved in finance, media and the arts. "People live here who want to escape Primrose Hill," says Quinn. "It's a bit more gritty."

**LUCY ALEXANDER**  
Q Developments: 020-7223 1200

In 1919, Bentley built his first car in a garage next door

# PARADISE ROW WITH KNOBS ON

In the first of a new series, Peter York charts the changing face and fortunes of übercool Marylebone High Street

WE CAN SEE two jaunty, absurd and unmistakable hairdos from the middle of the road. Russell Brand is walking down Marylebone High Street towards Oxford Street. On the other side, going up past the working clock outside Waitrose, the PLU's own supermarket, is Barbara Windsor's ponytail, the colour of bleached tow-ropes.

That's how it is there now. One Saturday I saw the *Evening Standard's* restaurant critic, Fay Maschler, and her novelist husband Reg (Fitzrovia), Griff Rhys Jones (Fitzrovia), Kimberly Quinn (Mayfair) and Tyler Brülé, inventor of *Wallpaper* magazine (local), in the same half hour. Sometimes it's like the BBC canteen. Marylebone High Street is a magnet for the media artgenisia, pulling people from nice neighbouring places who don't have such nice shops.

We've both — my agent, Anita Land, and I — got born with Marylebone and its High Street. Anita remembers going to the exotically 1920s-muralled Pâtisserie Sagne, all Viennese coffee and cakes, as a treat after her first trips to the dentist in Harley Street. And she remembers a mass of showbusiness guests, friends of her father, Leslie Grade, and his two brothers, who lived in a mews here, a smart flat there. People like Dennis Selinger, Peter Selners's agent, or John Lennon on the corner of my square.

I remember the whole area as an accessible playground from Hampstead. And my best friend at school lived there, in the Marble Arch Regency square I live in now. Anita lives in the neighbouring one. I pitched up from South Ken in 1993. Anita arrived about five years later.

The High Street seemed completely local in the 1960s. I thought it was heaven, better than Heath Street and Hampstead High Street. Sharper, more compact, more urban. But as the 1960s became the 1970s and I left home for a Bayswater bedsit and then Chelsea (you had to be there in '71), I forgot about Marylebone and the High Street and it started its slow decline. By the 1980s it was distinctly dim, competed out

The point is that it's a proper high street with all the essentials

by the New Islington and the New Notting Hill (the emerging Clarendon Cross and Ledbury Road), full of old ladies, charity shops, medical suppliers and not much else, except for the unstoppable Pâtisserie Sagne. The world had moved west and people talked about Marylebone as a series of big intersections, an anonymous central somewhere, on the way to somewhere else. All deeply unfair, because Marylebone always had been a real village with a long history, which then became an important prod borough, with the big grids and the grand houses of Portman Square laid down in the later 18th century.

Marylebone was intended as part of Great Nash London, a parade of orderly stucco splendour from Buckingham Palace to Regent's Park. This being London, not Paris, it never quite happened. Marylebone festered as its inhabitants grew older and weren't replaced. It couldn't be gentrified, since it had never been prole or Pooter. And the grandees who owned the larger, better chunks, bounded by Edgware Road, Oxford Street, Marylebone Road and Portland Place to the north east, the Portman and De Walden families, seemed to have lost the plot. But in the 1990s everything changed. Young metropolitans who had been dredging out North London for cheaper houses started to notice what was under their noses: fantasti-



cally central, lots of good 18th and 19th-century housing stock, great transport connections and cheaper than Notting Hill.

But what provoked the Marylebone miracle was the De Walden Estate, which was created by 17th-century toffs, suddenly getting clever and

proactive about Marylebone High Street, seeing that it could be rethought as a distinctive high street with special shops. The point about Marylebone High Street is that it's a proper local high street with all the essentials, the supermarkets, banks, newsagents, and the rest,

timesonline.co.uk/property

## HOUSEHUNT

For sale in Marylebone . . . and its fringes

### FIVE-STOREY GEORGIAN TOWNHOUSE

Wimpole Street, W1: a grand family home with huge appeal for Beatles fans



Peter York thought Marylebone High Street a heaven in the Sixties and was drawn back to the area in 1993 by its vibrant feel and specialist shops; he and Anita Land, his agent, seen below, are fans of the local Oxfam

**WHAT YOU GET:** Nine bedrooms, three reception rooms, three bathrooms, kitchen, terrace. A total of 4,271 sq ft.  
**WHERE IT IS:** Wimpole Street runs south from Regent's Park to Oxford Street, parallel with Marylebone High Street. Smart shops and Tube stations abound, though you're unlikely to want to go anywhere else.  
**UPSIDE:** Paul McCartney lived here from 1964 to 1966 with his girlfriend, Jane Asher. He wrote various songs here, both alone and with John Lennon, including *Yesterday*.  
**DOWNSIDE:** Half the house is currently a medical practice, but it could easily be restored.

**COST:** £4.15 million **CONTACT:** Jonathan Arron, 020-7624 2255, www.jonathanarron.co.uk

### MEWS COTTAGE NEAR HARLEY STREET

Devonshire Mews West, W1: a smart contemporary conversion near Regent's Park



**WHAT YOU GET:** Three bedrooms, two reception rooms, two bathrooms, kitchen. A total of 1,253 sq ft.  
**WHERE IT IS:** On a quiet cul-de-sac off Harley Street, two minutes' walk from Regent's Park, Great Portland Street Tube station and Marylebone High Street.  
**UPSIDE:** The entire house has been beautifully redesigned to create a large open-plan living/dining/kitchen area with exposed brickwork. The lease is also extremely long: 999 years.  
**DOWNSIDE:** There's no garden and, despite appearances, no garage. Plus, the third bedroom is rather on the small side.

**COST:** £1.625 million **CONTACT:** Jeremy James & Co, 020-7486 4111, www.jeremyjames.co.uk

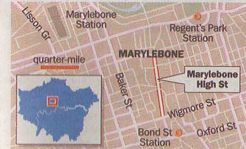
### GEORGIAN HOUSE NEAR EDGWARE ROAD

Davenry Street, NW1: a spacious four-storey terraced house with patio



**WHAT YOU GET:** Five bedrooms, entrance hall, two reception rooms, three bathrooms, kitchen. A total of 1,839 sq ft.  
**WHERE IT IS:** Just to the north of Marylebone Road, the east-west highway skirting the congestion charge zone, and an olive stone's throw from Marylebone proper's delights. Paddington Station is near by.  
**UPSIDE:** Roomy, with attractive high ceilings, and splendidly sited for a quick getaway by road or rail.  
**DOWNSIDE:** Davenry Street is very much on the wrong side of Lisson Grove. Also, outside space is minimal and there's still a shop front.

**COST:** £945,000 **CONTACT:** Sandfords, 020-7723 9988, www.sandfords.com



and St John's Wood. The other cleverness the knobs on — comes in the way the De Walden Estate has avoided the clone tenants that have ruined British high streets over the past 20 years. They've sought out specialists, often with no more than one other branch — Frangierie from its cult outpost in Highbury, Skandium, the furniture shop with its Alvar Aalto originals, from Wigmore Street. Gap came and went, but agnès b stayed. Links of London replaced a not-quite-for-us euro menswear place.

We like the lot, but for Anita the Pâtisserie Sagne — now officially the Pâtisserie Valerie at Sagne — and Lewis & Lewis, the hardware shop that still finds parts for supernaturated small appliances, are crucial. We're both on for Daunt's, where you get launch parties of the kind that contain Sebastian Faulks and Beryl Bainbridge. We once saw Simon Sebag Montefiore interview Andrew Roberts there — both Capel & Land clients — and a few months later Andrew grilling Simon, lovely high-end historians' incest. We both like the little furniture shop Conran. Anita loves the light fittings and mid-century mirrors and Perspex obelisks from Noho upstairs. I like Andrew Weaving's serious Sixties and Seventies stuff in the basement. And we'd both sign any petition to keep the Hellenic restaurant on its corner between the High Street and Thayer Street.

Good thinking, of course, since bookiness and foodiness go together in the other local villages that make up Marylebone High Street's hinterland, from Bayswater to Primrose Hill, taking in Hampstead and Little Venice, Fitz-