

THE COUNTRY HOUSE COLLECTION

ENCHANTED CASTLE
The Scottish home
that's fit for a prince

THE TIME TRAVELLER
Discover a house with
an amazing secret

A SENSE OF GRANDEUR
Behind the gates of
the ultimate estate

ELIZABETHAN GEM
Mixing heritage
with modern living

◆
Step inside
Britain's most beautiful
country homes



THE COUNTRY HOUSE COLLECTION

The Country House Collection always proves to me how very lucky we are to be dealing with such outstanding properties. Not only are all of these buildings beautiful, they often come with a fascinating history.

This year's collection shows just how much Strutt & Parker's Country Department has grown in size and stature over the past few years. We are successfully selling some of the very best houses, farms and estates in the country, and we hope to continue this run for many years.

The prime country house market continues to move at different paces. Some areas are beginning to attract a considerable amount of attention, while others are still struggling as buyers come to terms with the cost of moving. But with the threat of a mansion tax receding and the economy continuing to strengthen, we see exciting times ahead.

In the following pages, you'll find a selection of the outstanding houses we are offering, but there are many more not on show here. As well as additional houses currently available on the open market, we also have a

wide selection of properties offered on a private and confidential basis.

I have our marketing team to thank for producing such an outstanding magazine, the Country Department team to thank for improving our level of service and the quality of properties available, and Christie's International Real Estate to thank for making the world a much smaller place by introducing us to the most active and affluent buyers from around the globe.

This is a great job to be in and a great time to be buying. Please ask us for further details of any property that might be of interest. Alternatively, just sit back and enjoy every page.



James Mackenzie

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Country House Renaissance



The country house is enjoying a revival as modern buyers look for the perfect combination of contemporary living and a sense of history. *Clive Aslet* reports



Morley Old Hall, Norfolk
A sympathetically renovated
Grade I Listed Elizabethan hall
in an unspoilt rural setting.
Price on application





‘The quality of life offered by a magnificent house surrounded by gardens and parklands is easy to understand’



Kingston Lisle Park, Oxfordshire

This impressive house, one of the most beautiful in Oxfordshire, lies at the heart of a spectacular estate.
Guide: £21,000,000

Forty years ago, it seemed that the British country house was on its last legs. The Victoria and Albert Museum staged an exhibition, *The Destruction of the Country House*, detailing scores of glorious properties that had been demolished during the course of the 20th century. Adverts in magazines such as *Country Life* told the same sorry tale of decline and neglect – almost every one included the depressing words ‘suitable for institutional use’. After the oil crisis, which pushed heating bills through the leaky roof, the summit of most people’s aspiration was a largish suburban house near a golf course in the Home Counties.

Thank goodness that dismal era is now behind us and once again the country house is regarded as a highly desirable acquisition, rich in history – a place where life has been perfected over centuries. ‘The country house is one of Britain’s great achievements,’ says architect Robert Adam, who has built and restored numerous grand properties, ‘and everyone recognises it as such’.

But what has led to this welcome turnaround? The answer, perhaps surprisingly, is modern life, which has made owning a country house not only desirable but also more feasible.

The quality of life offered by a magnificent house surrounded by gardens, parkland and unspoiled views is easy to understand. But these enduring qualities have been enhanced by some typically 21st-century considerations. Most importantly, a house set in its own grounds offers a degree of privacy that is impossible to find in

towns and cities. What’s more, as life becomes increasingly urban and crowded, peace and natural surroundings have become even more sought-after. ‘These are such populous and small islands,’ declares style commentator Peter York. ‘I am a committed urbanist, but even I have funny little feelings when I visit a well-run country house. I’d quite like to have one.’

Alongside the luxury of privacy, modern technology has also played a part in the country house renaissance. ‘Modern communications have made it far easier for people to live in an idyllic location but still stay in touch with the office,’ explains James Mackenzie, Head of Strutt & Parker’s Country Department. ‘In fact, two questions we are often asked about a property are “is there broadband?” and “how good is the mobile signal?” Working from home one or two days a week is now common practice, allowing people to combine high-earning jobs with a country lifestyle. Add to that better road and rail connections, and many country houses are now a perfect complement to modern living.’

The other significant factor behind the renaissance is a very modern desire to own something that is special and has a sense of place. As cities become more uniform, buyers who want a property with personality and history are increasingly looking towards the countryside. The unique architecture is partly down to the successive reimagining of the country house by different eras, stretching from the mellow brickwork of Tudor to the new materials of Modernism. But partly it is due

to the character of the British countryside itself. Being on the edge of a continent, the underlying geology is crunched up creating a rich variety of rock and soil types. As a result, builders have been able to use a range of materials. A house made from the Old Red Sandstone of the Welsh Marches, for example, won’t easily be confused with one from Cornwall, where tough, grey granite was often used. ►



The Mill House, Wiltshire

A beautiful home, which has been extensively renovated, set in 3.3 acres in the picturesque Nadder Valley.

Guide: £2,500,000

It's this uniqueness that ultimately makes country houses so sought-after. But that can create problems for buyers. 'For many people, owning a country home is a dream purchase and increasing numbers are chasing that dream,' explains Jessica Simpson of Private Property Search, which specialises in finding homes for buyers. 'As a result, supply of the very best houses in attractive locations has actually become quite limited.'

Of course, buyers still want to adapt country houses to reflect modern lifestyles. According to Robert Franklin, an architect in the Arts and Crafts style, it's about blending the old and the new. 'Those who can afford a small estate with a nice house on it almost always want all the style and status, but none of the old formality,' he explains. 'So out with the corridors and in with the big family room where everyone can cook, eat, relax together and entertain.'

Fitting this sort of open-plan space into an old house, designed for a different way of life, can require some lateral thinking. Often old service wings, which were based around a large servants' hall, are the perfect location for a modern family room, while attics are ideal for playrooms and hobby rooms. In fact, one of the attractions of a country house is the flexibility that comes from having plenty of space.

But there is a limit to how much work new owners are prepared to do. A generation ago, buyers wanted nothing better than to find an unrestored house, which they could love back into life. 'But that's no longer the case,' says Mark McAndrew, Head of the Estate & Farm Agency at Strutt & Parker. 'Time is precious, particularly for couples where both partners work, so fewer purchasers want to take on restoration projects that might last many years. As a result, condition has become more important.'

Ease and convenience are not just limited to the interior of the house, they also apply to the location. 'The ability to reach fast transport links is often a priority, along with being close to good schools,' explains James Mackenzie. 'Although buyers are looking for privacy, they don't want to be completely isolated. Ideally, they want to have a pub, cinema and Waitrose nearby. It is about balancing convenience with space.'

That sense of balance lies at the heart of the appeal of owning the perfect country house. It offers the rare chance to combine elegant living with a sense of history, to have the luxury of privacy and still enjoy the convenience of modern life. No wonder that buying a country house has become the ultimate property purchase. ●

Clive Aslet is Editor at Large of Country Life

Built to last

THREE CLASSIC FEATURES OF A COUNTRY HOUSE

Parkland

The landscape park has been called Britain's greatest contribution to the visual culture of Europe. Ironically, the people who built the landscape park often saw very little for their efforts in their lifetime. But centuries later, we can enjoy their legacy of beautiful green spaces.

Sport

Country houses were built around sport. Grand stables celebrate a love of horses, while the bedroom wings of Victorian country houses were intended for the unattached males who came to shoot.

Outbuildings

These can be as architecturally interesting as the house. For modern buyers, outbuildings offer the opportunity to create extra accommodation, offices, screening rooms – or just a great place to hold a party.



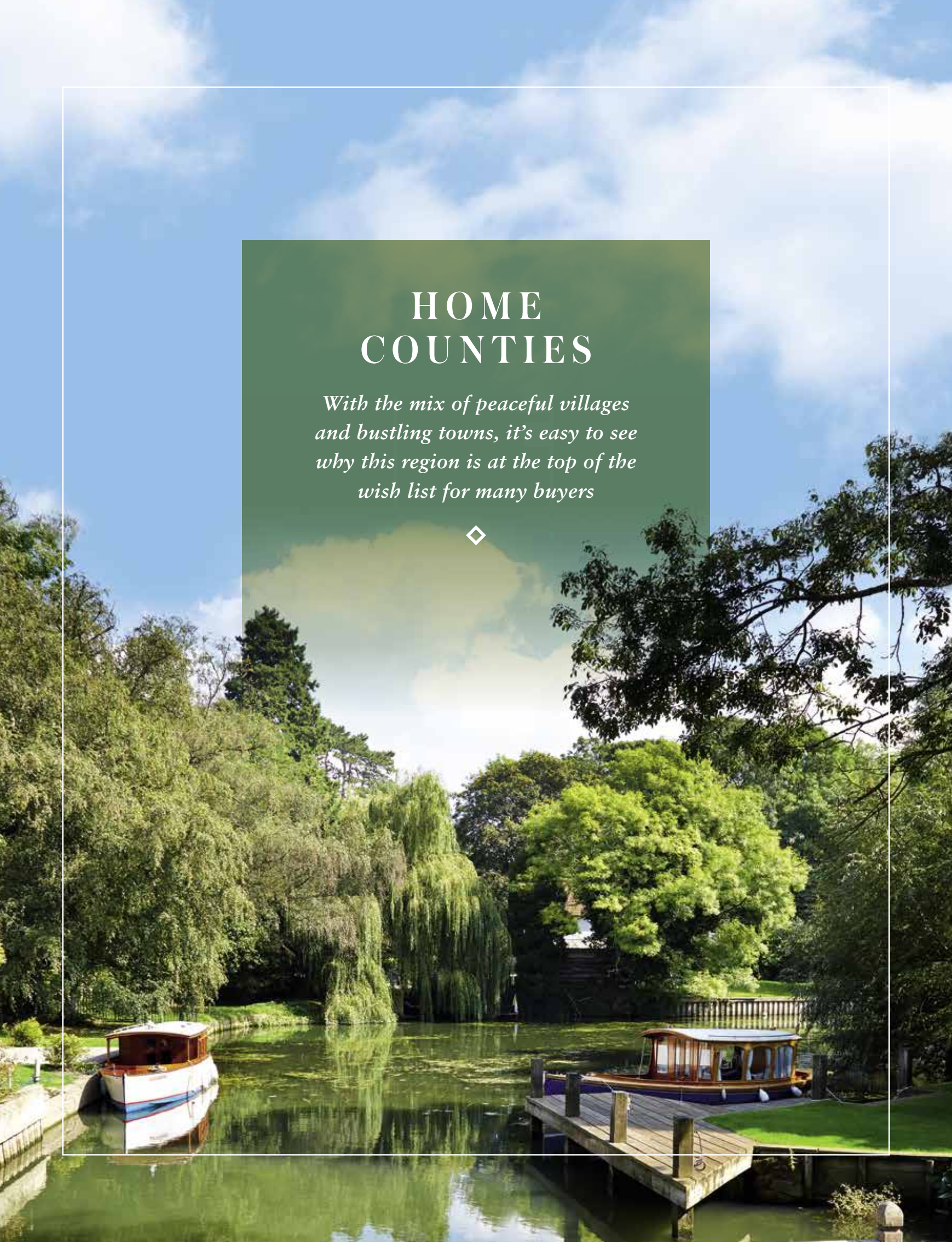
Abbotts Wood, Buckinghamshire

A modern country house that has been finished to an exacting standard.

Guide: £7,500,000

HOME COUNTIES

*With the mix of peaceful villages
and bustling towns, it's easy to see
why this region is at the top of the
wish list for many buyers*



The perfect view

With uninterrupted views across the Surrey Downs and an impeccably refurbished interior, Southways is one of the country's most desirable houses, as *Ruth Corbett* explains

The view from Southways is almost as impressive as the house itself. The property is in a fabulous location on the crest of the Surrey Downs. 'When you walk out through the loggia on to the terrace there is a magnificent view of St Martha's Church, which is perched on a hill on the ancient Pilgrims Way,' says James Mackenzie of Strutt & Parker. 'It really is the perfect setting.'

The broad sweep of woodland and meadows that surrounds the Queen Anne-style house has changed little since Saxon times, but incredibly London is just a 40-minute train journey away. Heathrow and Gatwick are also within easy reach and you can be on the M3 in just 10 minutes.

Despite the proximity of this modern-day infrastructure, the sense of peace at Southways is really exceptional. 'There are other houses in the area in good locations with excellent transport links,' explains James. 'But it is rare to find one where you can't hear any aircraft noise or even the sound of traffic. At Southways, it really is like living in the heart of the country – it is completely quiet, even though it's within walking distance of Guildford's high street.'

When the current owners first saw Southways, the house had been divided into two separate dwellings. By chance, both were on the market at the same time. They decided to buy the two properties ►





Southways, which was built in the 1930s, is set in 3.5 acres of grounds

and then embarked on an extensive refurbishment programme to restore the house to a single residence. The project involved the complete renovation of the interior to an exactly high standard. A new entrance lobby and porch were built to create a focal point at the front of the house, but the most substantial addition involved building a new extension by cutting into the hillside. It has a grass roof and houses a fabulous swimming pool, as well as a steam room and two changing rooms. The pool opens onto a south-facing timber deck that has a spectacular view of the valley beyond.

Following the meticulous refurbishment, the house has seven bedrooms, five reception rooms and six bathrooms, all decorated in a contemporary palette.

The current owner's favourite room is the study, which has a bay window and elegant wood panelling. 'It's a south-facing room, so it gets plenty of light,' she says. 'But it can also be very cocoon-like and cosy when you want it to be.'

Although it is a large house, it doesn't feel overly grand. 'It's a really comfortable home that has been designed for modern family living,' says James.

In every room on the ground floor, tall windows or French doors open out on to a vast York stone terrace and have sensational views. Thanks to the elevated setting, there are often spectacular sunrises and sunsets to be enjoyed.

The peaceful outside space has been substantially landscaped. It now includes new seating and planted areas, as well as a remodelled entrance drive. Some of the gardens have been designed by Chelsea gold-medal winner, Philip Nash, who also designed the external lighting scheme. The grounds, which extend to around 3.5 acres, include a tennis court shaded by trees and a traditional-style Alitex glass house.

With its exceptional facilities, Southways feels more like a private country club than a house. James believes that the English country house doesn't come any better than this.

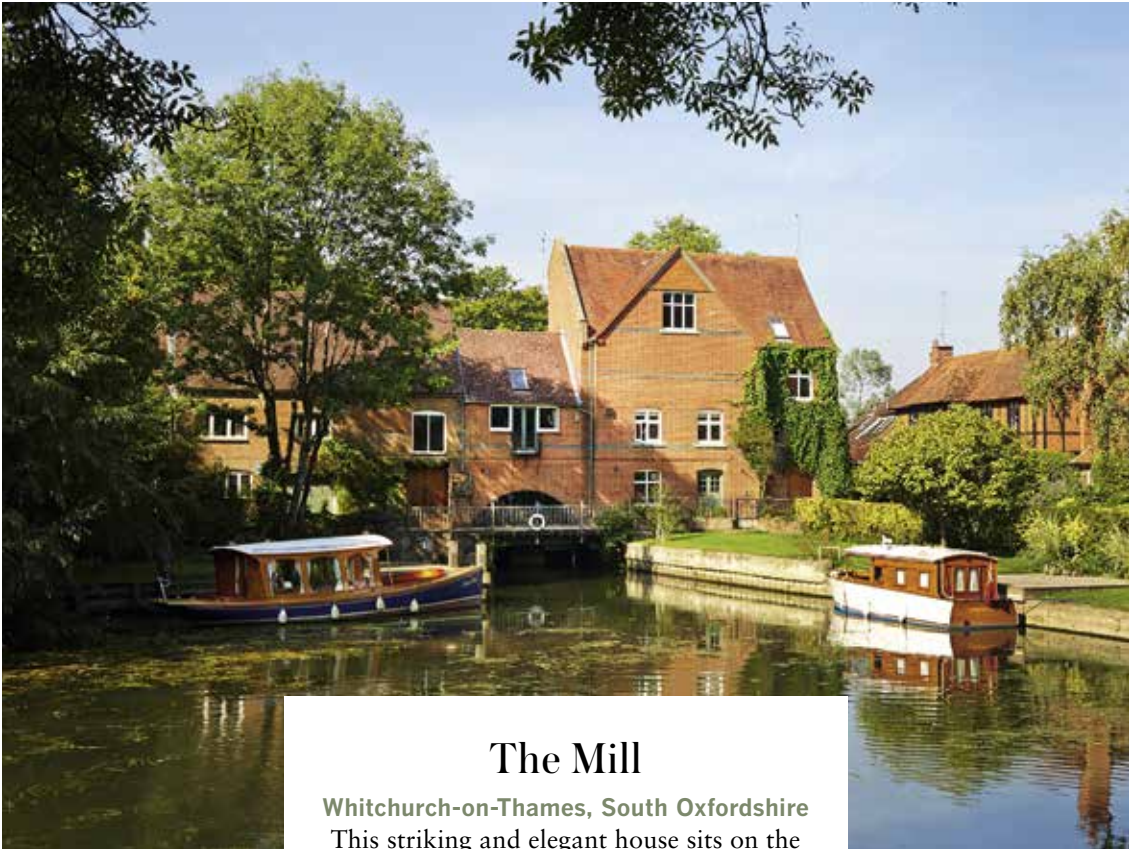
'When the house was built in the 1930s, there was nothing else in Surrey that came remotely close to it,' he says. 'Its wealthy banking-family owners had their pick of any spot outside of London and they chose very well. No expense was spared then and no expense has been spared now, ensuring that Southways remains a truly outstanding home.' ●



Above: French doors open on to the stone terrace. Opposite, from top: the view from the loggia; the interior is elegant, and modern; a stylish bathroom with a terrace





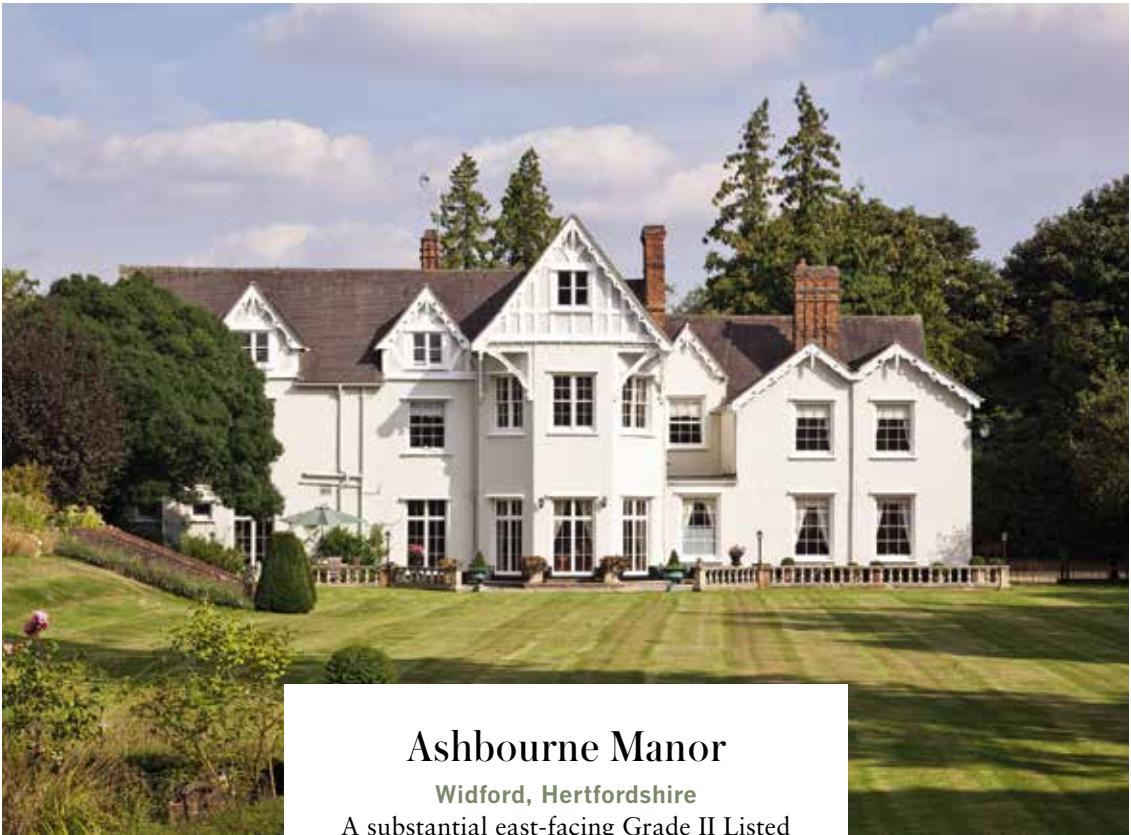


The Mill

Whitchurch-on-Thames, South Oxfordshire

This striking and elegant house sits on the River Thames and has been sensitively converted into a family home.

Guide: £3,500,000



Ashbourne Manor

Widford, Hertfordshire

A substantial east-facing Grade II Listed Victorian country house that has been sympathetically modernised.

Guide: £4,500,000





Percy Lodge

Richmond, London

The country comes to London with this gem of a house on the doorstep of Richmond Park and only 7.5 miles from Hyde Park Corner.

Guide: £7,950,000

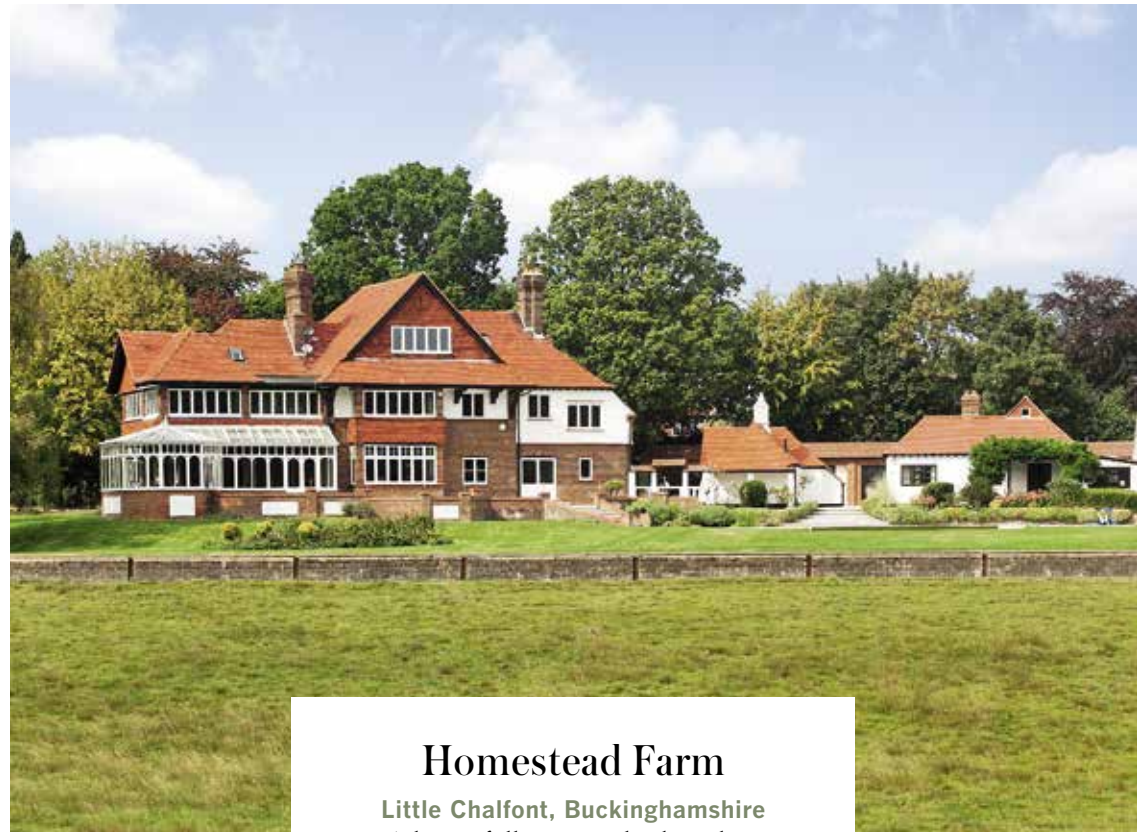


June Farm

Reigate, Surrey

This historic gem dates from the 17th century and offers exceptional grounds and equestrian facilities.

Guide: £6,000,000

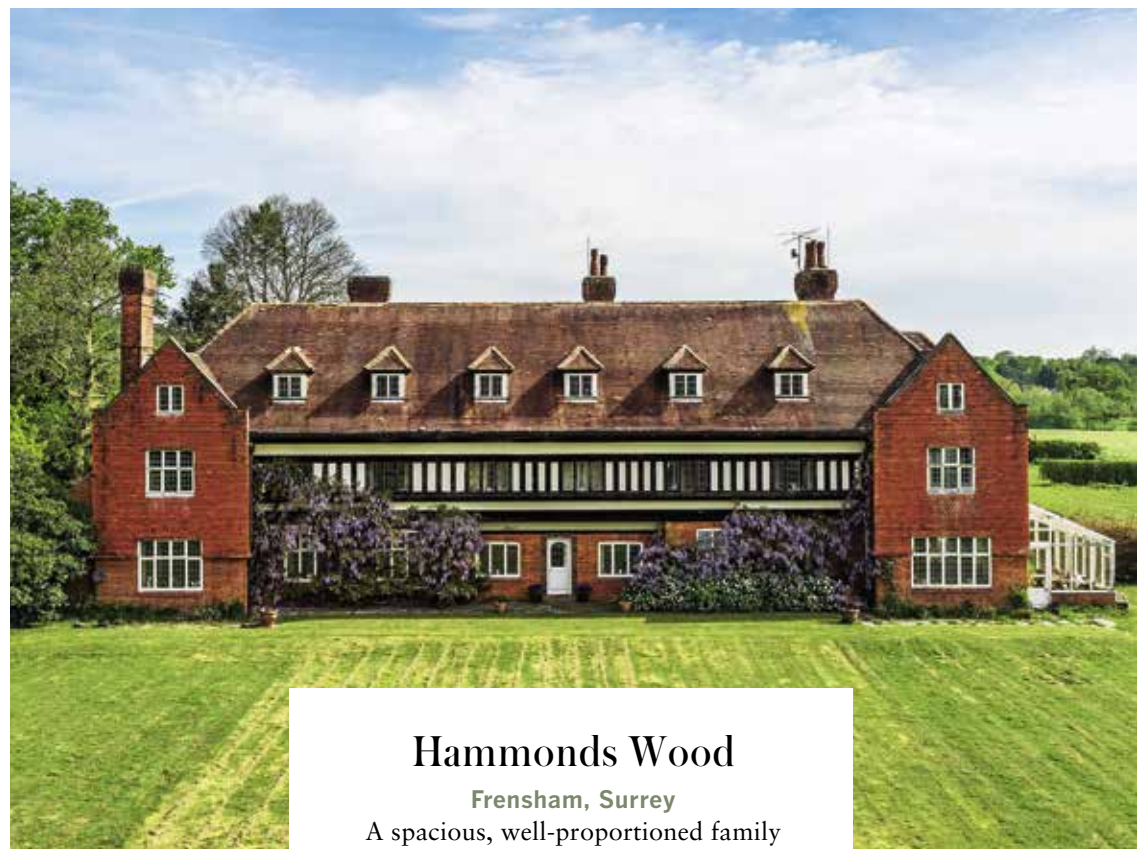


Homestead Farm

Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire

A beautifully restored Edwardian home that is in a peaceful yet highly convenient rural location.

Guide: £6,250,000

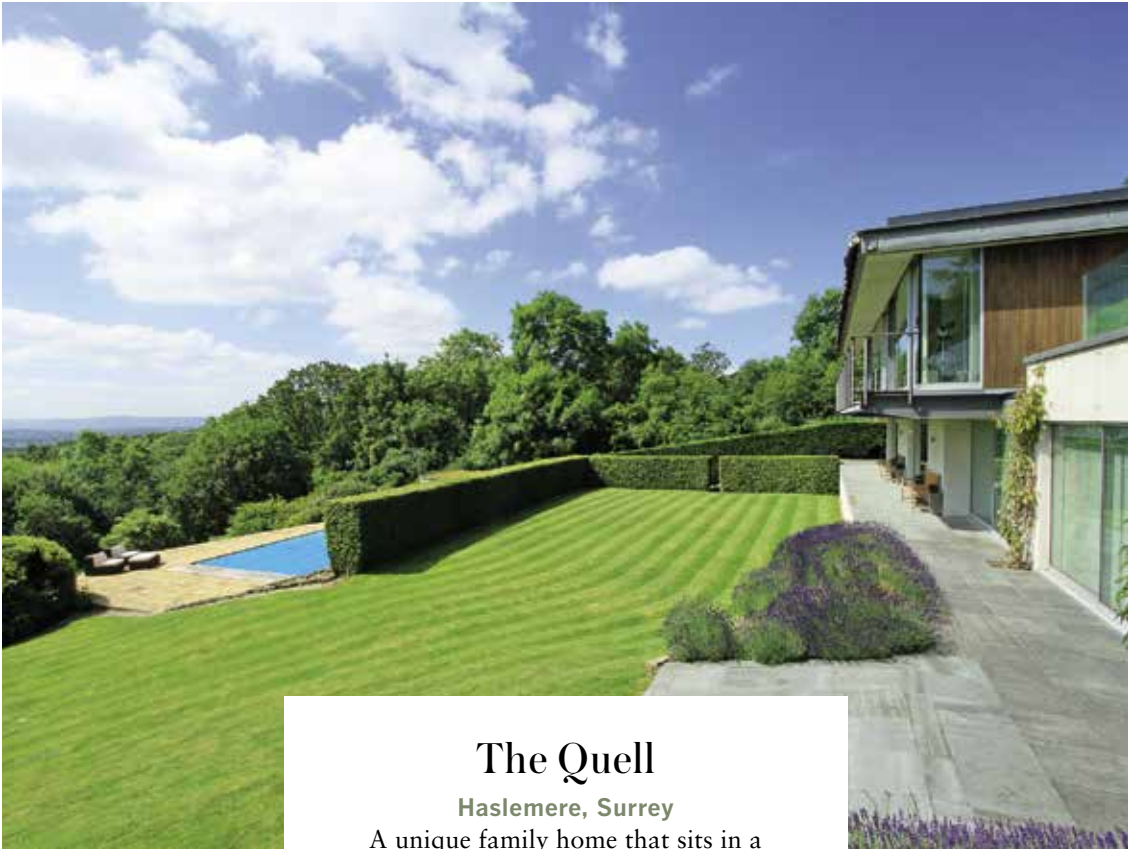


Hammonds Wood

Frensham, Surrey

A spacious, well-proportioned family home situated on the edge of Frensham village that offers a tranquil rural retreat.

Offers in excess of £3,750,000

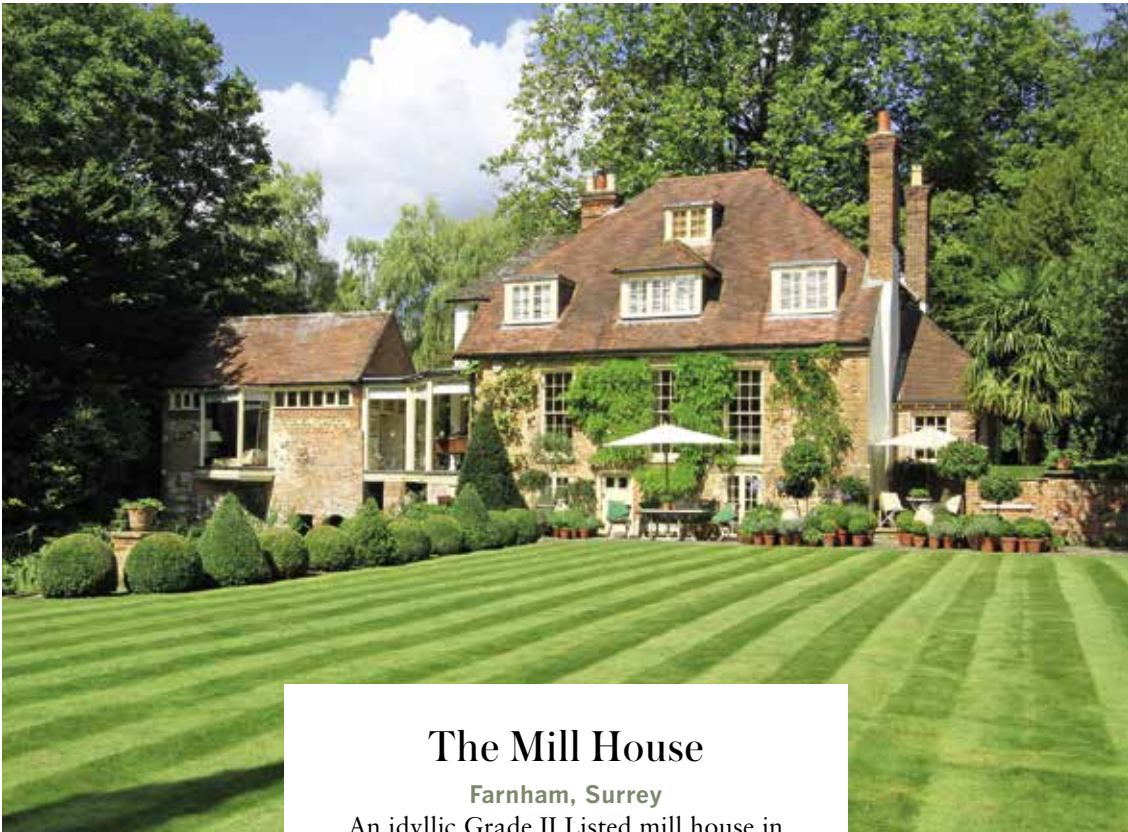


The Quell

Haslemere, Surrey

A unique family home that sits in a beautiful sought-after location with views over Surrey and West Sussex.

Guide: £3,400,000



The Mill House

Farnham, Surrey

An idyllic Grade II Listed mill house in a peaceful setting in the heart of Surrey, but less than two miles from a mainline station.

Guide: £3,500,000



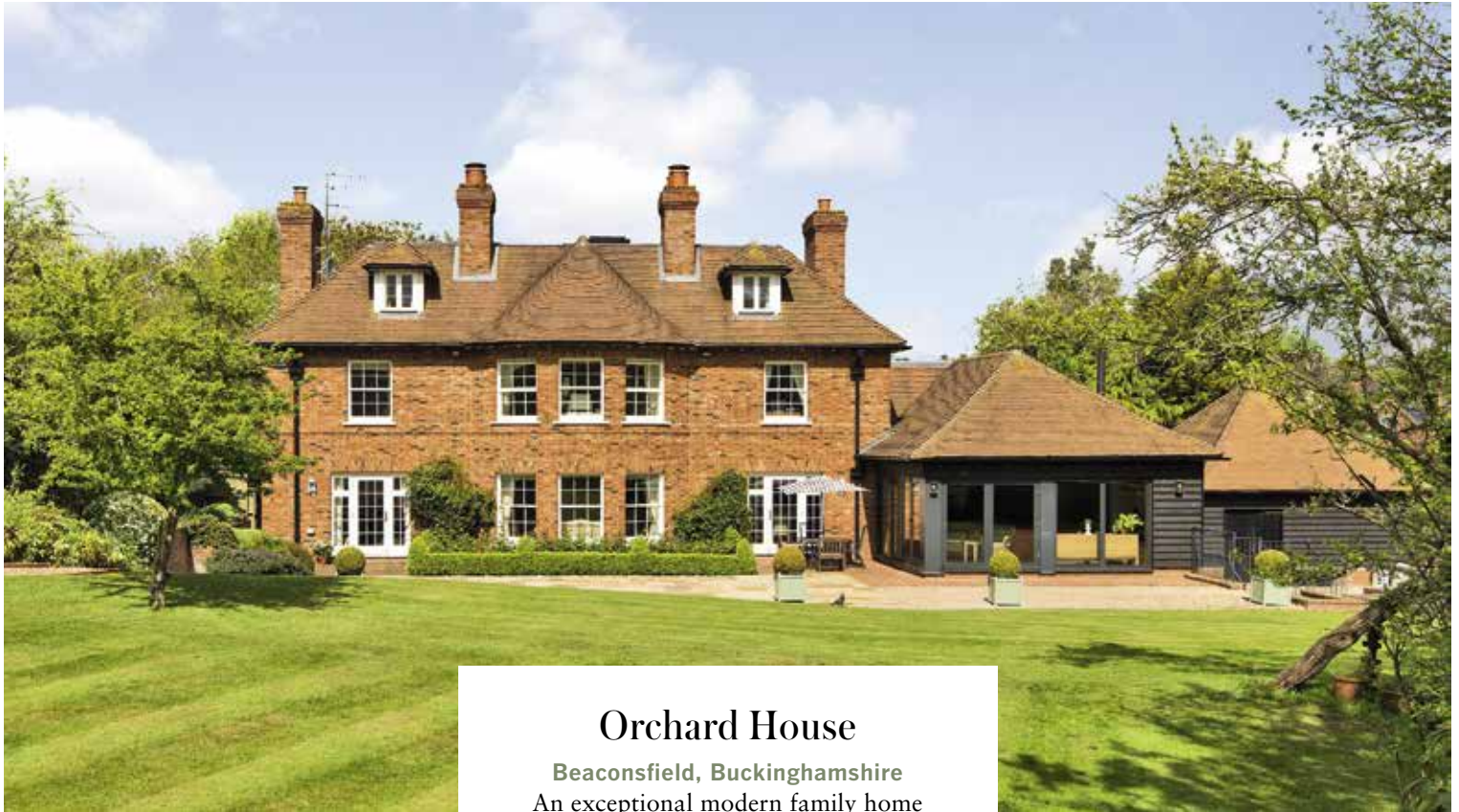


Moor Green Farm

Finchampstead, Berkshire

An impressive Georgian-style home with superb entertaining space and views across Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve.

Guide: £4,350,000

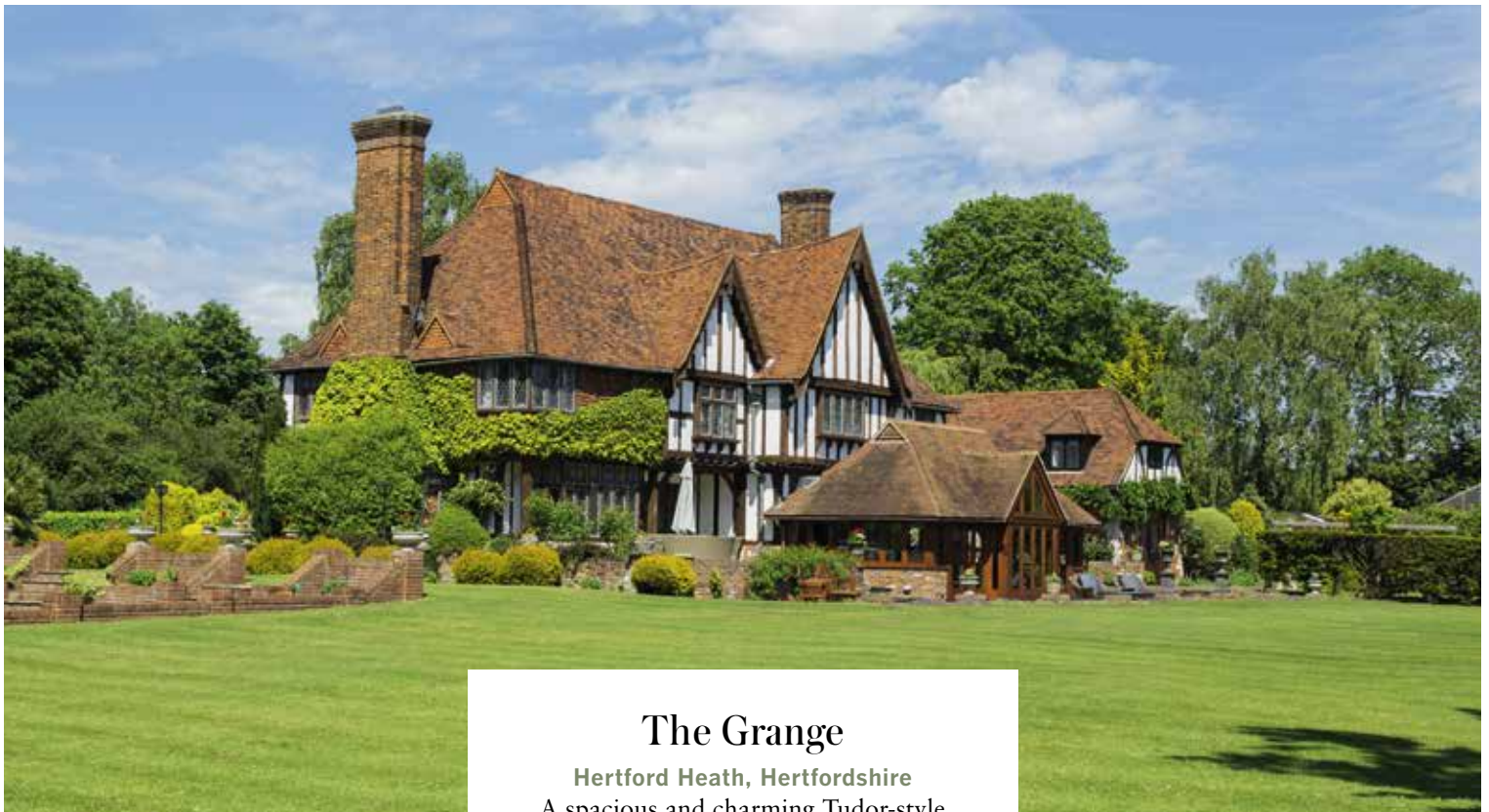


Orchard House

Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire

An exceptional modern family home with excellent commuting links in the beautiful Chiltern countryside.

Price on application



The Grange

Hertford Heath, Hertfordshire

A spacious and charming Tudor-style country house with a cottage set in delightful gardens and grounds.

Guide: £3,950,000

An aerial photograph of a vast, rolling countryside. The landscape is a patchwork of green fields, some of which are divided by stone walls. Scattered throughout the fields are numerous trees, some standing alone and others in small clusters. In the distance, a town or village is visible, with buildings and a church spire. The sky is a deep blue with large, white, fluffy clouds. A semi-transparent dark blue rectangle is overlaid on the upper half of the image, containing the title and text.

COTSWOLDS & MIDLANDS

*As well as the area's beautiful,
unspoilt countryside, buyers
are attracted by good transport
links and excellent schools*







The Old Manor sits in a valley and is surrounded by woods and farmland

The time traveller

The Old Manor looks like it has been in its idyllic rural setting for centuries. But, as *Cherry Maslen* reveals, the house is hiding an amazing secret

Everything about The Old Manor – creamy stone, matching boundary walls, lush, mature gardens – fits perfectly with its bucolic Cotswolds setting. The building looks like it has been here for centuries. So it comes as a shock to learn that the manor is barely more than five years old. This remarkable effect has been achieved by building a new house from old stone. The entire front façade was removed from an 18th-century house in Calne, Wiltshire, carefully stored in a reclamation yard and reused, stone by stone, to create the elegant front of The Old Manor.

The house has been named after its Wiltshire predecessor and is a skillful blend of original materials, classically proportioned interiors and a new rear elevation that houses an enormous kitchen, perfect for 21st-century living. The house is very much a labour of love on the part of its owners, Sarah and Adam McKenzie Wylie, who moved in with their two children in September 2010. They did not rush the build, renting nearby and spending time sourcing the right materials and fixtures, from beautiful arched windows to the six reclaimed working fireplaces.

The couple had originally bought an unremarkable cottage in this beautiful spot in the South Gloucestershire valleys, which they planned to knock down so they could build their own home from scratch. ‘We went to see the house in Calne before it was demolished and I knew straight away I wanted to re-use that beautiful Ashlar Bath stone,’ says Sarah. ►

Sarah, who is a portrait artist and has studied architecture, had a keen sense of what would work visually, both with the exterior of the house and the interior, and was closely involved with the build. 'I could see the house in my mind's eye – it was almost like creating a massive painting.'

Sarah did a lot of research and decided on an 'Irish Georgian farmhouse' look with big rustic fireplaces. Working with an architect and 'wonderful builders', with whom she spent up to six hours a day, she was both project manager and client.

The result is a spacious, modern home with all the charm and grace of a Georgian house. As you walk through the white-painted front door into the flagstone hall, everything is in perfect harmony: white woodwork, gold ceiling lanterns and gold-framed mirror. It's an elegant, authentic look that has been achieved with a clever combination of traditional methods, soft colours and 'finds' such

as the original Georgian doors leading into the sitting rooms and the kitchen. This is perhaps the most impressive room in the house. It is an enormous 32ft by 17ft, with a beautiful arched window at one end and a huge stone fireplace, which came from a nunnery in France, at the other. Sarah didn't want it to look like just a kitchen – and it doesn't. A table long enough to comfortably seat 10 people is positioned by the fireplace and doors open onto an outdoor loggia, perfect for alfresco dining.

Unlike its draughty Georgian counterparts, The Old Manor has all the benefits of a newly built home, including underfloor heating – the reclaimed Cotswold stone flagstones had to be slimmed down to make sure that the heating was effective.

Upstairs, the five bedrooms have beautiful views over the valley. The master suite features a walk-in wardrobe and a dressing room. Guests can also sleep in The Shed, a New-England style timber building in the garden, which has a sitting room that could double as an artist's studio and its own kitchen and bathroom.

Having lovingly crafted this architectural phenomenon, rescuing the beautiful Bath stone façade in the process, the owners are sad to be putting it on the market. But life moves on. They spend quite a lot of time in London and plan to buy a small house there and a second home further into the West Country, possibly Cornwall.

'It's a beautiful building in a magical setting, which makes it quite possibly the best house I have ever been asked to sell,' says Strutt & Parker's Luke Morgan. 'It's remarkable to think that it's not even listed – one glance and you would think that it must be.'

Wherever they find themselves living next, the owners can be proud of what they've achieved at The Old Manor. 'The biggest compliment we've had is that lots of local people have said the house looks as if it has been here for 200 years,' says Sarah. ●

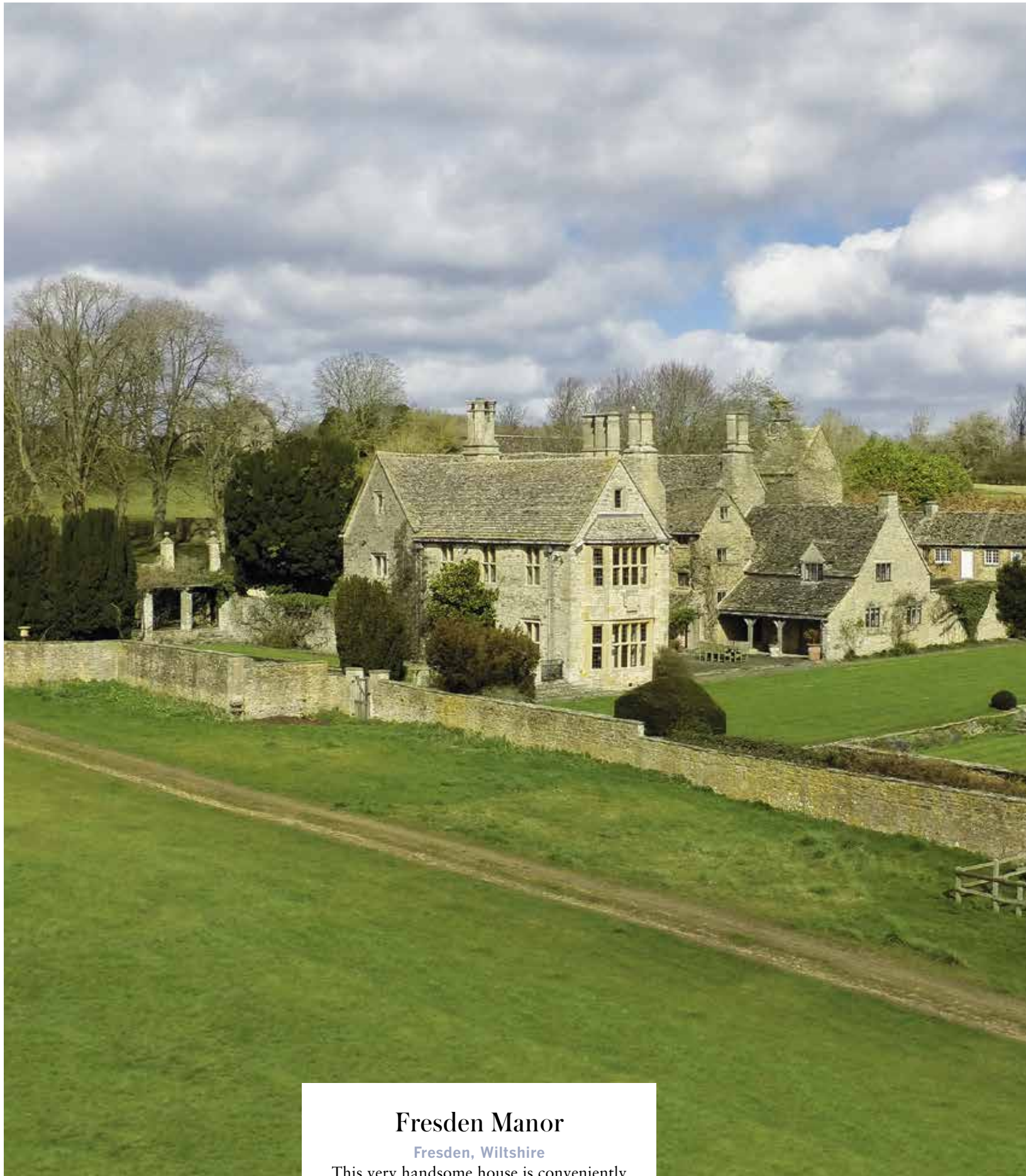
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*"I could see the
 house in my
 mind's eye –
 it was almost
 like creating a
 massive painting"*





Clockwise from top: the elegant entrance hall; windows look out over the valley; the fireplace came from a French nunnery



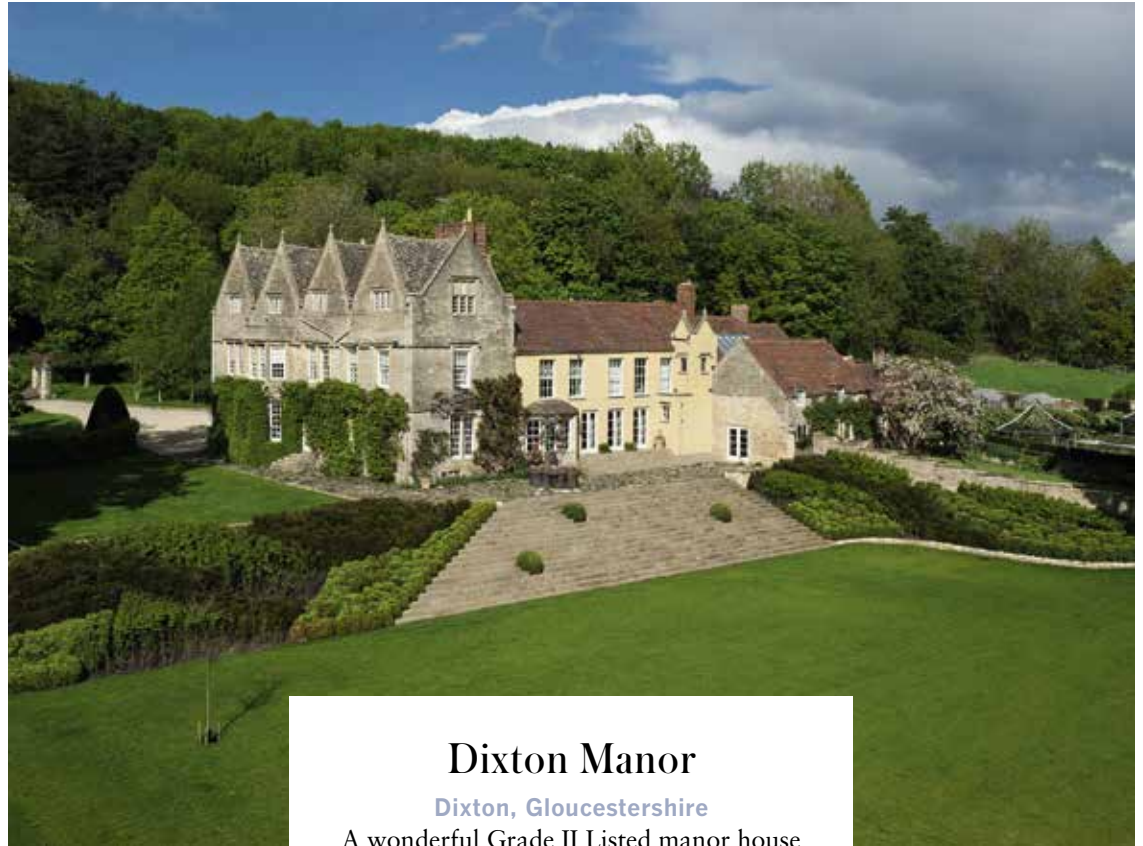


Fresden Manor

[Fresden, Wiltshire](#)

This very handsome house is conveniently arranged for modern living and has unspoilt views over the surrounding countryside.

Price on application

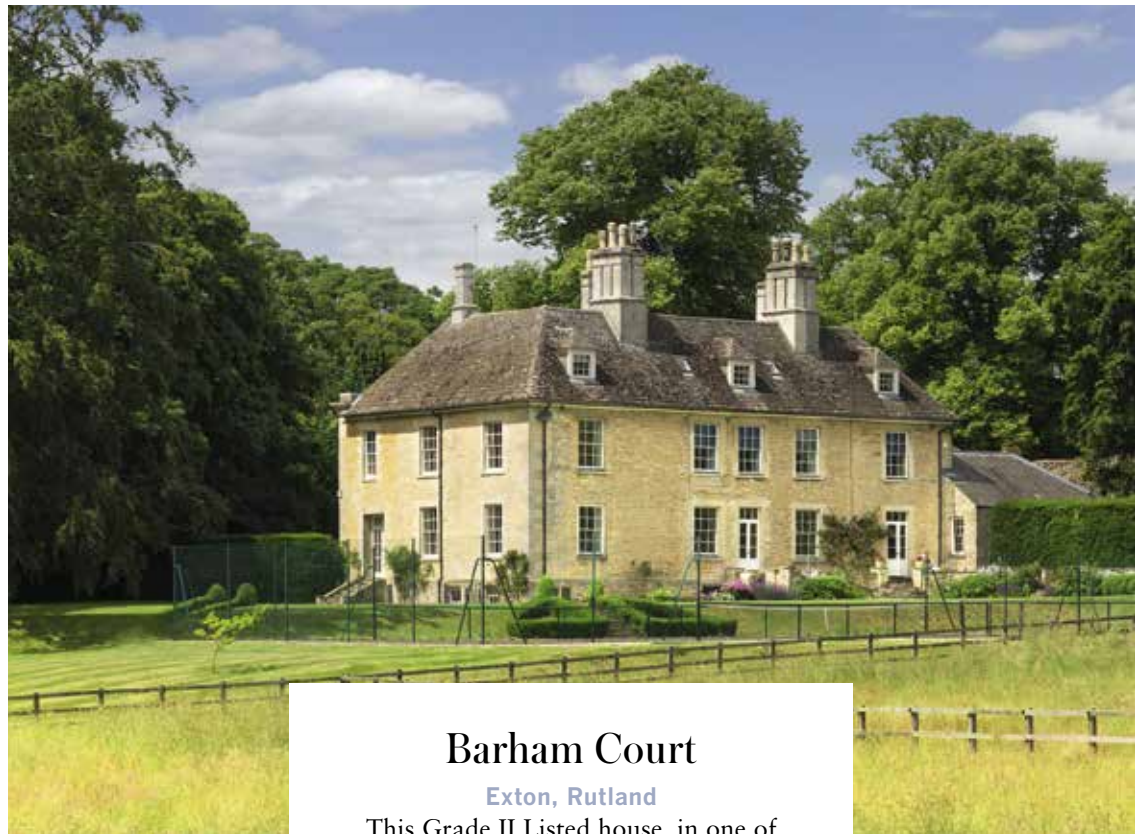


Dixon Manor

Dixon, Gloucestershire

A wonderful Grade II Listed manor house in a private and peaceful setting with commanding views over the countryside.

Sold



Barham Court

Exton, Rutland

This Grade II Listed house, in one of Rutland's prettiest villages, was originally the vicarage to the Exton Park Estate.

Sold





Cold Ashton Manor

Cold Ashton, Wiltshire

A Grade I Listed Cotswold manor house with extensive ancillary accommodation and excellent communication links.

Price on application

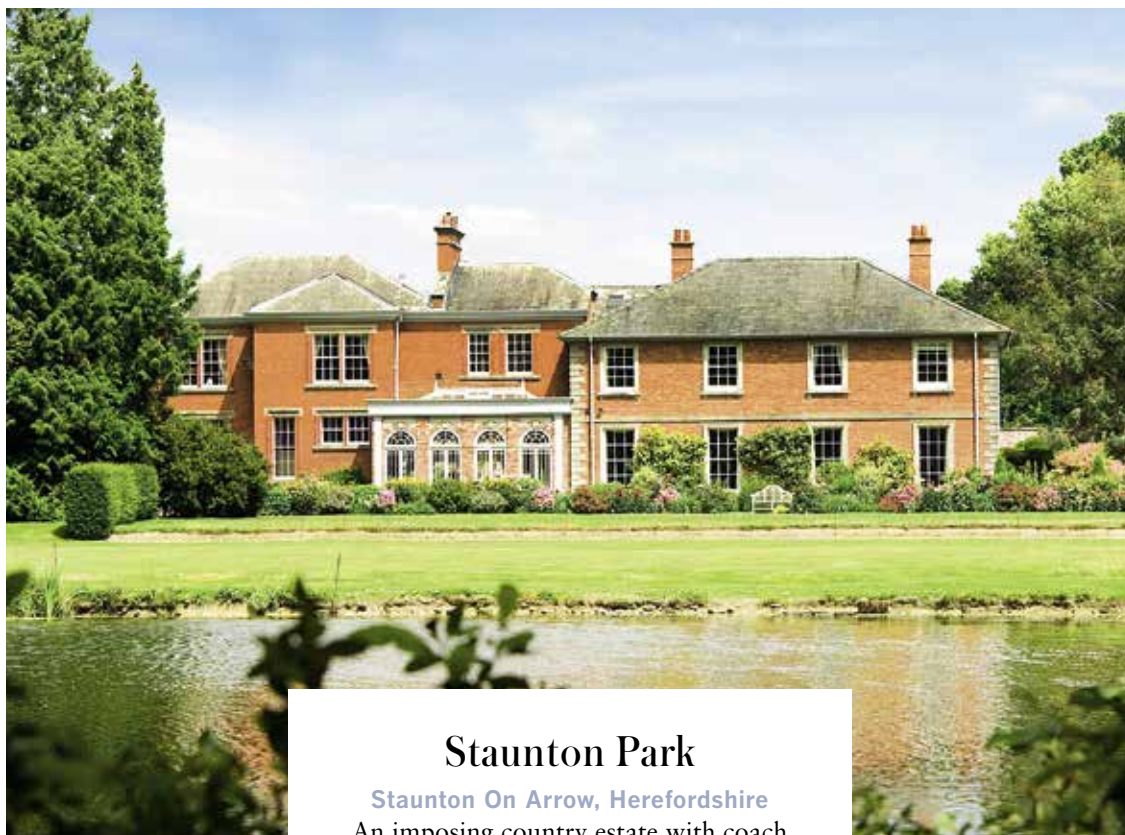


Middle Lypiatt Grange

Middle Lypiatt, Gloucestershire

This traditional house has been beautifully refurbished to offer the best of 21st-century family living in a tranquil rural setting.

Guide: £3,250,000



Staunton Park

Staunton On Arrow, Herefordshire

An imposing country estate with coach house, stable block, beautiful gardens and views over the Welsh Marches.

Guide: £2,250,000



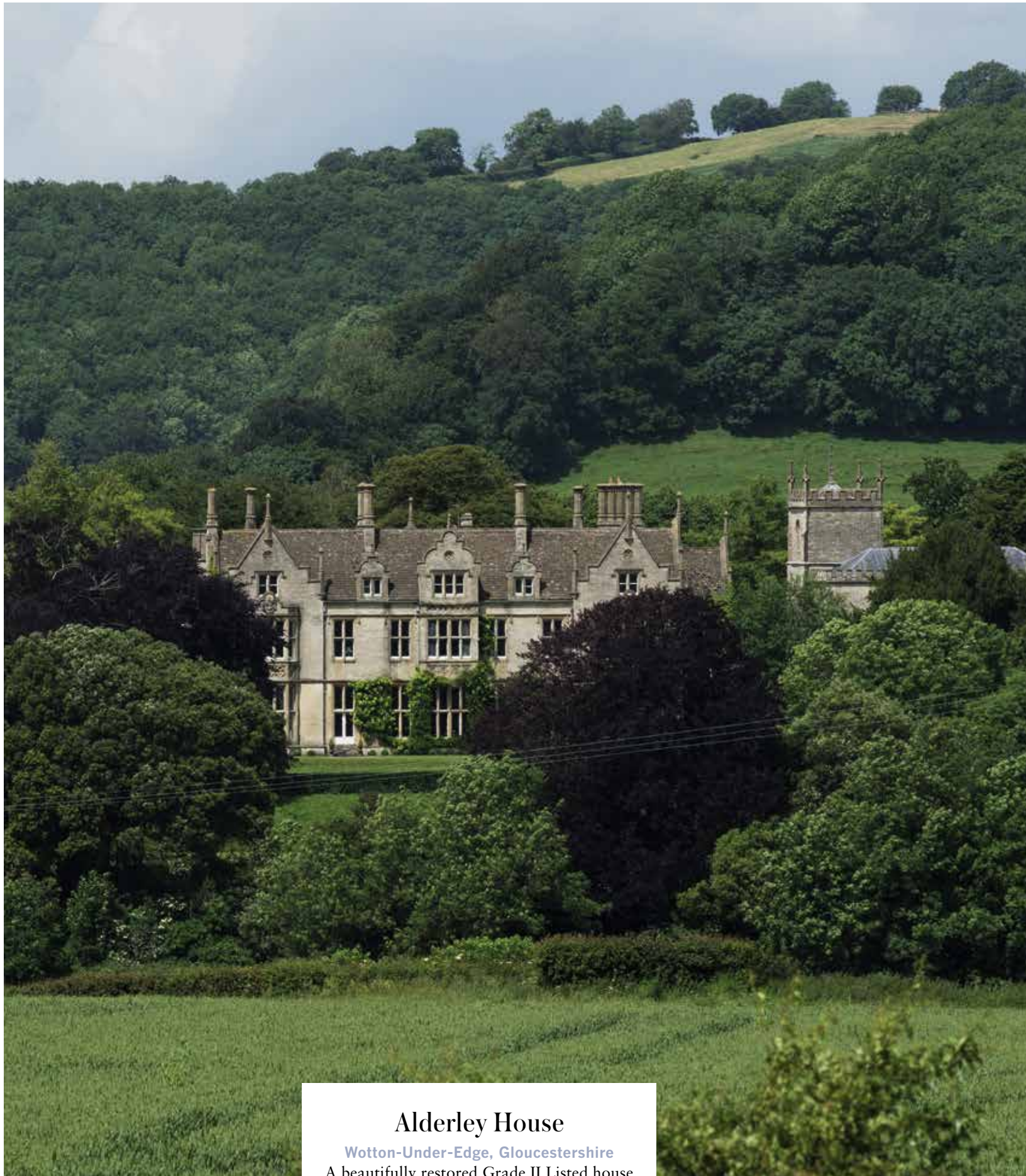


Bibury Court

Bibury, Gloucestershire

A beautiful Grade I Listed Jacobean manor built on the site of a former Benedictine monastery close to the River Coln.

Price on application

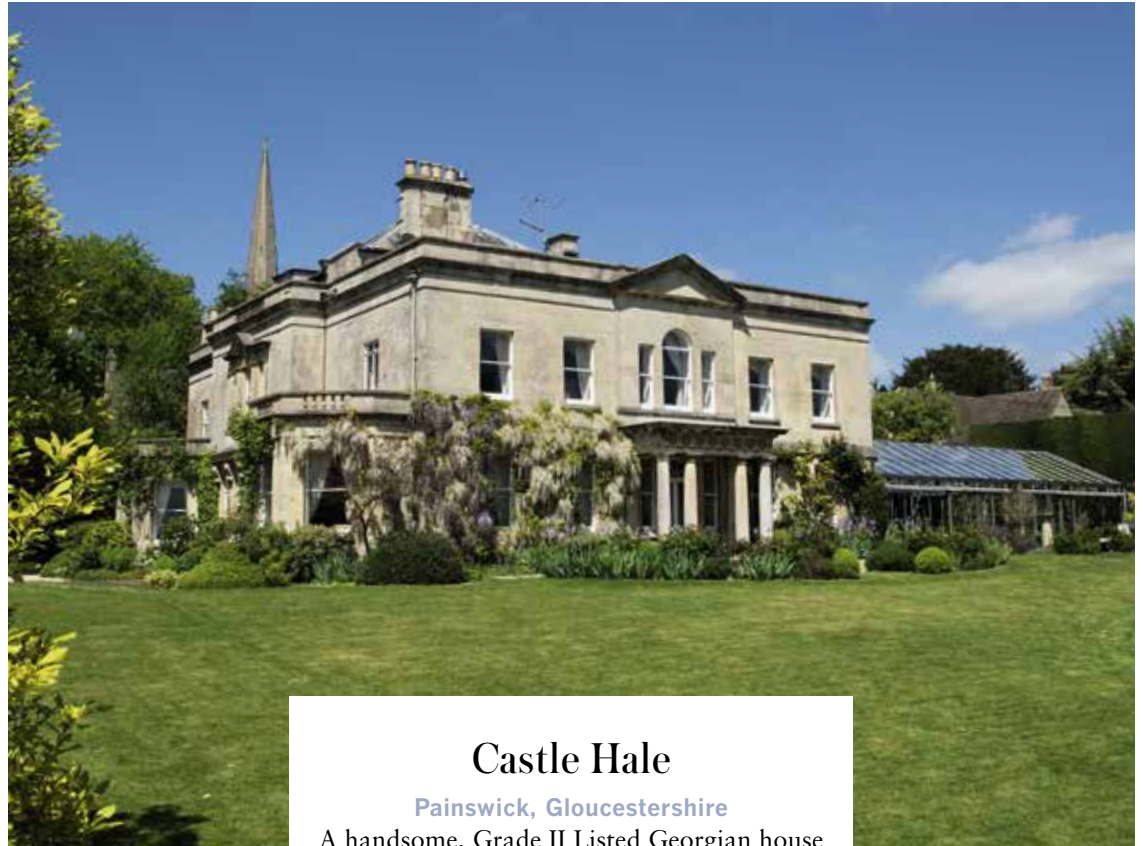


Alderley House

Wotton-Under-Edge, Gloucestershire

A beautifully restored Grade II Listed house with exceptional views and outstanding facilities, including a riding school.

Guide: £6,500,000

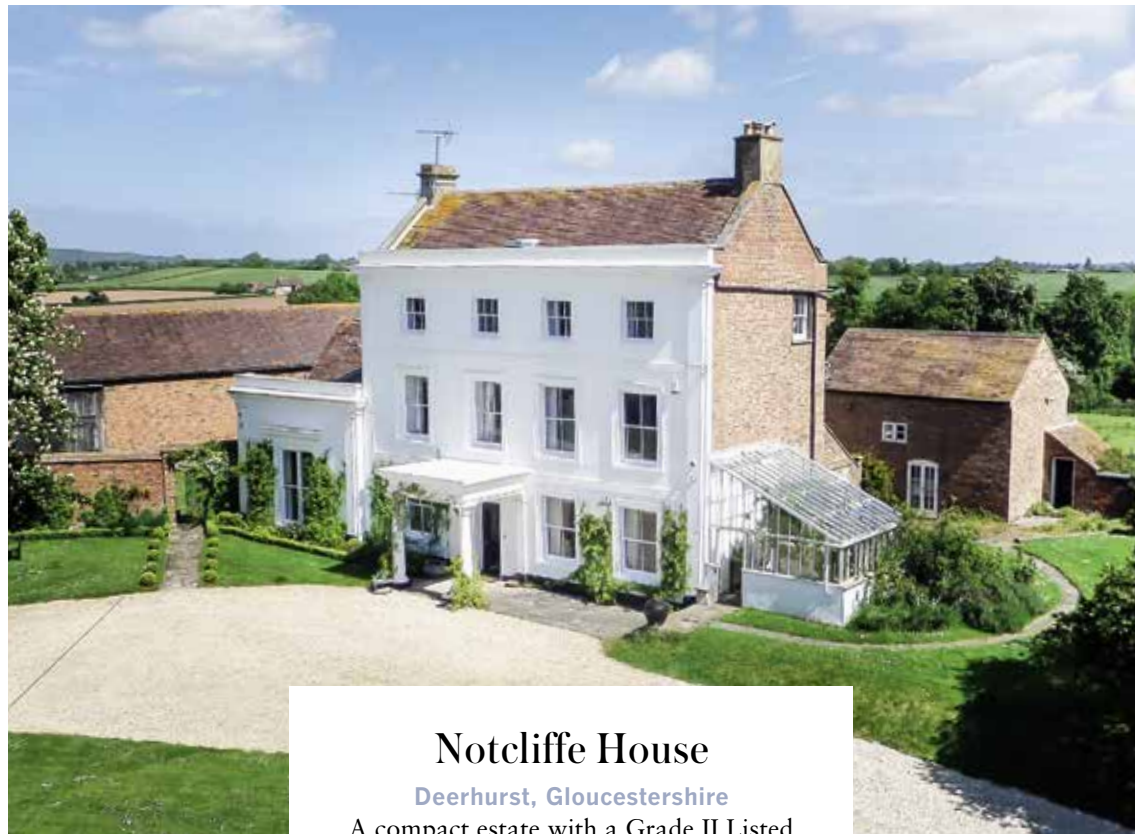


Castle Hale

Painswick, Gloucestershire

A handsome, Grade II Listed Georgian house tucked away in a highly desirable village that is known as the 'Queen of the Cotswolds'.

Guide: £2,600,000

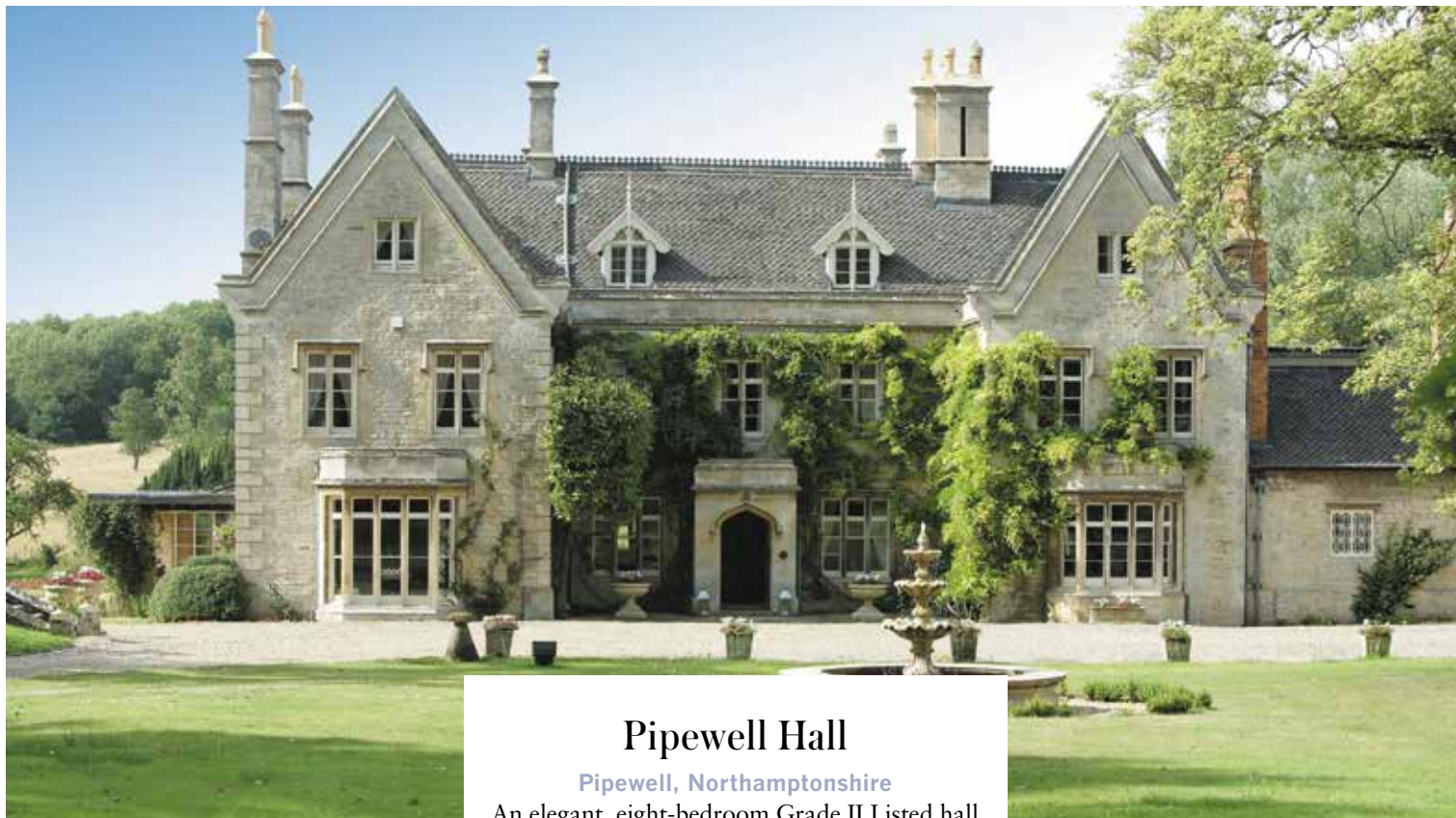


Notcliffe House

Deerhurst, Gloucestershire

A compact estate with a Grade II Listed house set in about 132 acres with stables, a tennis court and swimming pool.

Guide: £3,250,000

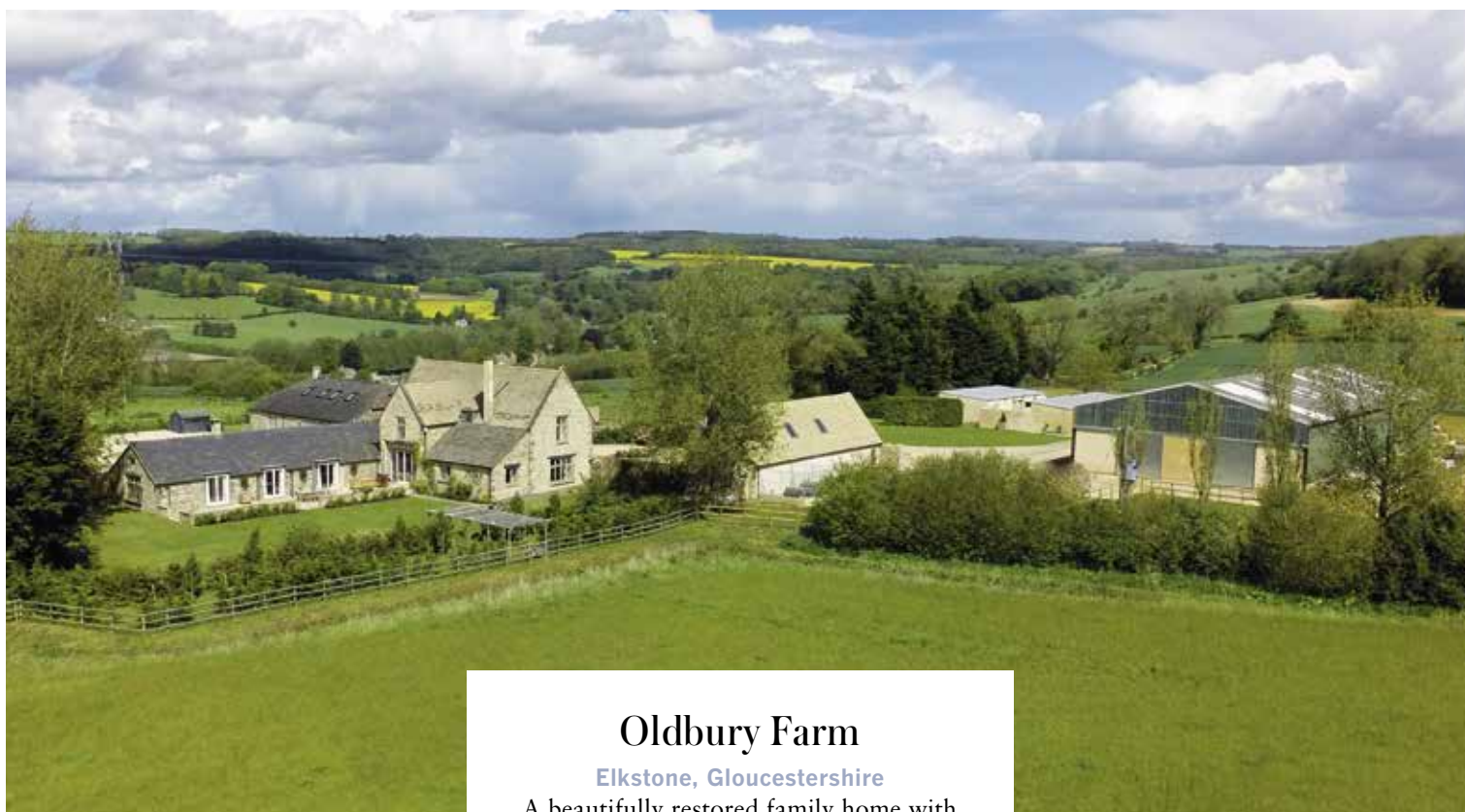


Pipewell Hall

Pipewell, Northamptonshire

An elegant, eight-bedroom Grade II Listed hall that has been recently refurbished with three cottages and 17 acres of gardens and pastures.

Price on application



Oldbury Farm

Elkstone, Gloucestershire

A beautifully restored family home with a good range of outbuildings and glorious views over the surrounding countryside.

Guide: £2,750,000



EAST & SOUTH EAST

*Buyers are seeing excellent
value in properties right across the
region, leading to higher demand
and increased viewings*



A sense of grandeur

Hall Place is one of Britain's most exceptional estates. *Anna Selby* explores a splendid Victorian mansion set in over 1,000 acres of beautiful Kent countryside

If you think that the country estate belongs to a bygone era – the Crawleys' Downton Abbey or Mr Darcy's Pemberley – it might be time to think again. A country estate is now regarded as one of the few places in the modern world where you can have total privacy and seclusion, away from the stress of city life and in a setting large enough to entertain on a grand scale. An estate offers space – and that space can offer, in turn, many possibilities.

Hall Place has all of those possibilities. This is an exceptional Grade II Listed mansion with over 1,000 acres of beautiful Kent countryside. There is a magnificent Grade II* park, which was designed by Lanning Roper (he was landscape gardener, too, for Prince Charles at Highgrove and at Chartwell, the Churchill family home). Not surprisingly, within such a stunning setting, there are spectacular riding trails and, of course, stables.

But that's just the start of the estate's appeal. There are copses for game birds and shooting parties in the autumn. There is a vast lake for fishing and boating on lazy summer days, tennis courts if you're feeling more active and plenty of lawns for croquet. There is even the old peacock house to restore if you have a penchant for exotic birds. The possibilities are endless.

Hall Place itself is built in the Victorian Gothic Revival style, inspired by the churches of the Middle Ages. There had been an earlier house on the site, but the Elizabethan building that stood on the estate when Samuel Morley bought it in 1870 was in ►





Hall Place was designed by leading Victorian architect George Devey

disrepair and he decided to replace it. George Devey, who was later to become one of the inspirations for the Arts & Craft movement, was the architect and Jackson & Graham – whose clients also included Queen Victoria and Napoleon III – were responsible for the interior design and furniture. The house passed to Morley's son, Lord Hollendon, and has remained in the family until now.

Sadly, the family has no direct heirs and, after much soul searching, they have taken the decision to sell. It's the first time Hall Place has been on the market in 145 years, presenting a golden opportunity for its next fortunate owner.

'This is a truly classic English estate,' explains Strutt & Parker's Will Whittaker. 'There's a splendid Victorian house next to a huge lake and a beautiful park surrounding it. It's a very romantic setting, full of surprises. There is a wonderful tower on the east side

of the house with a roof terrace where you can see for miles and the tennis courts have a lovely pavilion, hidden away in a corner of the estate.'

But what of the house itself? Hall Place is a real Victorian architectural gem, filled with magnificent features, especially its beautiful wooden panelling and fine staircases. There are easily 12 bedrooms, as well as spacious reception rooms with far-reaching views across the park. The house sits at the heart of the estate, which ensures total privacy, and yet it is also surprisingly accessible. It is just five miles from the lovely market town of Tonbridge and 40 minutes by train from London.

'It's always been such a family house,' says owner Andrew Hope-Morley. 'As children, we would go-kart on the lawns and swim in the lake. All of our friends would come for weekends and they adored it too.'

The mansion is not, however, the only building on this quintessential English estate. There are seven cottages, a coach house, a clock tower and a lodge at the start of the long drive through the elegant grounds. In fact, everywhere you look there are wonderful details to enjoy, from the ornate bridge over the stream and the sunken tennis courts to the walled kitchen garden and that peacock house.

While any new owner will no doubt want to put a personal stamp on this beautiful old building and update it for contemporary living, this is also an opportunity to own an important part of England's cultural heritage.

'An estate is a very different thing from a country house, however large or stylish that house may be,' says Will Whittaker. 'Hall Place is a truly classic estate in a very English setting. Due to the land, you have privacy and prestige. It really is the ultimate way to enjoy life in the countryside.' ●



Above: the East Lodge and The Kennels cottage. Right, from top: the house was built in the Victorian Gothic Revival style; an ornate bridge spans the lake; the formal garden





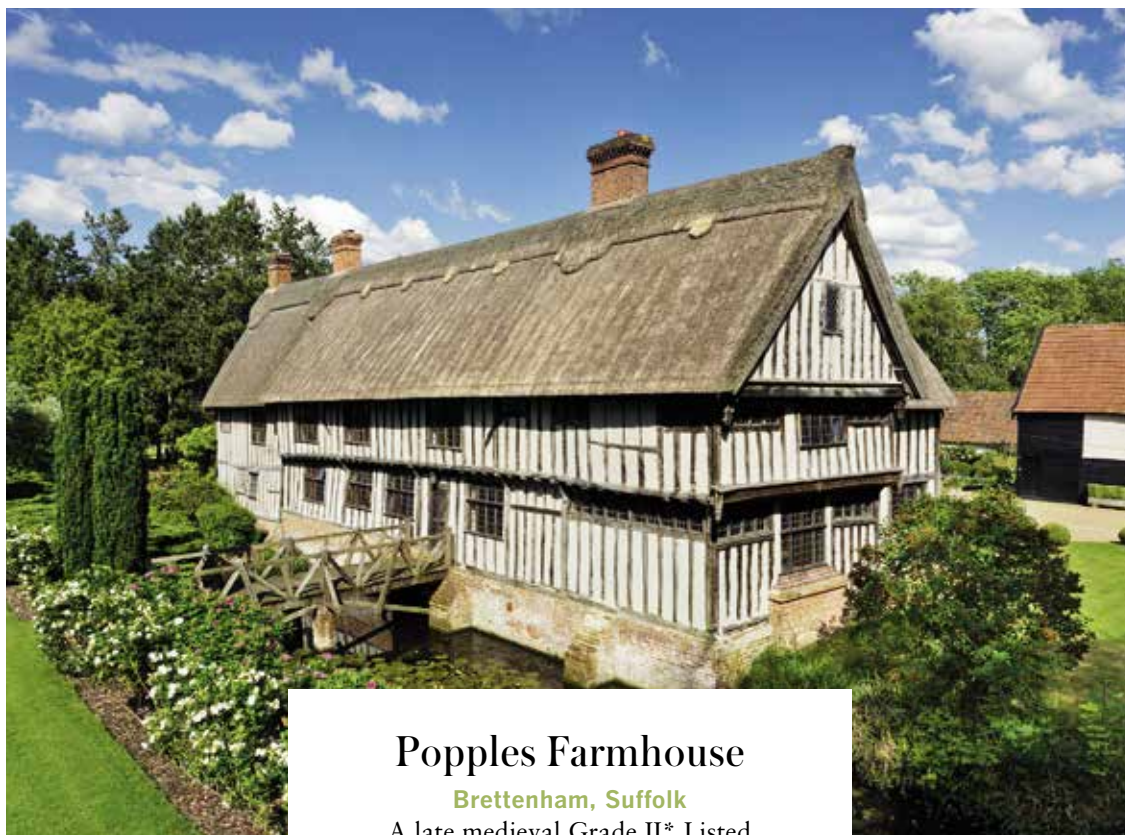


The Laines

Plumpton, East Sussex

This Grade II Listed house, formerly the village rectory, is nestled in an enviable position at the foot of the South Downs.

Guide: £2,950,000



Popples Farmhouse

Brettenham, Suffolk

A late medieval Grade II* Listed house set in more than eight acres of beautiful gardens and grounds.

Offers in excess of £2,000,000





Yaldham Manor

Kemsing, Kent

An exceptional residential estate centred on an historic manor house of about 12,000 sq ft with a medieval great hall.

Guide: £3,500,000

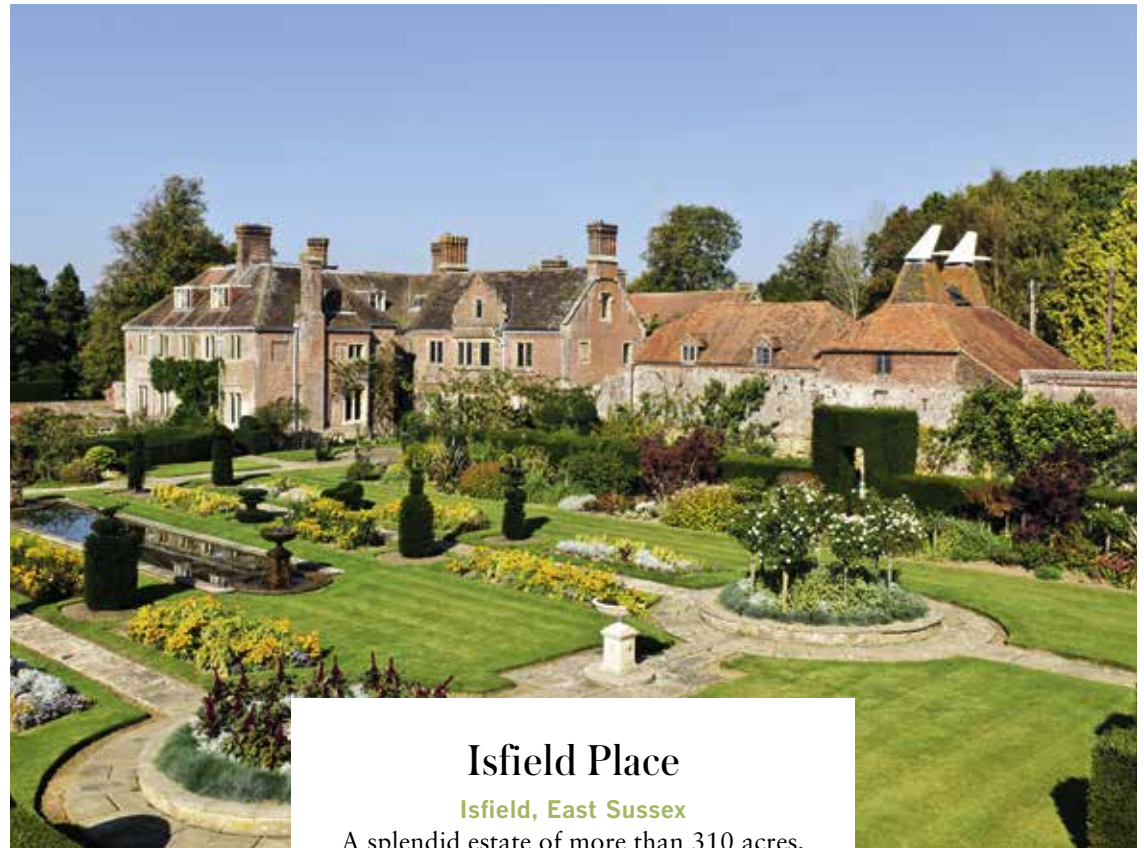


Madehurst Lodge

Madehurst, West Sussex

A Grade II Listed Georgian house of grand proportions, located on the southern slopes of the South Downs National Park.

Price on application

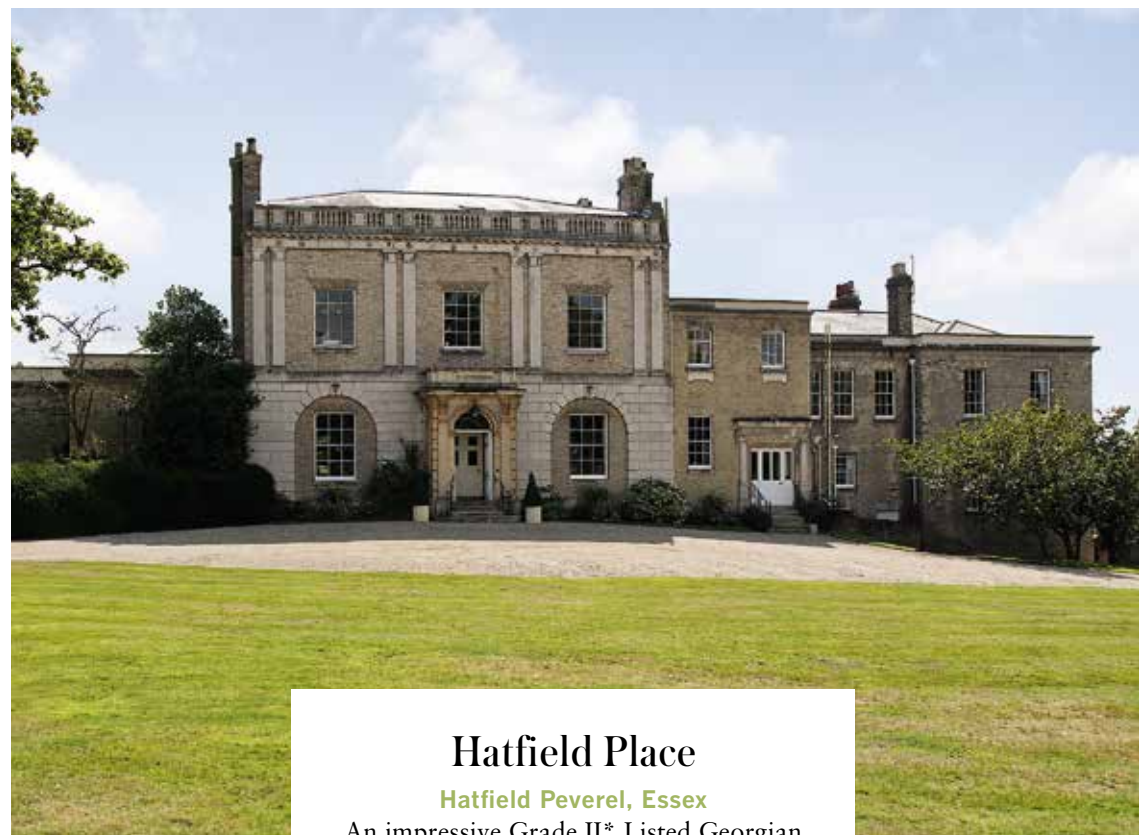


Isfield Place

Isfield, East Sussex

A splendid estate of more than 310 acres, offering complete privacy and security amid rolling, unspoilt countryside.

Guide: £8,950,000

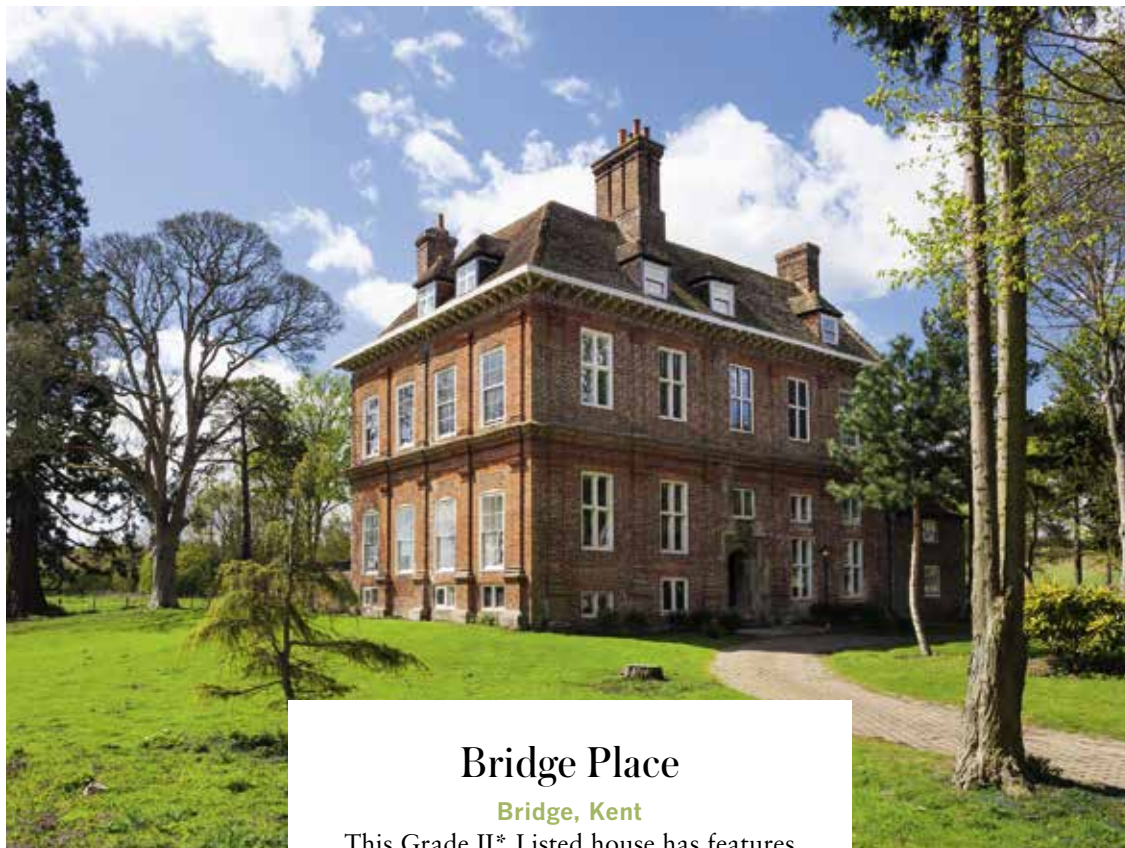


Hatfield Place

Hatfield Peverel, Essex

An impressive Grade II* Listed Georgian country house, with annexe and coach house, set in delightful gardens.

Guide: £2,450,000

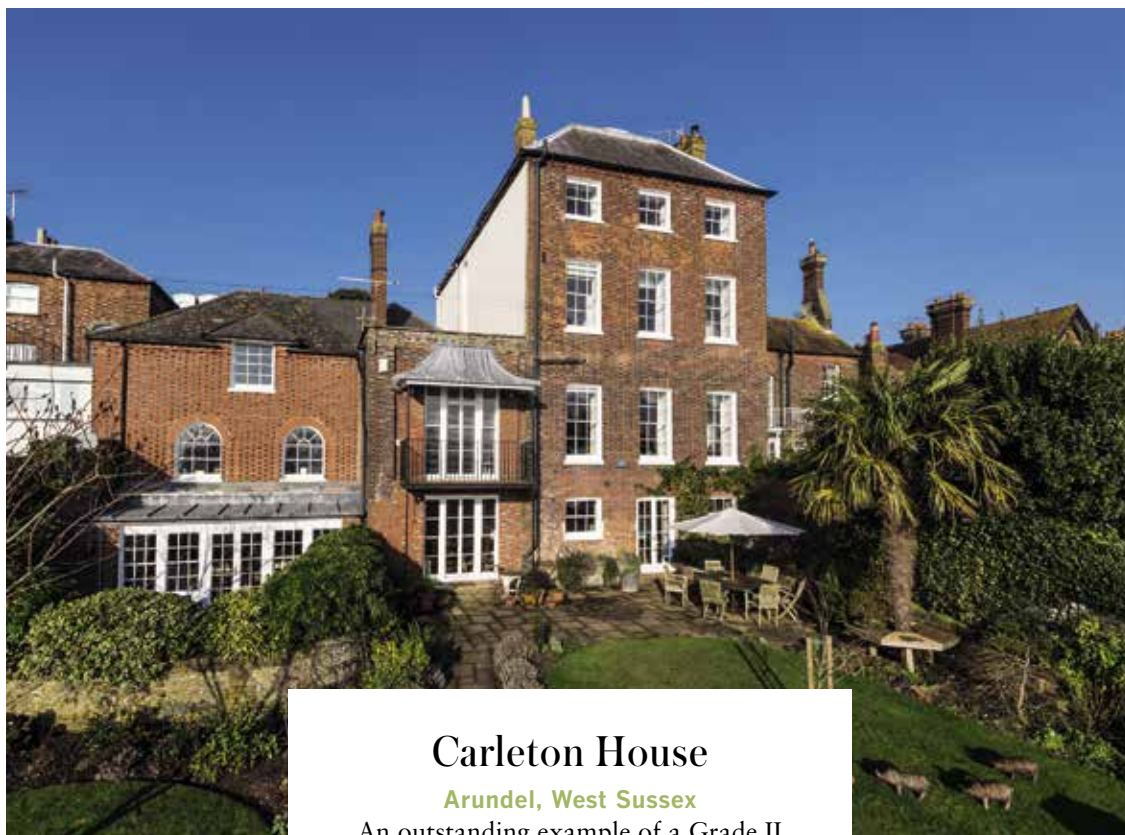


Bridge Place

Bridge, Kent

This Grade II* Listed house has features dating from the 17th century and has been lovingly restored by the current owner.

Price on application



Carleton House

Arundel, West Sussex

An outstanding example of a Grade II Listed townhouse, which has a separate three-bedroom coach house.

Guide: £2,490,000





Stormont Court

Godden Green, Kent

A rare opportunity to acquire this incredibly private and majestic country house just outside Sevenoaks.

Guide: £4,900,000



Mill House

Stowting, Kent

An outstanding Georgian mill house that has been restored and updated with striking 21st-century architectural additions.

Guide: £3,750,000



Woodmancote Place

Henfield, West Sussex

This charming Grade II Listed house seamlessly blends medieval origins and modern facilities in a peaceful setting.

Guide: £7,950,000

SOUTH & SOUTH WEST

*London buyers are once again
relocating to the area. The market
is very active, demonstrating
a high level of confidence*





Chettle House had not been offered for sale in over 150 years



Making history

Chettle House has a fascinating past. *Mark Palmer* discovers how this charming home has evolved over time and why it is about to enter an exciting future

No wonder it took 25 years to build this exquisite manor house; no wonder that great arbiter of architecture, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, described it as the 'plum amongst Dorset houses of the early 18th century and nationally outstanding as a specimen of English baroque'; and no wonder it was chosen as the location for the 2006 film *Amazing Grace* about the heroics of William Wilberforce, along with many other period dramas.

Chettle House is a masterpiece. Like a little-seen work by Gainsborough or Constable, you could almost hear the intake of breath when it came to the market for the first time in more than 150 years. 'Houses of this quality and heritage very rarely become available,' says Strutt & Parker's Edward Lucas, who oversaw the sale. 'It is a beautiful property in a perfect setting, with over 100 acres of gardens and parkland.'

The house, which is Grade I Listed, has quietly evolved over its long life. But it is now about to embark on a whole new adventure. It is currently divided into flats and the sale offers the incoming owner the opportunity to create an updated, single-dwelling family home that is deeply rooted in English history.

There's a reference to Chettle in the Domesday Book under its Old English name of Ceotel, which means kettle, referring to the location of the local village in a deep vale surrounded by hills. A convent was established here in the early 12th century. Many years later, after the dissolution of the monasteries, the estate ►

passed to the Crown, until Elizabeth I sold it to the Chaffin family around 1575. But it wasn't until the 18th century that the current house began to take shape. A descendant of the original owners, George Chaffin MP – who represented Dorset for 41 years – commissioned Thomas Archer, a pupil of the architect Vanbrugh, to replace the Elizabethan manor with a Queen Anne-style house.

The memorably named Bastard brothers from nearby Blandford were hired as the builders and all materials were sourced locally. The bricks were made from local clay and the timbers came from wood felled in the area and seasoned over the course of years.

Archer's distinctive oval design resulted in a magnificent house with elegant proportions and beautifully delicate rounded corners, which are an Archer trademark.

Perhaps the most striking feature inside the house is the glorious central staircase, which is made of oak with turned balustrades and moulded handrail. The two wings of the staircase circle back to meet at the first floor level.

But that is just one of the house's architectural gems. On the ground floor, there is a truly fabulous, south-facing drawing room, which was described by Pevsner as the 'great thrill of the interior'. Its three huge sash windows ensure that it is spectacularly light during the day, showing off the ornate ceiling with mouldings decorated with gold leaf and four painted cherubs, reputedly the work of sculptor Alfred Stevens. Visitors are, quite literally, walking through history as the floorboards are made of planks from HMS Victory.

Upstairs, the boudoir, as it is known, is the star attraction, and for very good reason. It has its own large fireplace, cornicing and gold leaf, as well as delightful views over the gardens and park.

Even the basement at Chettle House is impressive. There is a large space (perfect as a wine cellar), with pillars and vaulted ceiling, and three additional rooms. The kitchen was once in the basement and its fireplace is still there. A stone staircase leads from the basement up through the house to the attic.

Following the death of the last Chaffin without heir, the house was purchased in 1846 by the Castleman family of Wimborne (the hotel in the local village is named after them). They made some changes to the layout, most notably by lowering both the north and south wings. The Bourke family, who decided to sell Chettle House, are relatives of the Castlemans.

'Around every corner of the house there is something remarkable that reflects the rich history of the building,' says Edward Lucas. So it's no wonder the property sold in excess of the guide price just two days after it appeared in *Country Life*. ●



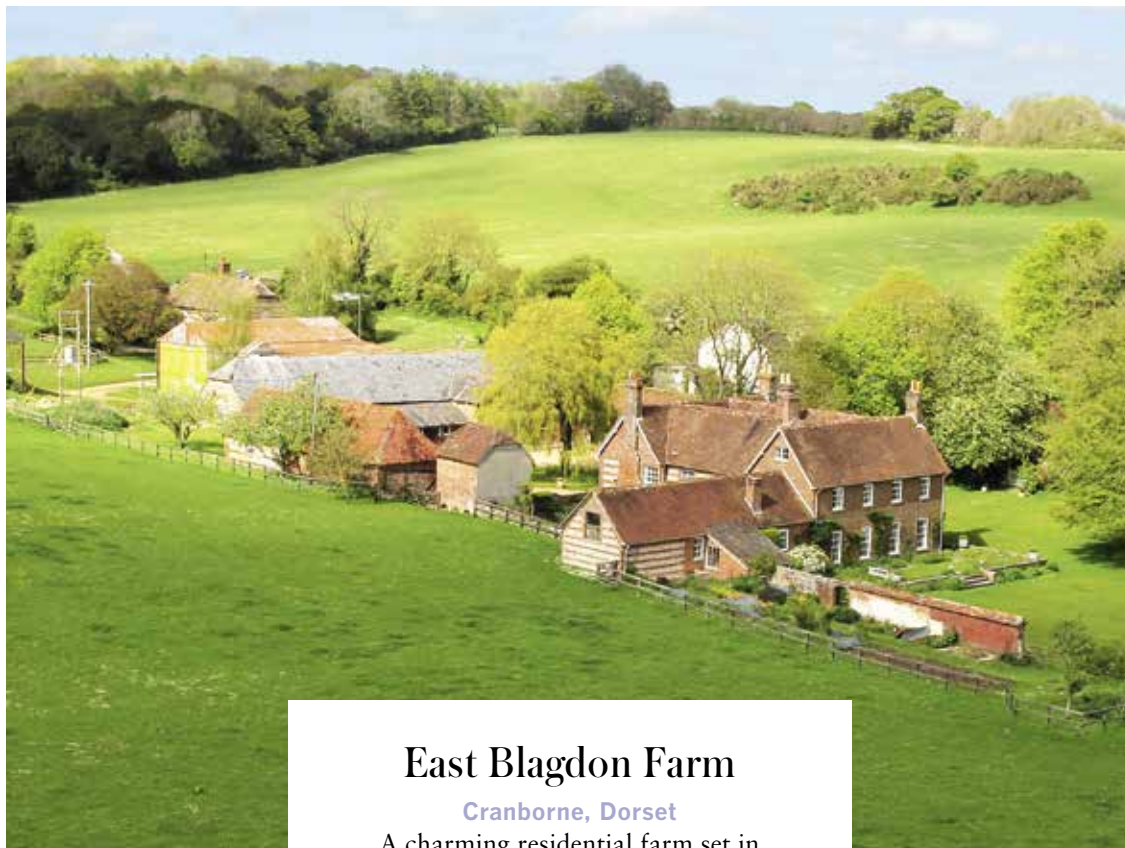
Above: the house is set in over 100 acres of parkland.

Right: the magnificent central staircase sweeps up from the ground floor.

Bottom right: the rooms are filled with natural light







East Blagdon Farm

Cranborne, Dorset

A charming residential farm set in the heart of the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Sold



Furlong

Topsham, Devon

A Grade II Listed former boat house with its own private pontoon, slipway and dry dock, offering extensive views up the Exe Estuary.

Offers in excess of £3,000,000





Mere Down House

[Mere, Wiltshire](#)

A wonderful five-bedroom house that enjoys outstanding views over this very pretty part of Wiltshire.

Price on application

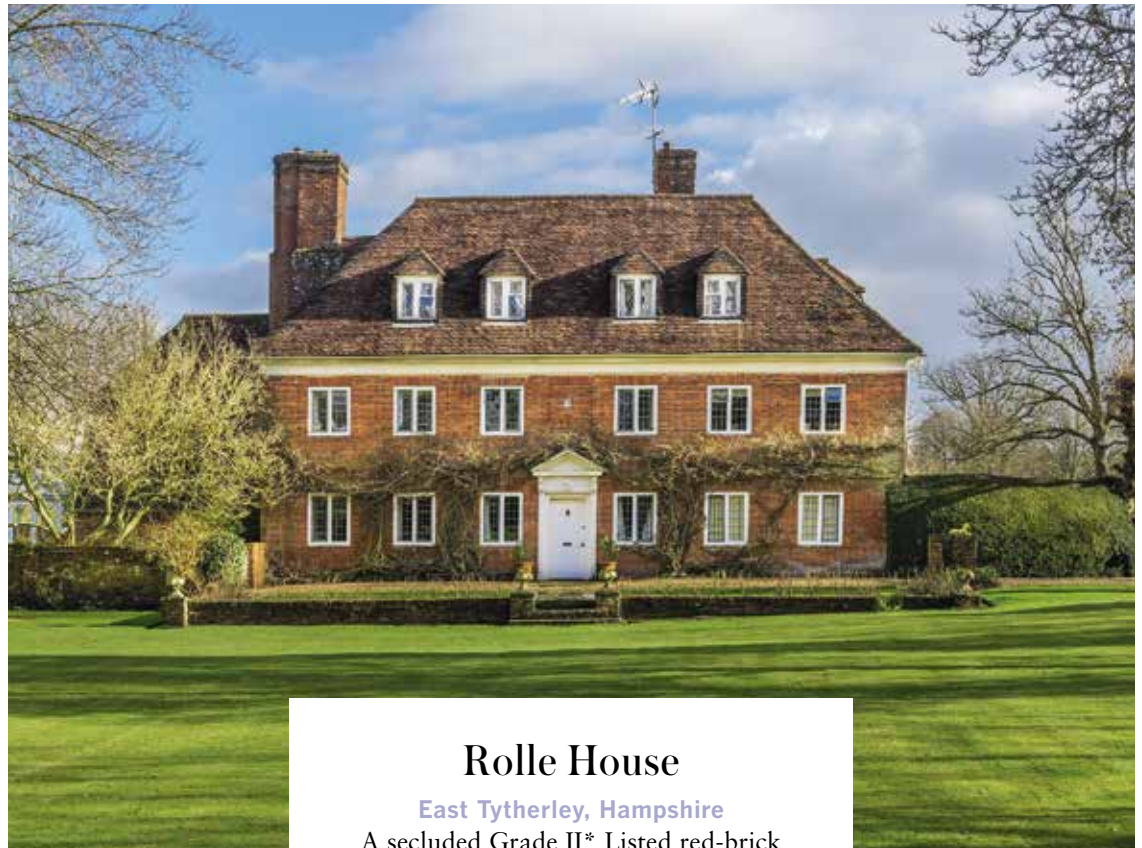


Wilton Place

Wilton, Wiltshire

A very impressive Grade II Listed Georgian country house in the heart of an attractive Wiltshire market town.

Guide: £3,950,000

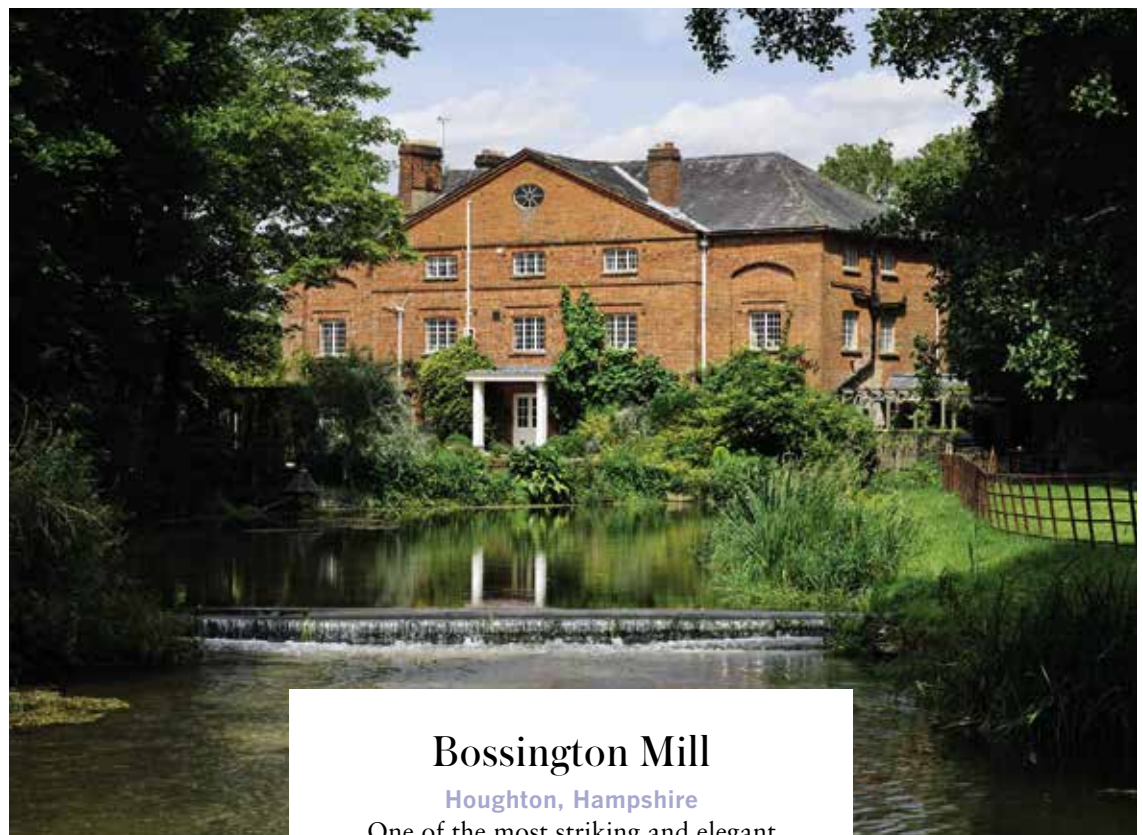


Rolle House

East Tytherley, Hampshire

A secluded Grade II* Listed red-brick house approached via its own electric gate and a sweeping gravel driveway.

Sold

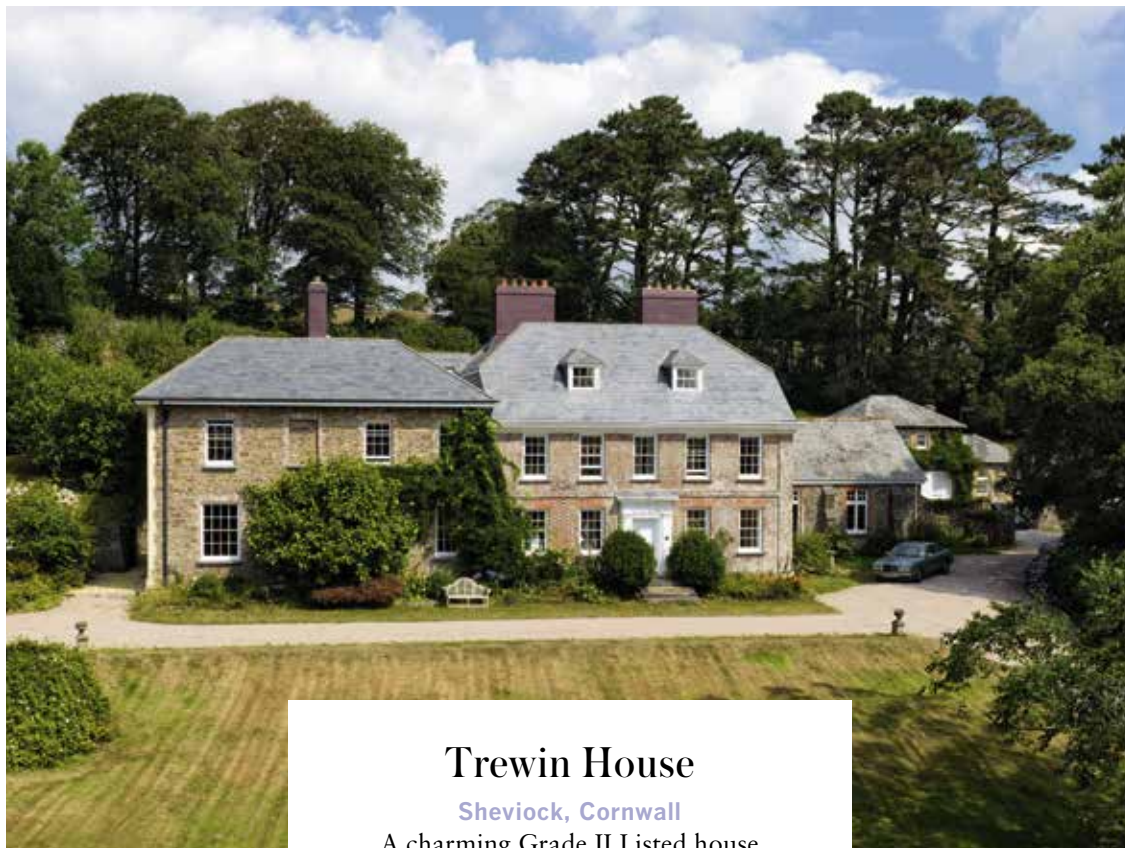


Bossington Mill

Houghton, Hampshire

One of the most striking and elegant houses in the Test Valley, this is a beautiful family home on the River Test.

Guide: £2,400,000

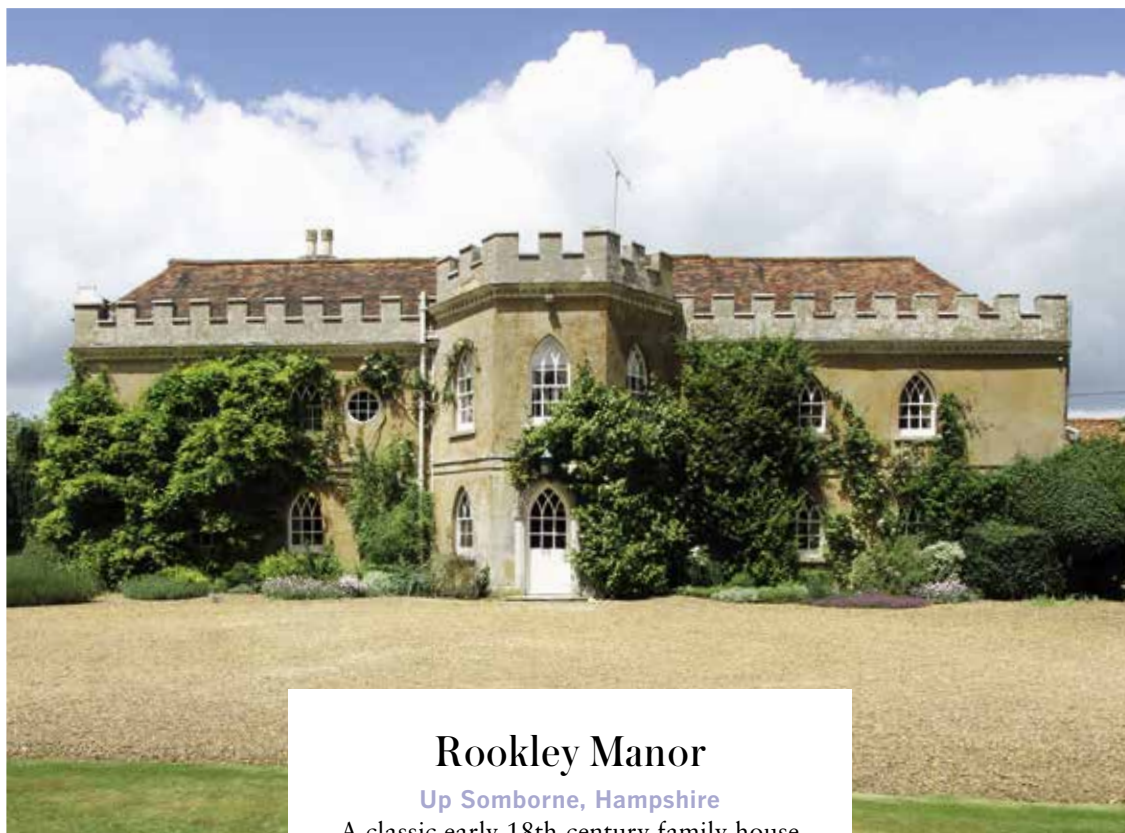


Trewin House

Sheviock, Cornwall

A charming Grade II Listed house dating from the 18th century, situated in the heart of the Cornish countryside.

Guide: £2,350,000



Rookley Manor

Up Somborne, Hampshire

A classic early 18th-century family house with ancillary accommodation, set in grounds of more than 10 acres.

Sold



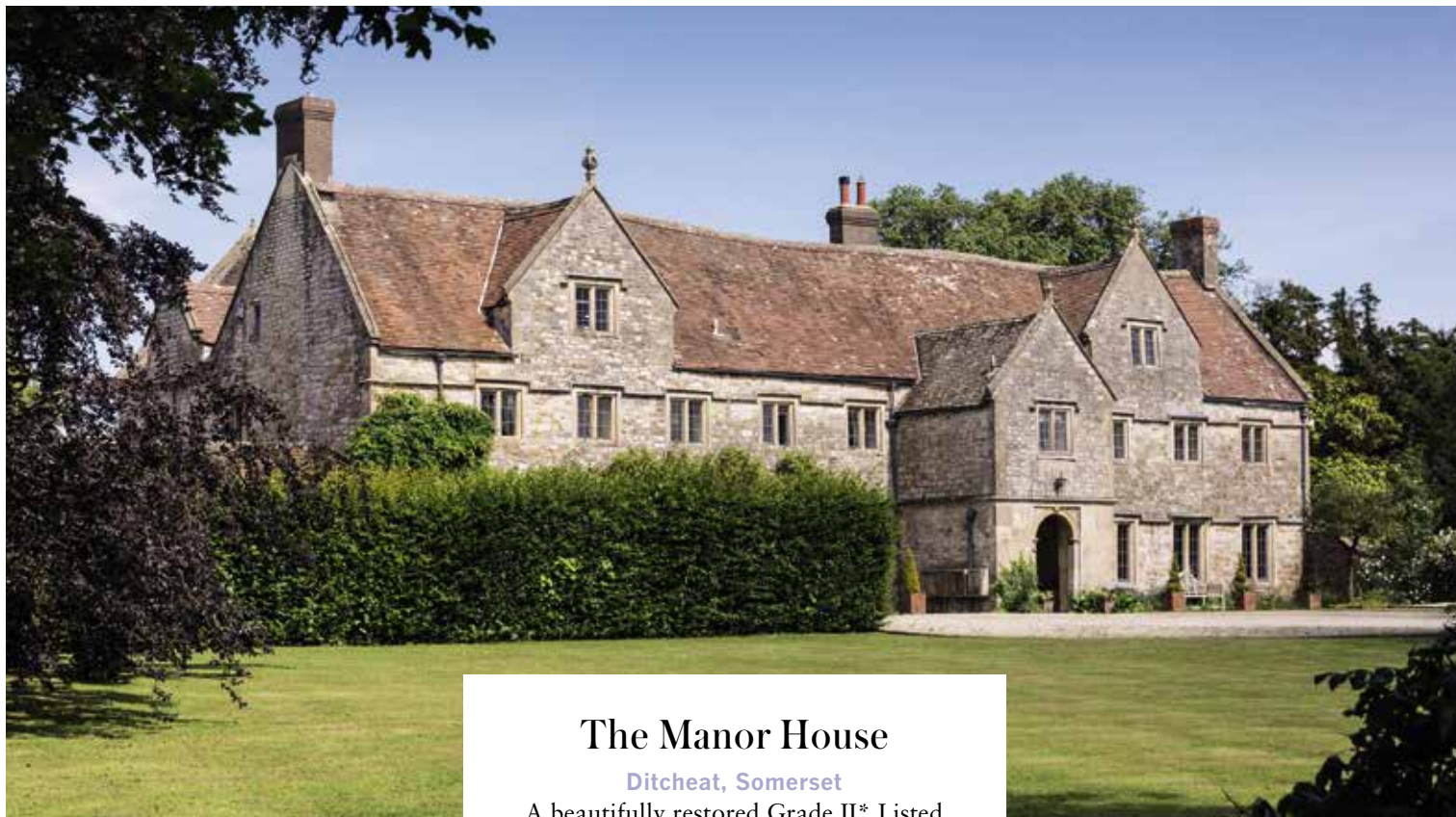


Mamhead House

Mamhead, Devon

A magnificent Grade I Listed late Georgian house with commanding views along the East Devon coastline.

Price on application

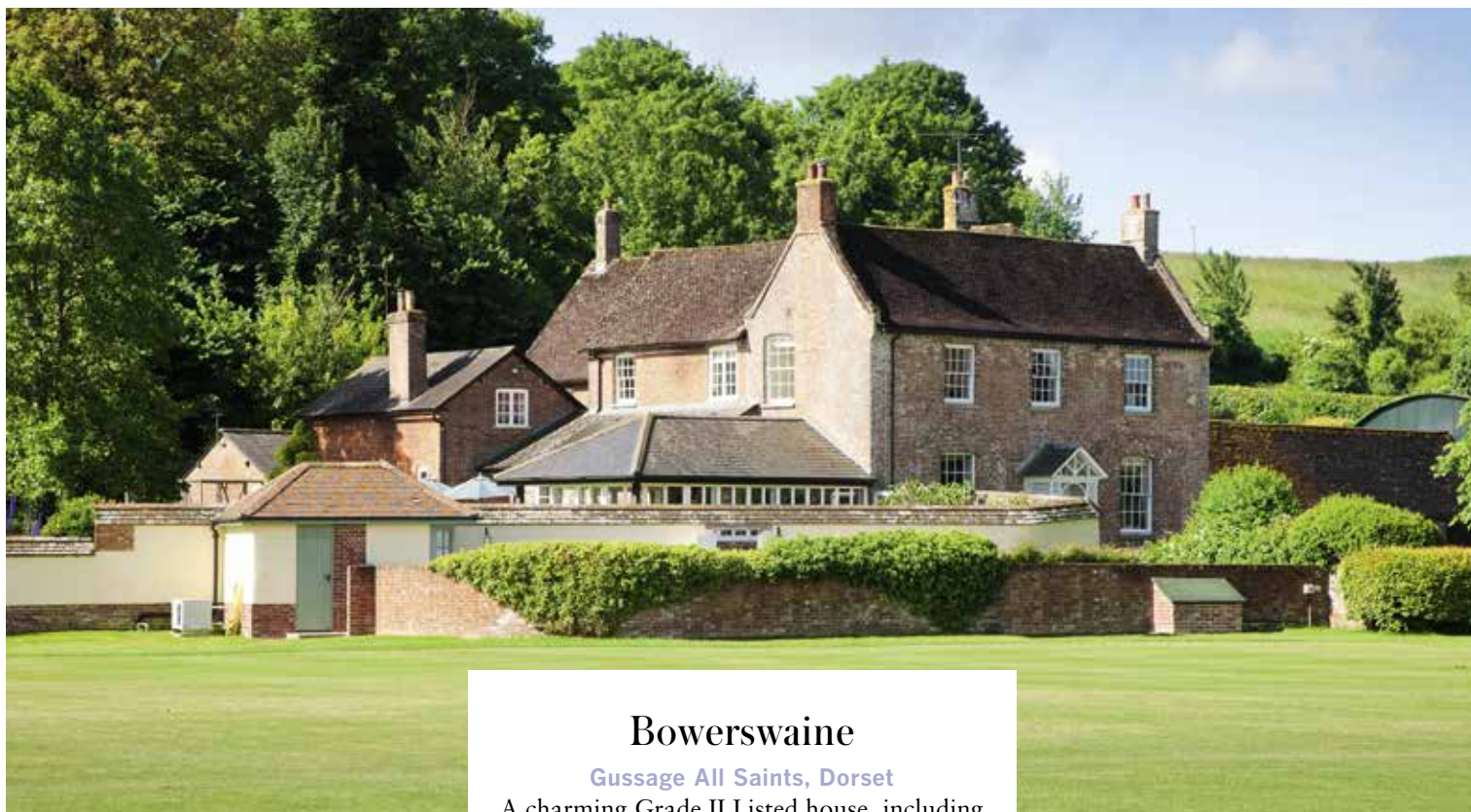


The Manor House

Ditcheat, Somerset

A beautifully restored Grade II* Listed family home in a popular Somerset village that retains many original features.

Guide: £2,950,000



Bowerswaine

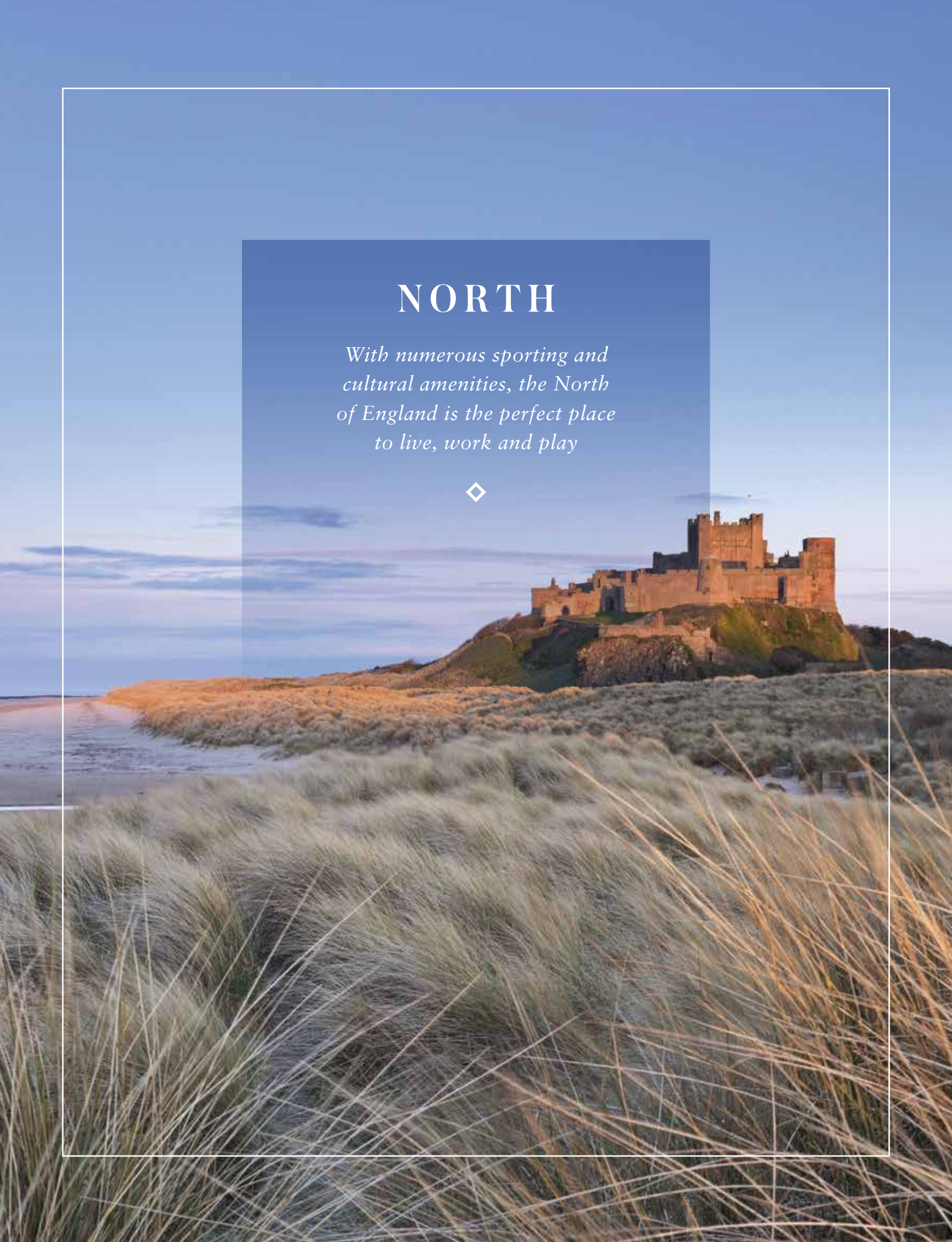
Gussage All Saints, Dorset

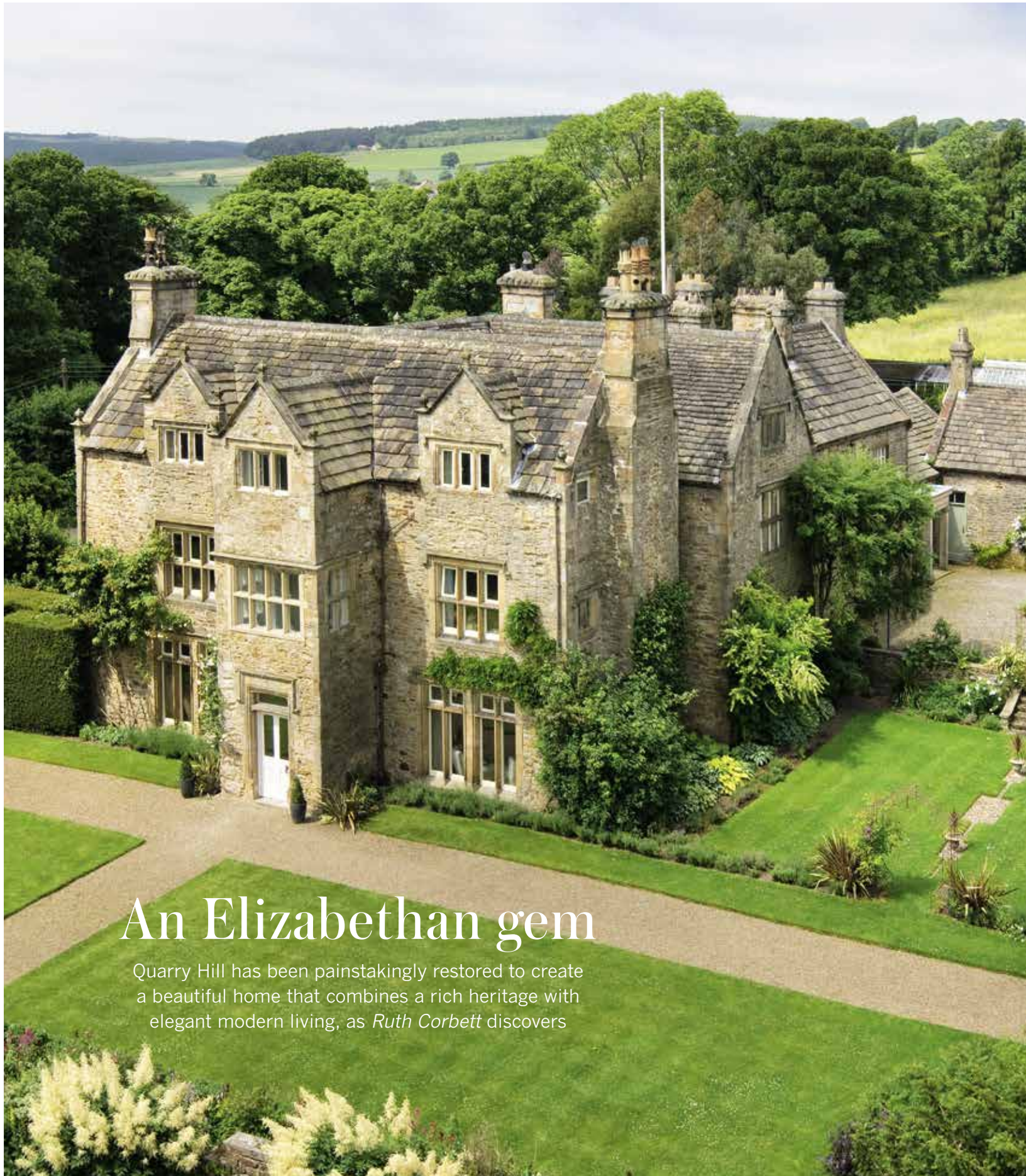
A charming Grade II Listed house, including a full-size county cricket ground and pitch, in an idyllic setting on the Cranborne Chase.

Guide: £2,995,000

NORTH

*With numerous sporting and
cultural amenities, the North
of England is the perfect place
to live, work and play*





An Elizabethan gem

Quarry Hill has been painstakingly restored to create a beautiful home that combines a rich heritage with elegant modern living, as *Ruth Corbett* discovers



Elizabethan manors are a rare commodity in the North East. There are just a handful in the region, one of which, Quarry Hill, in County Durham, is a particularly exquisite example. Built in 1590, this beautiful residence is home to Sir Paul and Lady Sarah Nicholson, who bought the house 40 years ago. 'We have been restoring it for all that time,' explains Lady Sarah.

Grade II* Listed for its historical significance and architectural merit, Quarry Hill was once the dower house to the Brancepeth Castle Estate. A perfect match for the sort of property seen in the BBC's *Wolf Hall*, one can almost hear the whispers about the politics of the day that must have filtered through its handsome chambers.

An extensive programme of maintenance and works has seen the house transformed. There are nine bedrooms and eight bathrooms, a beautifully proportioned drawing room, with views across the garden, and a pretty dining room close to the kitchen. The interior has been sensitively adapted to modern living. Along with a billiard room and a flower room, there's a wine store and a smart hi-fi system that serves the principal rooms.

Samuel Gibson of Strutt & Parker says there really is no downside to this house. 'Sometimes a house might be wonderful, but its grounds are poor, or there are not enough outbuildings, or the property is overlooked,' he says. 'Quarry Hill has outbuildings, greenhouses, a housekeeper's cottage, landscaped gardens and, importantly, is invisible from the road, which is one of its greatest attributes.'

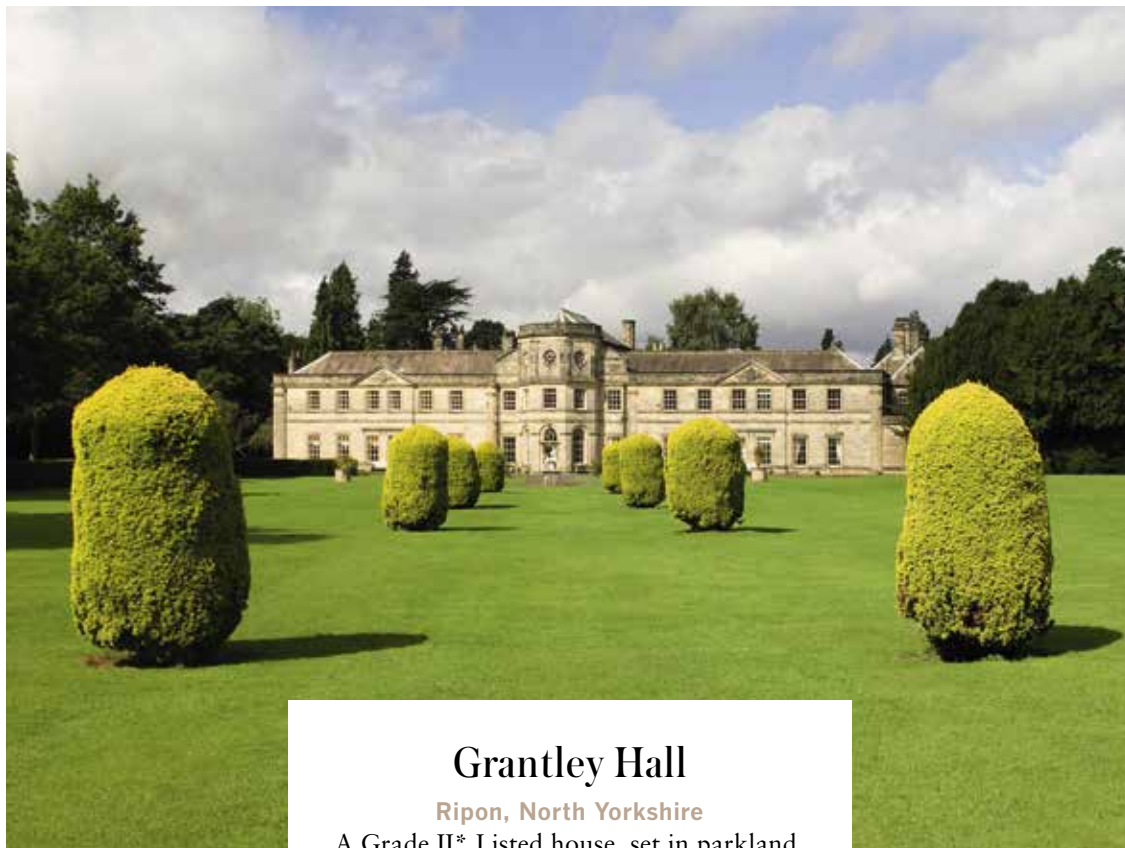
Lady Sarah adds that it is a very easy house to manage, despite its size. 'You can shut off a floor or a certain area when needs be, heating and all, so it is very efficient to run.'

Outside, all of the grounds have been beautifully maintained – the cobbled courtyard, framed by the former stables and housekeeper's cottage, is just one of many charming features. There is a walled garden as well as a working kitchen garden, which produces unusual fruits for these parts, such as quince, medlar and kiwi.

The house is offered with around 3.7 acres, but additional land (around 40 acres) and two cottages are also available by separate negotiation. 'We'll miss it. We've had a wonderful time and a huge amount of fun,' says Lady Sarah. 'But with only the two of us, it's time to let someone else take the reins.' ●



Top: many of the rooms at Quarry Hill enjoy tranquil views over the gardens
Above: the housekeeper's cottage is reached across a cobbled courtyard

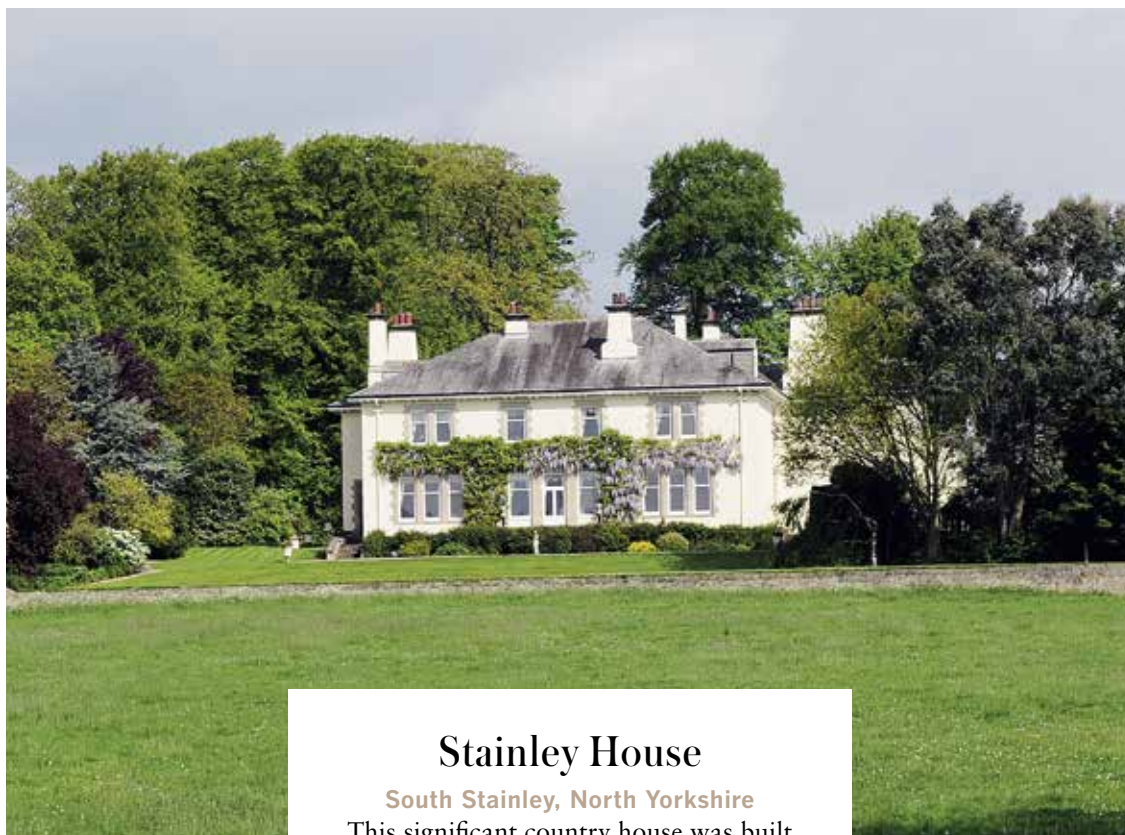


Grantley Hall

Ripon, North Yorkshire

A Grade II* Listed house, set in parkland, that can be used as a residential house or has the potential to be turned into a hotel.

Price on application



Stainley House

South Stainley, North Yorkshire

This significant country house was built in 1906 and is set in unspoilt countryside midway between Harrogate and Ripon.

Guide: £2,500,000





Firby Hall

Firby, North Yorkshire

One of North Yorkshire's finest country houses, Firby Hall stands in beautiful parkland overlooking lakes and open fields.

Sold



The Lowbridge Estate

Selside, Cumbria

An outstanding period country house with lodge and let farm in a secluded setting within the Lake District National Park.

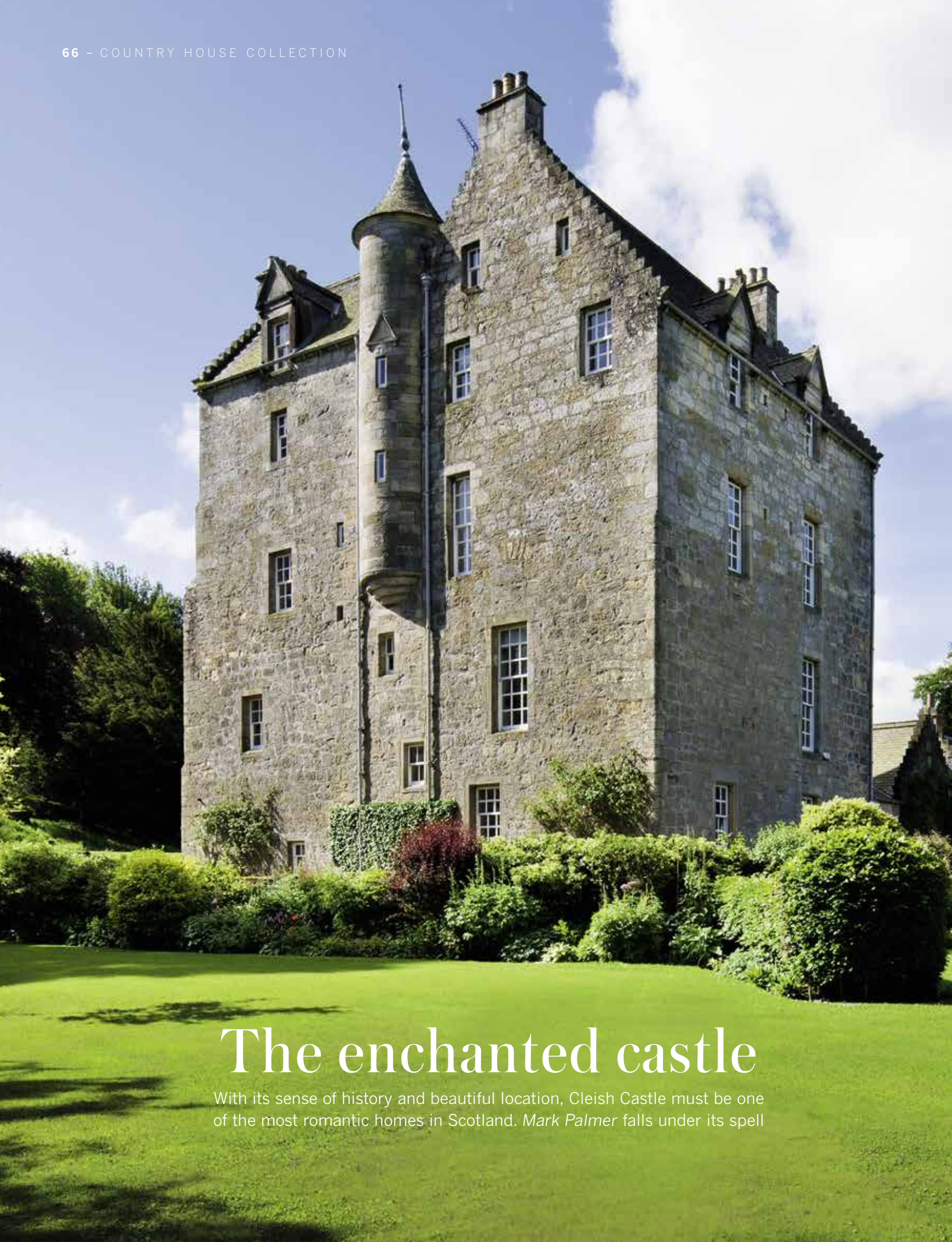
Guide: £3,250,000



SCOTLAND

*With recent political uncertainty
behind us, as well as an exceptional
stock of houses, we look forward to
a brisk market for the rest of 2015*





The enchanted castle

With its sense of history and beautiful location, Cleish Castle must be one of the most romantic homes in Scotland. *Mark Palmer* falls under its spell

Prince Charming might not have been quite such a catch had he been living in a terraced house near a busy road junction. Let's just say that his father's castle came in handy. But, then, all castles have a fairytale air about them. And when they stand on an elevated site in rolling Scottish countryside, with views of a loch laden with trout, but close to one of the most fascinating cities in the world, then they take on an appeal all of their own. Add to the mix both a great sense of history and the easy accommodation of modern living and you have the very definition of desirability.

All this and more awaits at Cleish Castle in Kinross-shire – a mere half an hour from Edinburgh. The castle is most likely more than 500 years old – there is a reference to an Archibald Meldrum of Cleish in 1466. After the Meldrums, it passed to the Colvilles, who on, 2 May 1568, sheltered Mary Queen of Scots after her escape from nearby Loch Leven Castle. Then, over the next few hundred years it variously changed hands. It was enlarged at the beginning of the 17th century and then renovated and further updated in the mid-1800s and again in the 1970s, winning several prestigious awards in the process.

Crucially, the present owners have added a single-storey south wing, which blends superbly with the rest of the property. In fact, you might easily think this extension has been around for centuries.

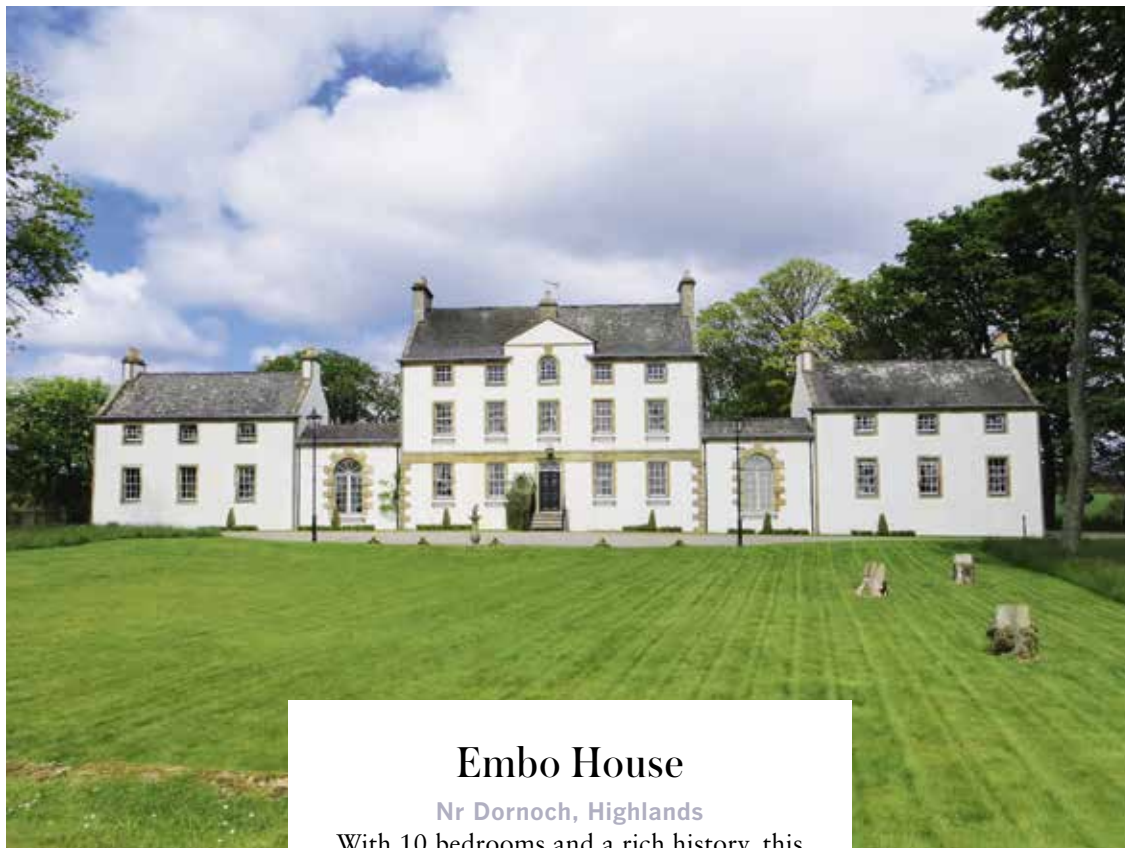
'Cleish has been transformed from a proper castle keep to a modern family home – a transformation that has been achieved tastefully and seamlessly,' explains Strutt & Parker's Malcolm Leslie. 'It's a classic of its kind and properties like this seldom come on to the market.'

There are eight bedrooms over five storeys. The magnificent drawing room is on the first floor, which is across the landing from the library with its distinctive painted ceiling. Each of the floors is connected via a spiral staircase. In a nod to modern living, there is also a lift.

Outside is no less impressive. Cleish has Scotland's oldest yew walk, dating from 1620-1640. The main lawn, surrounded on two sides by terracing, was probably originally set out as an archery lawn with the targets placed on the lower terrace. There is also a beech maze, planted in 2006, and in true fantasy castle-style, a small burn runs through the grounds. Cinderella surely would be smitten. ●



Main picture: the castle is set in peaceful gardens. From left: the interiors have been meticulously refurbished; the spiral staircase links all the floors



Embo House

Nr Dornoch, Highlands

With 10 bedrooms and a rich history, this 18th-century A Listed manor house has been sensitively updated to a high standard.

Price on application



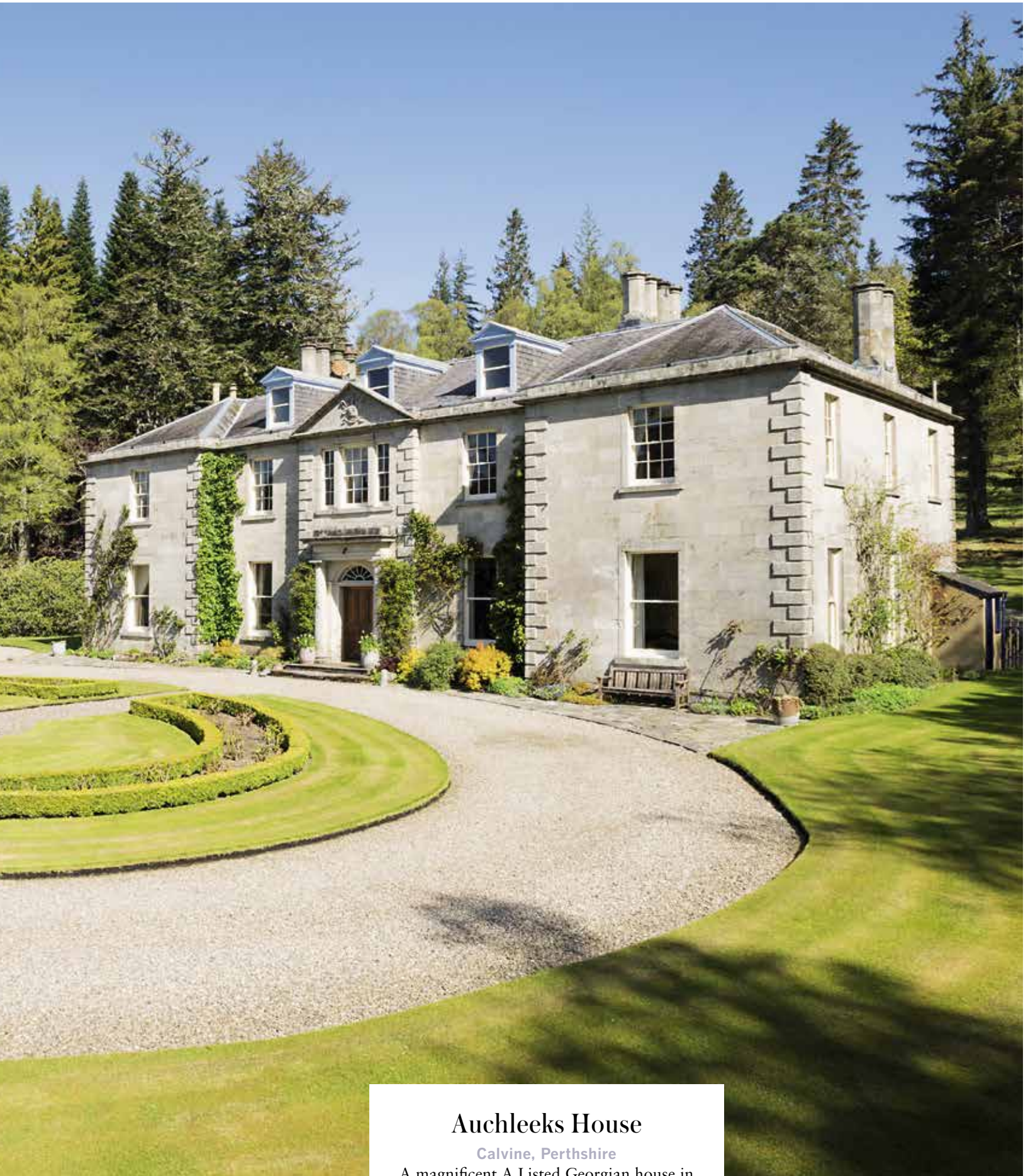
Stracathro Mansion House

Brechin, Angus

This estate includes a grand Palladian-style mansion house, coach house, six terraced cottages, arboretum and ponds.

Price on application



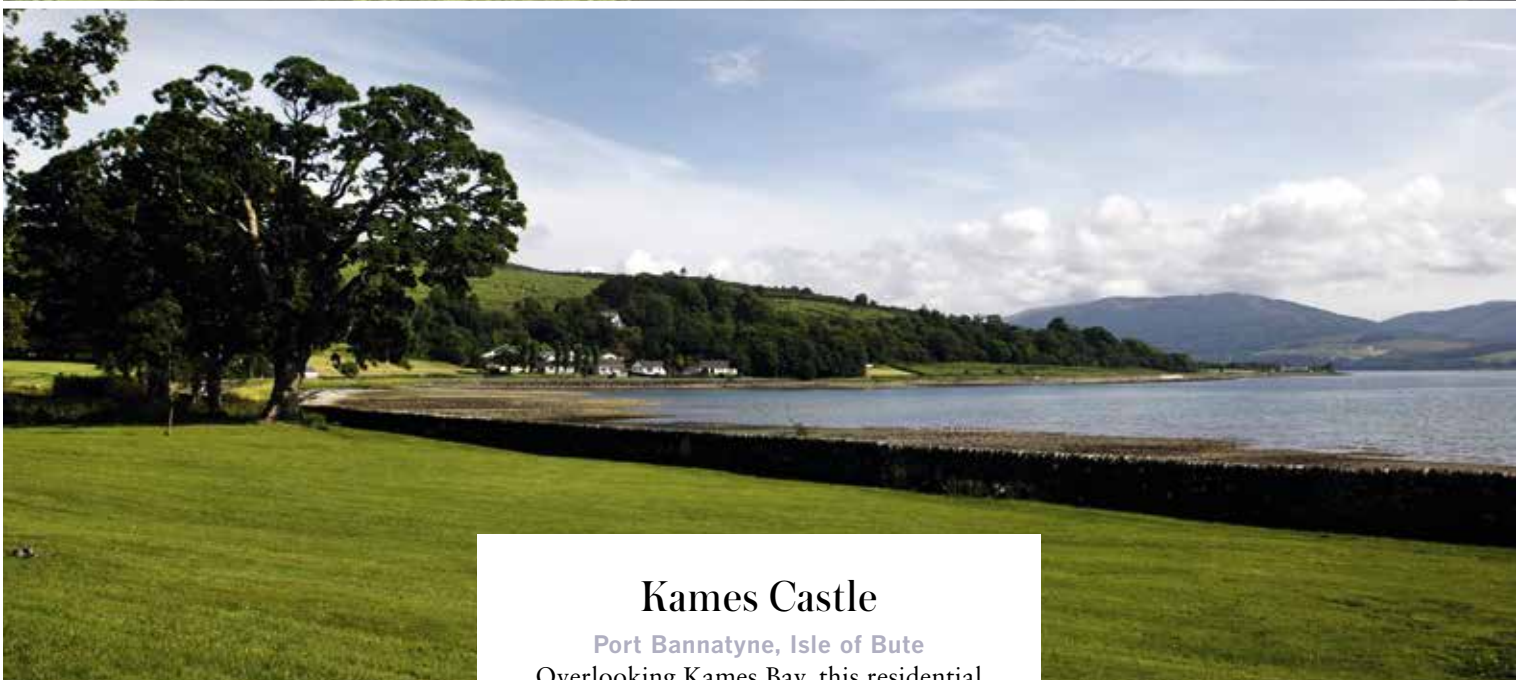


Auchleeks House

Calvine, Perthshire

A magnificent A Listed Georgian house in the Highlands, set in about 30 acres and including a two-bedroom cottage.

Price on application



Kames Castle

Port Bannatyne, Isle of Bute

Overlooking Kames Bay, this residential estate includes a 14th-century keep, eight cottages, outbuildings and a walled garden.
Price on application

An aerial photograph of a tropical beach. In the foreground, several tall palm trees stand on a lush green area. Beyond them is a wide, sandy beach that curves along the shoreline. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, with visible coral reefs and sandbars beneath the surface. The sky is a deep blue, and the overall scene is bright and sunny.

INTERNATIONAL

*As the sole UK affiliate of
Christie's International Real Estate,
Strutt & Parker is part of a property
network that spans 46 countries*





A little piece of paradise

When it comes to getting away from it all, nothing quite matches Tavern Island. With an immaculate house and private beach, it is the ultimate in waterside living, as *Cherry Maslen* discovers



If true luxury is being able to do whatever you want, without concerning yourself about the neighbours, then owning your own private island must be the ultimate indulgence. Tavern Island, just off the New England coast from the pretty seaport village of Rowayton, is a delightful retreat – three and a half acres of lush greenery, trees waving in the ocean breeze and three perfect little beaches.

In the middle of the island sits an immaculate, six-bedroom house, built more than 100 years ago but updated with state-of-the-art kitchen and bathrooms. It has ocean views from every room. The sitting room, which has a huge stone fireplace, is at the heart of the 6,000 sq ft home, with two floors of bedrooms above, including the master suite with expansive dressing area, two offices, exercise room and steam room. Moments from the house is the spectacular infinity pool, which has more glorious sea views.

Meticulous care has also gone into the two-bedroom, two-bathroom caretaker's cottage, ideal for guests, and the charming boathouse, rebuilt in the 1990s, which also has a guest bedroom as well as a games room. The island has had no shortage of famous guests, with dramatist and screenwriter Lillian Hellman staying in the caretaker's cottage in the 1930s, where it is believed she finished writing the Academy Award-nominated *The Little Foxes*.

But the liveliest parties on Tavern Island were undoubtedly during the 1950s and 1960s, when legendary theatre impresario and songwriter Billy Rose owned the property. He invited the stars of Hollywood and Broadway – Marilyn Monroe, Maureen O'Sullivan, Barbra Streisand – to enjoy the island's idyllic seclusion and views. From a little summerhouse, known as the 'teahouse', perched on the edge of the island, you can see the bright lights of New York sparkling after dark.

The current owners of Tavern Island have lived there happily full-time for more than 30 years. Now that their family has grown up, they want to find another family who will love this romantic and unique spot as much as they have.

'It is so magical, so serene and so calm that it's hard to believe it's just an hour's drive from New York City,' says Connecticut agent Rick Higgins, who knows the property well. 'I can vouch for the amazing sunsets over the harbour of Rowayton, which are part of the daily experience.' ●



Main picture: Tavern Island is in an idyllic location. Top and above: all of the buildings, including the teahouse and the elegant main residence, have been meticulously restored

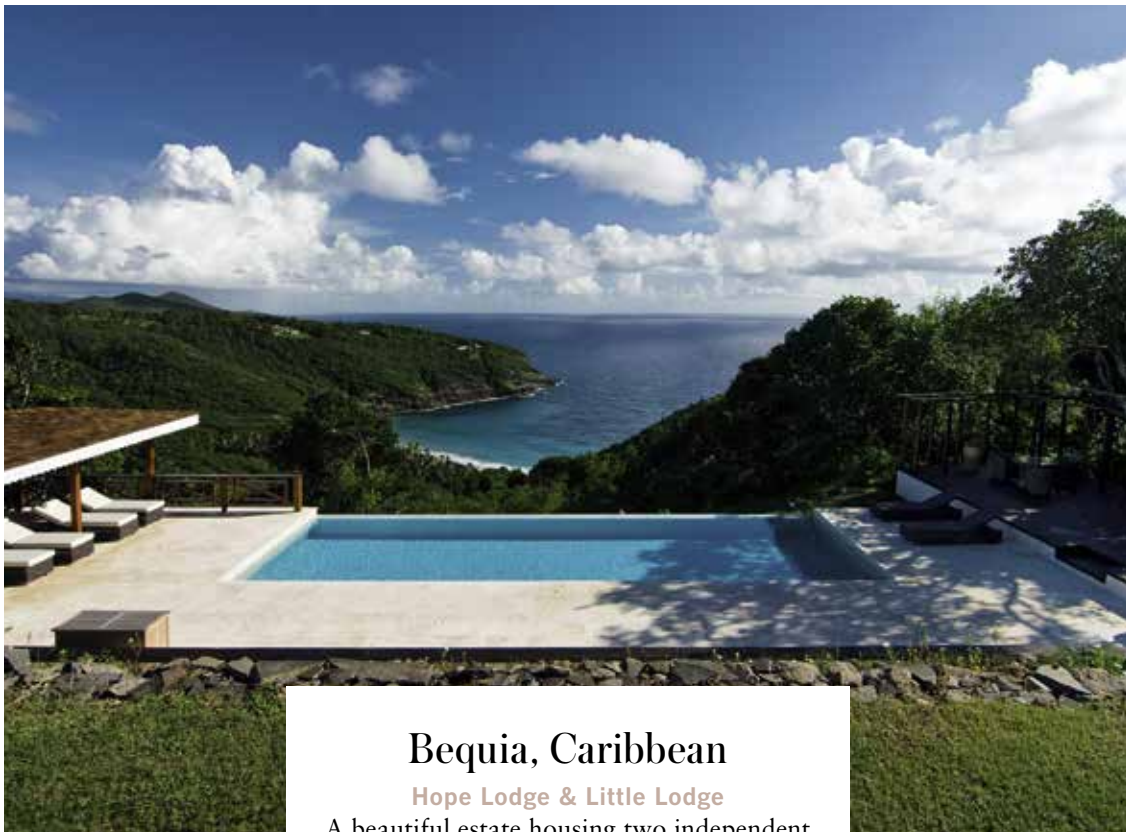


New South Wales, Australia

Lady Wakehurst Drive

With an exceptional sense of privacy, this four-bedroom, four-bathroom property enjoys wonderful Pacific Ocean views.

Guide: AU\$3,600,000



Bequia, Caribbean

Hope Lodge & Little Lodge

A beautiful estate housing two independent properties (offered as one but available separately) overlooking a pristine beach.

Guide: US\$10,000,000





Poitiers, France

Historic chateau

A 19th-century chateau of rare elegance that offers over 900 sq m of living space over four floors.

Guide: €6,900,000

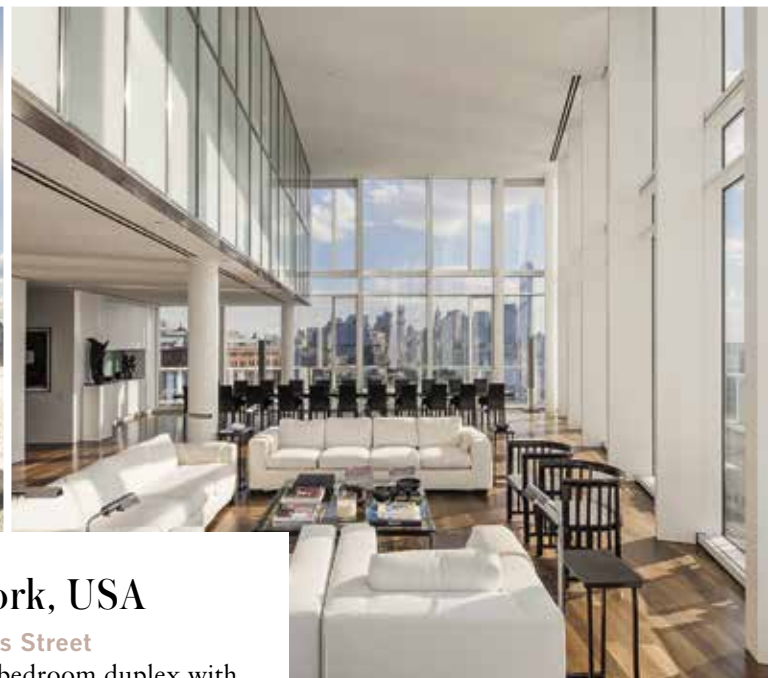


Western Cape, South Africa

Franschhoek

An outstanding home in one of the world's most beautiful wine producing valleys with accommodation for up to 16 people.

Guide: ZAR84,000,000



New York, USA

Charles Street

An incredible, four-bedroom duplex with a wraparound terrace offering magnificent entertaining space and breathtaking views.

Guide: US\$40,000,000



Sarah Parsons

'Not many people who work in Berkeley Square have a pair of wellies by their desk'



Mark Rimell

'Every day brings challenges, but there's no better reward than exceeding expectations'

Meet the team

Strutt & Parker's Country Department shares new ideas, expertise and contacts to deliver truly outstanding results for its clients



James Mackenzie

'It matters that the correct decisions are taken for our clients, even if that takes time'



Toby Webb

'I'm lucky enough to see some of the most beautiful country houses in the UK'



Olivia McGhee

'We bounce ideas off each other and we genuinely get on really well together'

"Selling a country house isn't just about finding a buyer – it's about finding the right buyer"



Matthew Sudlow

'The diversity of the job is quite special – there is never a dull moment'





William Whittaker

'We're big enough to cover the UK but small enough to provide a personal service'



Edward Lucas

'I love property as well as driving, which helps because I do over 40,000 miles a year'



Sarah-Jane Petherick

'We care about each and every job – it really matters that we get things right'



“We have a bigger view than an agency that is working purely at a local level”

Mark McAndrew

'Selling a client's most valuable asset is both a privilege and a responsibility'

Nicola Craddock

'Maintaining trust is vital to create relationships that will last for decades'



Andrew Russell

'The team has the ability to provide brilliant coverage and an all-encompassing service'



Liza Howden

'We punch well above our weight and always strive to achieve the best for clients'



Luke Morgan

'We are seen as people our clients trust and like, rather than estate agents'



These are very exciting times for the country house market. More London buyers have started to unlock equity to purchase a dream home outside the capital, while increasing numbers of international buyers are drawn to the privacy offered by a beautiful country house.

Despite this increase in interest, especially now that the uncertainty of the election has faded, the country market still presents challenges. This is a unique market, based around distinctive homes and discerning buyers, which means that selling a country house isn't just about finding a buyer – it's about finding the right buyer.

'While there is a lot of positive movement in the market, achieving a successful sale still takes expertise, excellent contacts and an experienced team that is prepared to work hard,' says James Mackenzie, Head of the Country Department at Strutt & Parker. 'We bring all of these key elements together, which is why we have earned a reputation as people who get the job done.'

According to Luke Morgan, who is a Partner in the Country House Department, much of that success is down to the way the team works.

'We have four teams responsible for different parts of the country who liaise with all the offices in that area,' he explains. 'Everyone in these teams has a direct connection with the places that they cover – they work there, live there or have

family there. This kind of in-depth knowledge of a location is quite unique and it really helps us to get under the skin of an area, because we really do live and breathe it.'

This local knowledge is balanced by Strutt & Parker's national reach. 'As we have an overview of the country house market right across the UK, and of buyers throughout the UK and beyond, we have a bigger view than an agency that is working at a purely local level,' says James. 'Crucially, we know what needs to be done to prepare a property to go on the market, and how to make the sale happen.'

In today's country house market, especially the top end, there are four different types of buyers that sellers need to reach – local, London, national and international. 'While the local office will have access to local buyers, we can access the other 75% of the market,' explains James.

That access is, in part, down to an exclusive relationship with Christie's International Real Estate, a luxury property network with nearly 1,350 offices in 46 countries, which allows Strutt & Parker to showcase their portfolio around the world. But perhaps equally important is the art auction side of Christie's. 'International clients in town to bid on an important painting might well pick up a magazine that features some of our property,' says James. 'Increasingly they're seeing a country house in England as a good investment.'



Left to right: Matthew Sudlow, Olivia McGhee, William Whittaker, Luke Morgan, Nicola Craddock, Sarah-Jane Petherick, James Mackenzie, Mark McAndrew, Mark Rimell, Sarah Parsons, Liza Howden, Andrew Russell, Edward Lucas, Toby Webb



Above: The team has developed a close partnership with Christie's International Real Estate

Many of these international buyers don't have preconceptions about precise locations, so they can benefit from the unique way in which the Country House team works.

'Expats and international clients often do not have fixed ideas about where they want to live,' says James. 'They might specify distance from London, the style of house they're after and that good local schools are important, but they're not set on exactly where. So when we get together as a team every Tuesday and talk about new buyers, we can look at introducing them to areas they might not have previously considered.'

Building relationships with potential buyers is at the heart of the Strutt & Parker philosophy. 'There is so much marketing media now at our disposal – glossy brochures and magazines, Twitter, internet databases – that sometimes it's easy to lose sight of the fact you're dealing with

A private view

OFF-MARKET SALES PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PRIME COUNTRY HOUSE MARKET

'Not everyone who is selling a country house wants the details of their property splashed all over the papers,' says James Mackenzie. 'That's why we have built a reputation for selling houses quietly and in confidence.'

Although private selling isn't for everyone, it can be an attractive option for those who want to achieve a good price while attracting the minimum publicity. Around half of the properties that are handled by the Country House team go on sale privately.

'Part of our success in this area is because we have access to buyers who are just as keen to keep details of their transactions private as the sellers are,' explains James. 'A lot of our private sales come about because of the role that members of the team have as individuals in their communities. We know the properties, we socialise with the people who live in them, and very often we'll know if they might be open to selling, if we have a buyer who might be interested.'

a lifestyle choice which is quite an emotional decision,' says Luke. 'That's where I think we are a bit different. While we do often use these incredibly valuable platforms to market a property, what we also do is pick up the phone and talk to the buyers who we've built up a relationship with, buyers who trust us.'

For Luke, that trust is based on going the extra mile – driving to a station to pick up or drop off a prospective buyer – or even advising buyers not to buy properties that he doesn't think will be right for them.

'Building up a good relationship means that when you do find the right property for them they know they can trust you,' he says.

It also means that sellers can feel secure that Strutt & Parker will do whatever is necessary to complete a sale. James Mackenzie recalls an instance when the buyers of a property said they would only take the house if the sellers would leave their pigs behind.

'But the sellers were adamant that they were taking their livestock with them, so Mark Rimell in our team took the potential buyers to market and bought them two pigs,' says James. 'The sale of the property went through and the buyers were so pleased, they named one "Strutt" and the other "Parker".'

It is just one example of how original thinking, dedicated service and unwavering commitment have helped the Country House Team to deliver outstanding results. ●

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