

mse

chartered surveyors
and estate agents

issue one

home2home

Move in the right direction



Michael Ginsberg

A Very Happy Christmas

As in previous years MSE have refrained from sending cards and have chosen instead to donate £500 to Shooting Star CHASE the fantastic local charitable hospice service supporting local families with a child or teenager not expected to reach their 19th birthday.

We would like to take this opportunity of wishing them continued success in the indispensable work they do.

CHASE
hospice care for children
Registered Charity No. 1042491



Good news – it's Christmas!

In the news this year; everything from wars in Afghanistan and Libya, riots in London, tsunami in Japan, Murdoch, Rugby World cup scandal and unprecedented financial uncertainty; no shortage of news.

However, looking around us in the Guildford, Godalming and Cranleigh areas in which we operate, there is much to celebrate. MSE has enjoyed another busy year and this is the first of a regular series of newsletters, "home2home", written specifically for existing clients and supporters of the company who have an interest in what we have been doing and our plans for the future in 2012.

Future editions will focus on the Residential and Commercial markets and changes in rules and regulations from the practical perspective in which we operate as agents, surveyors and property

managers. We hope this will be of interest to our clients and that a regular newsletter will also keep clients informed about changes in the company and the efforts we are constantly making to monitor and improve the way in which we operate.

In Property Management for example, a new Contractors Charter has been implemented this year, defining minimum standards and expectations of contractors' service to MSE and our management clients. Our focus in the department is always improving communications in all respects, as this is the essence of good management. Property management clients will have noticed the new property inspection reports, which we hope are of benefit and, to help further in minimizing arrears of rent, from the New Year, we will be accepting rents by credit or debit card, to assist tenants, where cash-flow is an issue.

Readers of the Surrey Advertiser and Surrey Times, will have noticed a new fresher look for MSE. The offices too have been freshened up and redecorated and the transition to using "MSE", consolidated; you will notice the first use of the new logo, in this Newsletter.

One particular success this year has been the growing survey and valuation work we have undertaken and we are grateful to our clients and for the referrals received from the professional and business community. In an expansion of the department, we are separating Survey from the Commercial Surveyors. This will pave the way for further expansion of the Commercial Department in 2012 with the planned recruitment of a dedicated Agency Surveyor to work alongside Tim, Richard and Margie.

Strength in depth across residential and commercial disciplines is something of a USP for MSE and the broad advice we are able to give owners and investors. For us and many of our clients, this is not the first downturn we have experienced and although each is different, they have all been cyclical and largely sentiment driven. Every market brings opportunities and we are optimistic that next year will be full of opportunity.

For now we focus on having a great Christmas and send our very best wishes of the season to all our clients and friends. Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter and I look forward to communicating again in the second edition in March 2012.

NEW Faces

MSE is delighted to introduce some new faces this year. The newsletter will give us the opportunity, in the future, of letting clients know about changes, where they affect you and some photos so you can picture the person at the end of the phone. You can always visit us on the web site too for more information and contact details.

Liam Duffy took over in March as Manager of the Cranleigh Office, when Stuart Maxwell left after 14 years with the company. Liam brings vast industry experience and a positive "can do" attitude, with a career in commercial and residential agency spanning some 34 years and including many years with some other firms (you might have heard of) such as Hamptons International and Burns and Webber in Guildford. He is a keen athlete having completed 7 London Marathons and regularly runs mountain marathons when he is not cycling with his club. He is always pleased to see you, so do pop in if you are passing the office in the High Street, Cranleigh.

Bharati Kulkarni retired this year as Head of Accounts, Property Management and was replaced after a handover, by **Sally Nightingale** who has already proved herself as a most welcome addition to the team. Sally is AAT qualified, studying for CIMA and had brought extensive experience in practice and industry. She will take overall responsibility for the company and client accounting ably assisted by a team of two, Janice and Sarah. Theirs is a vital and busy role and Sally brings a refreshing directness and energy to the company.

Roz Roberts, has also joined this year and is certainly deserving of a mention (if not a medal!). Hers is another challenging role dealing with a multitude of professional and commercial matters as my "right arm". She has a wealth of administrative and creative experience having worked previously in the shipping industry for P&O Cruises, amongst others, and, before that for 6 years with the Police. She joined us from working as a project manager in a large marketing company. At this time of the year, Roz is looking forward to her annual snowboarding expedition in January and I only hope she comes back in one piece.

Finally we bid farewell after Christmas to Paul Chilton who is leaving to join Berkley Homes after 7 years with MSE. A loss to the company but it is also testament to the strength in depth of the Lettings and management departments that we are able to maintain all activities while our new appointee finds her feet. Starting on 19th December, **Debbie Bushell** joins us with over 10 years experience in the property industry, previously on the legal side working as a property conveyancer for Kidd Rapinet solicitors and Moore Blatch solicitors in Southampton, and before a reservations manager and legal assistant for GCL solicitors in Guildford where she organized 12 legal clerks. She comes to us from Countrywide PLC where she has worked for the last two years as hands on Property Manager. We look forward to welcoming Debbie and introducing her to clients in person over the weeks to come.



Liam Duffy



Sally Nightingale



Roz Roberts



Debbie Bushell

mse

Chartered Surveyors
and Estate Agents

You are cordially invited to join us and our hand picked team of local property experts to answer all your legal, finance and property related questions, in an informal atmosphere with good wine and cheese.

Thursday 19th January 2012

between 5.30pm and 8pm

WHERE

MSE, Britannia House 133 High Street
Cranleigh GU6 8AU

RSVP

To let us know you're coming
01483 271800 or cranleigh@mseproperty.com

In association with



Your Home Drainage

Important changes recently came into effect concerning the ownership and responsibilities for drains connecting to the public sewers. These changes affect most properties.

In our area, effective from 1st October 2011, ownership of "private sewers and drains" transferred to Thames Water Utilities Ltd.

Private sewers and drains are defined as sections of a sewer pipe or drain that are shared with another person's property or run through another person's land.

Since responsibility for these has now been transferred to Thames Water, there will be increases to Customers' bills and Government estimates are in the range £3 to £14 per year.

Prior to the changes, an owner of a detached property was responsible for the drains from their home to the sewerage company connection, which is typically in the road outside. After October 2011, they would only be responsible for the drains up to their boundary. Therefore, in the event of a blockage or damage to the sewer outside their home is now the responsibility of Thames Water.

Similar changes apply to semi-detached and terraced homes. In essence, the changes mean that property owners are only responsible for the drains actually on their land. The same principle applies to Flats or "Multiple Dwellings" where the responsibility for the drains outside the site boundary become the responsibility of Thames Water.

Property owners are still responsible for internal plumbing and all pipes inside the property boundary.

The drains of some properties are connected to a private pumping station before they connect to the main sewer network. The Government plans to transfer these to Thames Water in 2016 but owners will still be responsible for the repair and maintenance of pumping stations.

More information is available on Thames Water's website www.thameswater.co.uk/privatesewers

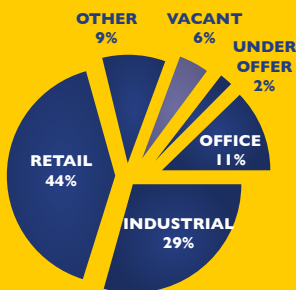
MSE Chartered Surveyors do have experience advising Clients regarding drains and in our view these legislative changes are likely to be well received by the majority of property owners. This is because the transfer of ownership of drains is likely to reduce their potential liabilities, should the worst happen. Repairs or renewals beneath the road or pavement can be very expensive.

Jeremy Salter Bsc MRICS

Commercial Property Occupancy Remains Stable

The diagram shows the sector spread of commercial property under management at MSE across London and the South East.

We are pleased to note that, going into 2012, despite current economic uncertainties, 96% of units are occupied or under offer.



Tim Alden BSc MRICS

Buy to Let is Back

Whilst lending stays squeezed in the U.K. more would-be first time buyers are having to rent and thus helping achieve excellent returns for investors in the buy to let sector.

In fact rising rents are seen as a major contributing factor to the U.K.'s higher than targeted current rate of inflation. Part of this dramatic upturn in rental levels is the obvious fact that demand is outstripping supply and with most lenders needing 30% equity before approving buy to let products, this seems unlikely to change. This obviously presents an excellent opportunity for cash rich investors to benefit from far better net yields than could be achieved in any bank at present and possible capital growth to add to that over the medium to long term.



Figures for rental growth are at their highest on smaller units and obviously present a much more appealing prospect with the odds on having multiple small units in void at the same time being very low. However caution must be taken as figures aren't everything. It is important investors have someone to look after their interests in all aspects of residential lettings and management to make sure that not only is the asset performing at its peak but also to keep risk to an absolute minimum.

Mark Blakeway; Lettings Manager



The residential property market December 2011

Despite the continuous press coverage highlighting the perilous state of public finances and economic turmoil at home and in the Euro zone, the perceived value of bricks and mortar seems to defy the wider picture.

In a recent Rightmove report, polling more than 25,000 respondents, less than a third expected prices to be lower in 12 months time, with home movers in London and the South-East being the most optimistic about price increases in their area.

We are very fortunate in the wider Guildford and Surrey area in being somewhat buffered from the extremes of economic downturn, with a good mix of

housing, outstanding schools, employment opportunities, and excellent transport links helping to support high on-going demand to live in the area. As a result and alongside low turnover in the market and increasing realism on pricing among motivated sellers, the residential market has proved to be resilient with numerous families now set to move in before Christmas.

This regional trend has been borne out at MSE. In November, we have just recorded the second most successful month of 2011 across the Guildford, Godalming and Cranleigh branches for property sales achieving an exchange of contracts. This is despite 2011 now looking set to register the lowest level of housing turnover for 40 years according to the latest Hometrack housing report.

Looking forward, and despite the Government's decision not to extend the Stamp Duty holiday for first time buyers which ends on March 24th 2012, there is an added sense of urgency for first time buyers to enter the market. This fuelling of the market from the bottom up is healthy and The Chancellor in his Autumn Statement has also announced the Government's new strategy to introduce a mortgage indemnity

scheme. This will underwrite a new 95% mortgage scheme which will be available for new build purchases. The initiative aims to help 100,000 households to purchase a new build home with a 5% deposit. The scheme is not without its critics; however in view of the fact that the proportion of first time buyers fell from 23% in September to just 16% in October, the timing may be ideal.

The reality is that the majority of current active buyers who are confident of job certainty have an opportunity to lock into attractive, historically low interest rate mortgages with competing lenders keen to secure good quality borrowers. For the seller, the volume of buyers may be down overall but those buyers who are active are also now very motivated to find their next home from a low supply, with result that values are being maintained where properties have been sensibly priced.

For further information or advice on any aspect of the sale or purchase of residential property, please contact your nearest branch or speak to the Head of Residential Sales.

Peter Tappin on 01483 504200 or peter.tappin@mseproperty.com

Managers Meeting Afloat



On 21st October, in a welcome change to routine, seven managers in the company were invited by Paul Machell, Manager of the Godalming Office, for a day sail on his beautiful yacht Blasse a 40' Dafour moored at Itchenor. The crew had varying experience levels but all were in safe hands with Skipper Paul, who sailed the Atlantic with his family as part of a year out of work in 2005. This passage was not quite as ambitious but after a pleasant sail in light winds we reached Cowes, alighting for a local refreshment in the Anchor Inn and the team returned after a rewarding day to make Itchenor well after dark.

RICS Valuer Registration Scheme (VRS)



RICS

the mark of
property
professionalism
worldwide

From October 2011 it is mandatory for RICS members undertaking valuation work in the UK to register for the VRS. RICS is the world's leading qualification for valuation professionals and MSE are proud to have registered three valuers in the scheme, allowing us to provide residential and commercial property valuations for all purposes.

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