



# Going for a Burton

THE Hampstead home of actor Richard Burton, in which he lived when he first met Elizabeth Taylor, is up for sale. The property, a seven-bedroom, semi-detached townhouse extending to some 5,100sq ft, is on the market with both Aston Chase (020-7724 4724) and Knight Frank (020-3918 4413) for £7.95 million. The home on Lyndhurst Road features a Blue Plaque that was unveiled by Michael Sheen in 2011, and was the residence of Burton and his first wife, Sybil Williams. While based there, he met Taylor for the first time (who went on to become his second wife), and starred in films such as *The Robe*, *The Desert Rats* and *Alexander The Great*.

Homes with English Heritage's Blue Plaques may soon become less scarce, after it was announced that the scheme may be extended outside of the capital. An amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, due to be debated in the Lord's, will propose an official England-wide system. According to Stephen Parkinson, who raised the amendment, 'people everywhere should be able to celebrate the figures who have shaped their community—which is why we are seeking to extend



this opportunity across the country, to allow people and buildings from anywhere in England to be nominated'.

One such property to benefit could be the Beach House in Worthing, West Sussex, which already has three 'local' blue plaques. The property, which has now been split into apartments, once hosted King Edward VII and Sir Edmund Loder, as well as once being the home of playwright Edward Knoblock. A two-bedroom apartment in Beach House is on the market with Winkworth for £695,000 (01903 216219).

**Star quality:** Richard Burton's former home on Lyndhurst Road in Hampstead, NW3, is on the market for £7.95m



In the centre of it all: the views from the apartments at The Broadway at Orchard Place, SW1, might be the finest in London. From £1.585 million ([www.northacre.com](http://www.northacre.com); <https://residential.jll.co.uk>)



## Cash buyers in 'strong position'



**T**HE decision by the Bank of England (left) to pause interest-rate rises has been met with relief in the property market, but the price of mortgages is still high, experts say. The decision not to raise

rates at the end of September was a close-run thing, with the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee split 5-4 in favour; it is unclear if this is the end of rates rising, or just a pause, but many believe that rates are now at, or near, their peak, as the rate of inflation begins to fall.

'The past interest rate increases have had a detrimental effect on Britain's property market, most notably a significant reduction in property transactions, due to the fact that the cost of mortgages has skyrocketed as a result,' says David Hannah, chairman of Cornerstone Tax. 'However, if the Bank of England continues to see a notable drop in inflation like we witnessed in August, then I believe it will be an incentive for them to start lowering the base rate in the run-up to Christmas. This would mean a huge boost for consumers to start spending ahead of the holidays, bolstering Britain's economy, and trickling down to create an even bigger boost for the property market.'

Rising interest rates and inflation have seen mortgage-backed buyers struggle, especially in cities, yet the countryside market remains robust, particularly for cash buyers, notes Nigel Bishop, founder of Recoco Property Search. According to Hamptons, some 34% of transactions this year have been with cash, up from 32% in the same time frame from the previous year, with the areas of Somerset, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, the Cotswolds and Surrey remaining very popular.

'Each of these areas boasts a mixture of good schools, transport links and lifestyle choices which makes them an ideal location for families and professionals alike,' adds Mr Bishop. 'We advise buyers to keep their fingers on the pulse of the market and don't shy away from price negotiations as especially cash buyers are in a stronger position to reach an agreement.'



Green and pleasant land: the rolling Dorset countryside

## So, just what is green belt?

**T**HE concept of the 'green belt' is widely misunderstood, it seems, with some 26% of respondents to a new survey believing that it simply refers 'to the countryside as a whole'. The research, conducted by property planning website Searchland, asked 1,000 homeowners about their feelings on the green belt, as well as how it might be used to address the housing crisis.

The green belt is an area of undeveloped land between towns and cities that is protected to prevent urban sprawl. It measures at some four million acres in total, about 13% of England's total land area. Some 45% of people surveyed did not know, however, that the total green belt area is larger than England's 'built-up' area, which is about 9%. Even more startlingly, there are 271,000 homeless households in the country, according to the charity Shelter, but 35% of those polled would rather see this number rise than build homes on the green belt.



## New lease of life for Churchill's Toyshop

**W**HAT do the limpet, the clam, the beehive, the puffball, the kangaroo and the squawker all have in common? They were all types of weapon created at Ministry of Defence 1, otherwise known as Churchill's Toyshop, located at The Firs in Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire.

After the Second World War, the property served a variety of other uses, before being snapped up by Steve Waugh, managing director of Stonehouse, and converted into six apartments. Special care has been taken to conserve the historical interest of the property, with rooms such as Sir Winston Churchill's office and the boardroom retained and redeveloped into apartments.

'Stonehouse has endeavoured to tip its hat to the history of this building and each apartment has been respectfully named after Winston Churchill and his family members,' adds Mr Waugh. 'Historic memorabilia and a portrait of Churchill including items found during the refurbishment period have been proudly displayed for residents and visitors to enjoy.' Five apartments remain, ranging from one (£325,000) to four (£795,000) bedrooms ([www.stonehouseprojects.co.uk](http://www.stonehouseprojects.co.uk)). 🏡