



Introduction

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter.

It only seems a few weeks ago that we were celebrating Christmas in 2012. Time has certainly flown but in 12 months a lot has changed. In my opinion the bottom of the market was the end of 2011/ beginning of 2012.

2013 has certainly been an interesting year with the re-emergence of confidence and at last a changing market. Since May of this year the property market has started to move, radically in the case of London. But

marginally in the South West although it has still been a better market which is very welcome.

The commercial market remains stagnant with values still depressed and borrowing still difficult.

The rental market continues to be strong although some evidence of a weakening in rents, it will be interesting to see this years rental statistics.

Our mortgage and financial advice has been a success headed by Kevin McCormick, we have seen a recent rise in

applications, a sure sign of the market condition. We look forward to dealing with you all soon.

David Edwards
Managing Director
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Comment from our Mayfair Office

Not Just for Christmas

Nick Churton from our Mayfair Office takes a timely look at a highly popular seasonal pastime - looking for a new home.

December is a month of two moods for those wanting to move home. For the first few weeks seasonal preparations can take over and, for a little while at least, moving may take a back seat. But when all the hoo-ha is over, family and friends have departed and fallen pine needles hoovered up from the carpet, thoughts may turn again to the benefits of a home that better suits one's changing needs and lifestyle for the coming year.

So the end of December can be about getting online and window-shopping for a new home. It is also a good time to shop for an estate agent. Now, this is the important bit. Get it right and the sale of your property will certainly run a great deal more successfully than if you get it wrong.

A good estate agent may sound like an oxymoron to some but those who have benefited from employing a good one in the past will know that a tense and critical time can be made so much easier through an agent's expert advice - especially if a good price has been secured through his or her skilled and experienced negotiation.

To help find the right estate agent, ask around. Get feedback from friends and neighbours in your area. Take a note of For Sale boards - or, more especially, Sold Boards. Look for experience, capability, a bit of humour - without flippancy - some youthful enthusiasm backed up with mature direction and lots of wisdom and kindness. These are all attributes of a good estate agent and can be found if you take a little time and trouble to look for them. It's best to avoid the patronising, the ignorant, the arrogant and the pushy. It will be worth it.

Remember, a good estate agent is for the life of your sale not just for Christmas.

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Should I wait Until Spring to Sell My Home? from Toby Dowding MNAEA



With the holidays approaching, sellers often wonder if they should keep their properties on the market or take them off? Or if they haven't put their homes on the market yet, should they wait until after the first of the year? Maybe hold off until spring?

Conventional wisdom used to be that you shouldn't even try to sell your home during the busy holiday season. Potential homebuyers were too preoccupied with attending parties, cooking meals, buying presents or planning holidays. With all that going on, there just wasn't time to ride around with an Estate Agent, looking at properties.

But with the Internet, smartphones, tablets and our always-on-the-go lifestyles, that conventional wisdom isn't relevant anymore. The reality is, the homebuying season is now all year-round. Here's why you should consider putting your home on the market during the holidays, or even in January.

Today's buyers never stop looking online: Serious buyers are always looking -- and the holidays are no exception. They may check out the latest listed properties on our new John Smale & Co app before bed or while waiting for the Children's school holiday show to start. Our hectic lifestyles also play a role.

Many serious buyers today work hard. They don't shift into holiday mode until the last minute. Even during the holiday break, they're still

squeezing in work. There's no such thing for them as "winding down" So why not continue to monitor Estate Agent websites too?

The Available properties and competition is usually lighter: Despite our always-on-the-go lifestyles, many sellers still believe buyers can't be bothered to look for a home between, say, 1st December and New Year's Day. At the same time, sellers who've had their homes on the market often take them off during the holidays. The net effect is that the supply for good homes often tightens this time of year. So there's less competition for sellers, at a time when motivated buyers are out there looking, and no doubt wishing there were more properties to see.

If you've been considering selling, are motivated, are flexible on timing and have a home that truly sparkles as much as Christmas, there's still a window of several weeks to get buyers into your home before the end of the year. And those buyers flipping through properties at their Children's football match will be excited to see something new and enticing hit the market, especially if there's a lack of good available property in their area. These buyers will be motivated to see your home, regardless of what the calendar says.

Home not selling? Now's the time to lower the price or change your strategy: If your property has been on the market for months, most buyers and their agents will see it as stale or overpriced and disregard it no matter how great it is or how light the competition is. In that case, it's time to take action, and the year-end holidays can be a great opportunity to shift course. Dramatically reducing the price or overcoming some major obstacle that's been preventing the sale might be what's needed to sell your home.

If you received lower offers early on but weren't ready to accept them, or you keep hearing there are issues with how your property shows, this is a good time to show the market you're listening and are serious about selling. The motivated buyers, desperate for good property, will notice you and take a look. You might even get a sale

agreed before the end of the year.

Before you make any big changes, talk it over with your Estate Agent, as always.

Don't want to be bothered during the holidays? Then put your property on the market in January: Admittedly, the thought of keeping the house clean, holding open houses and leaving to accommodate last-minute showings during the holidays is a deal killer for some would-be sellers. If so, consider listing your property after New Year's Day.

Traditionally, not much property comes onto the market in January. It's cold in most places, the leaves are off the trees and landscaping is dead. Many sellers wait until the spring instead, a more conventional time to sell.

January's available properties is still very tight. And yet, each January, buyers call up agents, wanting to buy property. Often, new buyers -- with their fresh New Year's resolutions to stop wasting money on rent and buy a home are ready to jump into the market as soon as possible. With the new government ' Help to buy Scheme' this will also increase the activity levels from buyers who up until now have been sitting on the fence.

Whatever the buyers' motivation, for sellers it means one thing: Demand for homes can increase at a time when available property is traditionally low. And that means if you're ready to sell, you'll have an even more "captive" audience during the holidays, all the way through January.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide you with a Free Market Appraisal and offer any other advice prior to selling. Please call us on 01271 342000 or alternatively visit our website at www.johnsmale.com. We also have an out of hours number which you can ring to book Appraisals. 07976 303053.

Help To Buy

What is the Mortgage Guarantee scheme? These days many mortgages can seem out of reach. The Mortgage Guarantee scheme makes it possible to purchase a pre-owned or new build property under £600,000 with a 5% deposit. It could get your home-moving ambitions back on track.

Here's a quick summary of the important bits:

- Available for pre-owned properties and new builds across the UK - up to the value of £600,000.
- Both existing homeowners and first-time buyers are eligible.
- Buyers need a minimum of a 5% deposit.
- You must occupy the property and it must be your only property.
- Available across the UK from participating mortgage lenders.

Find your perfect property, without losing peace of mind

Help to Buy is a government-backed scheme to support buyers who may previously have struggled to raise a sizeable deposit. It's the same as a traditional mortgage, except the government guarantees a portion of the loan to an affiliated lender (though the agreement is between the lender and the government, not you!). You will barely notice the difference.

So what do you need to know?

The Mortgage Guarantee scheme can only be used for property you intend to occupy, and must be your only property. A minimum deposit of 5% of the property value will be required. The rest is par for

the course - as long as you tick the lender's boxes in terms of credit score and loan-to-income ratios. Another thing to note is that the scheme only applies to repayment mortgages. Interest-only and self-certified mortgages are not included.

There are lots of places you can go for more advice and assistance: estate agents, mortgage advisors, independent financial advisors and even developers.

For more information contact our independent mortgage advisor, Kevin McCormick on 01271 410135 or 07879 633476





A Highly Regulated Agent

Remember the important facts when it comes to instructing your Estate Agent to deal with the sale of your property. Too often we become blinded by a smooth talking salesperson, cheap fees and an unexpectedly high marketing price.

We have all read the horror stories about some Estate Agents but maybe we should look at the reasons behind why they got instructed in the first place and I'm sure that the reasons already mentioned would be contributing factors.

Some Estate Agents belong to self-

regulating governing bodies like the National Association of Estate Agents but very few are like John Smale & Co and belong to The Association of Residential Letting Agents, The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, The Financial Conduct Authority and the National Association of Estate Agents. Membership of all of these regulatory bodies can give you peace of mind that you are dealing with property professionals, who care enough about You and your property that they agree to be strongly regulated.

Also take into consideration, how long your Estate Agent has been

established, as their longevity will usually be a good 'yardstick' as to how they have conducted their business through the years; John Smale & Co. have been selling property in North Devon for well over 100 years.

We feel that it is a combination of our membership of regulatory associations, longevity and professionalism together with their training and use of modern methods that combine to provide an unrivalled property service for the twenty first century.

Auctions

With local property expert Paul Saunders joining us this year, it has enabled John Smale & Co once again to conduct our own Property Auctions.

If you have a property that may prove suitable for an auction, either because it is sufficiently unusual to determine a fixed price, or is run down or dilapidated, unmortgageable, or has structural problems, please contact Paul and he will be pleased to meet with you and give you the best advice.

The Auction process is still the best way by far to determine a property's value and we now have the experience to maximise

your selling price.

Paul Saunders has been an Estate Agent for over thirty years and has handled all sorts of auction lots, from plots to fine houses, in Devon, the Home Counties and even London. He can be contacted through the branch and can discuss how we can handle your property, offering an individual marketing plan, to help you succeed in selling.



Block Management

John Smale & Co.

Chartered Surveyors | Residential & Commercial Consultants

For a free consultation please contact us:

01271 329345 | lettings@johnsmale.com

John Smale & Co.
Chartered Surveyors | Residential & Commercial Consultants

Block Management

- Fully managed service of apartment blocks
- Collection of service charge & ground rents
- Maintenance schedules
- Sinking funds
- Regular meetings
- Competitive fees

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!!!



<http://www.facebook.com/home.php>

<http://twitter.com/#!/johnsmale>



A few weeks ago we were delighted to hand over the keys to one of our rental properties..... and all because of Twitter! Dave Star and Sarah Canty's romance blossomed through the social networking site Twitter and when they decided to start looking for their first home together it was an obvious option for them to 'Tweet' about their search. Jackie in our office spotted this and when a new rental property became available that suited their needs she contacted them through the site to let them know. Later that day they were viewing the house and within a few days, everything was agreed and a moving in date confirmed.

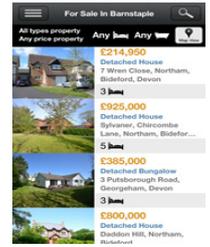
It just goes to show that in today's world of modern technology, you can't underestimate the powers of Social Networking! All at John Smale & Co wish David and Sarah the very best in their new home and hope they will be very happy there.

You can follow us on Twitter for latest news and updates - @Johnsmale

And in Other News.....



Our New iPhone App



John Smale & Co believe it is important to embrace technology and add value to their clients, so keeping up with technology and staying innovative is important to us.

Therefore we have now created an iPhone app and QR code. This will allow Apple users, who use iPhone and iPad devices to download a bespoke application that allows users to search for property that we market easily and quickly on the move. We understand people are time conscious and tech savvy, so it's important to cater for their needs with an innovative application.

The application comes with many features that include a property gallery on the home screen that lists the latest properties as they hit the market for sale and rent.

The user can search by area or postcode and see recent searches. Each property has its own description, floor plan and map view, details can be requested and favourite properties saved.

We believe this is a valuable extra service to our clients as it is another avenue opened up to prospective buyers that works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The iPhone application can be easily downloaded by visiting the Apple App store, clicking or using the link <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/john-smale-co/id668391284?mt=8> or using the QR code below:



On behalf of all of us at John Smale & Co, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year!

