



SINCE the arrival of the railway in May 1845, the cathedral city of Guildford and the surrounding towns and villages in what is now the Surrey Hills AONB have been an early port of call for Londoners in search of a country retreat within easy striking distance of the capital. And as the country-house market catches its breath in 2022 after a two-year buying frenzy fuelled by stamp-duty relief, low interest rates, strong demand and limited supply, it's been 'business as usual' for Tim Harriss of Knight Frank's Guildford office (01483 617910), who reports a flying start to the year.

After a hectic month of trading in March, which saw every house sold in Guildford go for more than the asking price, early April went one better with the sale of the landmark, 15,000sq ft Southways in White Lane,

Surrey spectacular

If these impressive properties are anything to go by, this resilient county is in fine health

which exchanged and completed on April 4. Extensively renovated in 2018, the imposing period property stands on high ground on the edge of town, overlooking protected open countryside that includes Newlands Corner, Pewley Downs, St Martha's-on-the-Hill and the Chantry Woods.

Now, for the second time in 10 years, Mr Harris is handling the sale of idyllic The Old Rectory at Hascombe, having previously sold it to the current owners. Now, he quotes

a guide price of £8.5m for the elegant, Grade II-listed country house set in some 20 acres of gardens, paddocks and woodland. The land on which it stands was once part of the vast Bramley estate held by William the Conqueror's half-brother, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, until his disgrace, after which it passed to the Le Fay family.

The ancient village of Hascombe, the name of which means 'valley of the witch', sits in a natural amphitheatre of steeply wooded



Left: Southways, Guildford, sold this year. Above and below: Georgian The Old Rectory, Hascombe, is Grade II listed, with impressive interiors and landscaped grounds. £8.5m



hillside in the heart of the Surrey Hills AONB, four miles from Godalming and eight miles from Guildford, surrounded by a cluster of large country houses and secluded country estates. It was to Hascombe that Hollywood came in the early 1960s, when screen idol Dirk Bogarde bought the Nore estate as a country retreat when he was resting between acting engagements, before moving to West Sussex and on to France.

The Old Rectory has been beautifully maintained by the current owners, who have built on the efforts of previous generations, reconfiguring the hallway and main staircase to create an impressive reception hall with double-height ceilings and a galleried landing, extending the coach house, refurbishing the interiors and creating the impressive landscaped gardens. →





Seven-bedroom Gresham Place, Whyteleafe, is reached along a sweeping drive. £3.25m

Historically, the imposing Georgian façade has been the most significant of the 18th- and 20th-century additions to the former rectory, which dates from the 16th century. The house offers 6,400sq ft of well-ordered living space, including the splendid reception hall, three principal reception rooms, a sitting room and kitchen/breakfast/family room on the ground floor, with an apartment and leisure suite in the converted coach house. The bedroom accommodation, comprising a large master suite, eight bedrooms and five bathrooms, is perfect for a large family, the agents suggest, although it is too much now for the current owners, who are looking to downsize.

‘Arts-and-Crafts Gresham Place is now a family home of great character and charm’

Over on Surrey’s eastern edge, the village of Whyteleafe sits in a dry valley of the Surrey North Downs within the predominantly rural Tandridge District, just south of the Greater London border. The village expanded following the arrival of the railway in 1856 and now boasts three railway stations that provide fast and frequent services to London Bridge and Victoria.

Hamptons’ prime team (020-7493 8222) is handling the sale, at a guide price of £3.25m, of handsome, Edwardian Gresham Place in leafy Portley Wood Road, Whyteleafe.

Having bought the house in the 1980s from the local authority, which had boarded up the original Arts-and-Crafts features and run the property as a foster home for babies awaiting adoption, the owners have painstakingly restored Gresham Place as a family home of great character and charm.

Approached along a sweeping private drive through an avenue of trees underplanted with a vast array of spring-flowering bulbs, the house offers more than 9,000sq ft of accommodation, including a large reception hall, three main reception rooms, a sumptuous master suite, six further bedrooms, four bath/shower rooms and a separate two-bedroom annexe. The beautifully landscaped gardens

and grounds include extensive terraces, a pond, swimming pool and summer pavilion.

Few North Surrey agents can match the expertise of Tim Garbett, who, since retiring after 40 years as Knight Frank’s uncrowned ‘king of St Georges Hill’, continues to strut his stuff on the international stage as the founding partner of Garbett & Partners (07831 576616), a role he happily combines with that of a doting great-grandfather. After eight months of ‘an unbridled buying frenzy’ in the exclusive enclaves of St George’s Hill and Wentworth, which saw record sales in 2021 at prices ranging from £5m to £20m, Mr Garbett can see prices levelling off in 2022. Although no one wants to talk about the war, Mr Garbett expects current levels of interest from the Middle East and China, supported by English families relocating from fashionable parts of London, to hold up in the face of an otherwise uncertain future.

English buyers in particular may be drawn to Cumbroc in Camp End Road, St George’s Hill, a striking, contemporary family house that has been lavishly upgraded by the vendors and comes to the market at a guide price of £5.5m through Garbett & Partners. The light-filled, 4,250sq ft house, which enjoys distant views from first-floor balconies, offers luxurious accommodation throughout, with a galleried reception hall, double-aspect open-plan drawing room, a galleried dining room, state-of-the-art kitchen/breakfast room, and four bedroom suites, plus a spare bedroom. The house stands in more than an acre of landscaped gardens planted with mature trees and shrubs and level areas of lawn, with outdoor amenities including a canopied entertaining terrace and a heated swimming pool. 🏊



Contemporary, five-bedroom Cumbroc, St George’s Hill, has luxurious interiors. £5.5m