

SNOOPING AROUND

Anna Tims



THREE HOMES NEAR RAILWAY STATIONS

1 Rochford Lofts, Rochford, Essex
What you get Open-plan living area, two bedrooms, two bath/shower rooms.

Pros Clerkenwell glamour in the Thames estuary: a chic loft fashioned out of a hospital boiler room by developer Square Foot. Seven minutes by foot from mainline services to London Liverpool Street, and four miles from the seafront. You get 1,335 sq m of glossy white space over two storeys, plus two parking slots.

Cons Rochford will some day be discovered for its convenience if not its charm, but that hasn't happened yet.

Price £325,000. Strutt & Parker, 01245 254606.

2 Mount Parade, York
What you get Two reception rooms, two bedrooms, one bathroom.

Pros A pretty slice of a pretty street a five-minute walk from the station and 10 from the city centre. It's small but genteel inside, with a handful of antique fireplaces, a designer kitchen just large enough to seat the family and a glamorous cleansing experience in the free-standing roll-top bath.

Cons No parking outside the house. The bathroom is downstairs. Only a small sliver of garden.

Price £375,000. Jackson-Stops & Staff, 01904 625033.

3 Monmouth Road, Tisbury, Wiltshire

What you get Two reception rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, cellar, four bedrooms, one bathroom, garage.

Pros A handsome chunk of Victoriana in a village served by a mainline station to London Waterloo. Refugees from the city can recover over large valley views from the upper windows. Generously sized rooms and a wide walled garden.

Cons Overlooked by several neighbours. Two of the bedrooms are on the narrow side.

Price £450,000. Woolley & Wallis, 01747 852242.

ANOTHER COUNTRY

Palmyra Resort, Jamaica. Apartments from £232,000. Pure International, 020-7331 4500.

Where? On 16 acres of beachfront in Montego Bay.

Getting there It's 15 minutes from Montego Bay airport, which is served daily from Heathrow by Air Jamaica (flying time: nine hours).

What? A neo-colonial fantasy built on an old plantation that hopes to relaunch Jamaica. Indulgence is compulsory: three golf courses, three pools, two restaurants, a beach club and a cinema on site – to save the soul from over-spoiling, enrichment classes (of the spiritual kind) are laid on, too.



HEY, BIG SPENDER

Puddletown, near Dorchester, Dorset. £4m. Savills, 01202 856 800.

What? A William and Mary house, once owned by Robert Walpole's son and favoured by George III's daughters.

What your millions get you Every necessary ingredient for a noble retirement: a gallery for drizzly-day promenading among Old Masters, a forest's worth of panelling in several reception rooms, an 18th-century oak staircase, a ha-ha to make the nine acres seem like 90, kitchen gardens for free vitamin C and a servant's flat. Then there are useful modern touches such as en-suite bathrooms to the five bedrooms and garaging for five Jags.

WRECK OF THE WEEK

Stone House Lane, Peckforton, Cheshire. £140,000 – for sale by auction on May 23. Strutt & Parker, 01244 220500.

What? A 17th-century cottage once part of the Peckforton estate.

Condition Very elderly. You'd probably want to start again, from the thatch downwards, and maybe extend with permission – £50,000 might take care of the cosmetic stuff.

Why you should It's a glorious location beside a dramatic ridge of castle-topped hills. Handy for Chester.

Why you shouldn't It's titchy. And it has only one bedroom and one reception room.

