

## A Mini Misadventure

### **Martyn Stubbs of Phillips & Stubbs offers some advice for those entering the property market early in 2009.**

Good estate agency isn't all about company-liveried Minis, glamorous offices and slick haired negotiators with a turn of phrase to match. Many in the industry, and the house buying and selling public, have come to understand this over the past difficult year – sometimes to their cost.

Good estate agency is far more about understanding the needs of people and the talent to translate that understanding into effective action. It is about unsurpassed local knowledge and a deep appreciation of how the property market nationally and globally affects markets at a local level. Some local markets are affected more than others.

The firms that have endured in the marketplace over the past twelve months are the firms that understand the importance of accurate pricing and have the skill to place each property onto the market at precisely the right time and at exactly the correct price.

This ability is not gained through smooth advertising and marketing. It is gained through rough years of relevant market experience and countless successful sales: all brought about through a unique combination of training, experience, talent and relentless pursuit in the cause of a client's best interests above their own.

The harsh conditions that have befallen the property market first, and then the banking and retailing sectors, are far from over. But there are now some greater signs of activity in the residential market than last year. Now is a superb time to buy as there is so much choice and prices have stepped back.

But for those entering the property market it is now more crucial than ever to get the best advice from the best people and then take that advice.

As Charles Dickens said "Take nothing on its looks; take everything on evidence." Sometimes the best advice does not come in the flashiest wrapping. If you are talking to agents about the sale of your property ask how long they have worked in the area, if they worked through the last property downturn and, most importantly, what they learnt from it.

Listen to the voice of experience and try not to be lured by style over substance - that would be a mini misadventure.