



Step into a war poet's story

THE handsome Victorian house where First World War poet Rupert Brooke (*right*) was born in 1887 is now on the market with Knight Frank. Four-bedroom No 5, Hillmorton Road, in Rugby, Warwickshire, stands only a short distance from the town centre. The third son of William Parker Brooke, a schoolmaster and classics tutor, Brooke secured a scholarship to Rugby School where he played rugby and cricket and won prizes for his poetry. The property, which also boasts three bathrooms, stands at the end of a terrace. The current owners have carefully upgraded it, at the same time preserving original features, such as the encaustic tiled floor in the hallway and ornate fireplaces. At the front of the house is an enclosed garden and at the back a gated courtyard with parking for four cars. £775,000 (01789 206950).



Capability's Leicestershire legacy

STAPLEFORD PARK, a Grade I-listed country house of some 36,000sq ft set in 54 acres near Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire, has been put on the market with Strutt & Parker for £18m. Held by the Sherard family for nearly 500 years, the parklands surrounding the house were redesigned by Capability Brown in about 1770. In the 1980s, it was bought



by an American restaurateur, Bob Payton, who converted it into a hotel, hiring Wedgwood, Turnbull & Asser and Crabtree & Evelyn to redecorate its rooms.

The grounds include a wellness centre with seven treatment rooms, a pavilion with changing rooms, four cottages and four tennis courts. 'Although the blueprint is here to revive a country-house-hotel business, or create an exclusive country members club, it's not beyond the realms of possibility to restore the house to a private dwelling, should there be the appetite,' says Mark Rimell, director of Strutt & Parker's National Country House Department (020-7591 6687).

Sutton Windmill, near Stalham in Norfolk, is reputed to be the tallest surviving windmill of its kind in Britain. Built in 1789 and Grade II*-listed, it was struck by lightning in 1940 and ceased to work. Following a significant restoration project, which included converting the neighbouring granary into the main body of the home, the six-bedroom property is on the market with Sowerbys for £1.5m. Attached to the granary is a three-bedroom holiday cottage that could generate £53,000 to £57,000 per year, according to estimates by a holiday-letting company (01603 761441)



My first house in the country Hamish Mackie

Where was it?

In a village on the edge of Cornbury Park estate, Oxfordshire

A quick description

It must have been one of Charbury's oldest cottages, built of Cotswold stone with a slate roof. I'm 6ft 3in and the main bedroom door was only about 5ft high. There were two further tiny bedrooms, a large attic, which was used as an office or spare room, and a small garage that I sometimes used as a sculpting workshop

How did you find it?

Through an estate agent in Chipping Norton

What made you buy it?

It was quite a lot of house for the money and was conveniently close to a friend who had a barn that I rented as a studio for my work

Best memory of living there?

Two of our three daughters were born when we lived there and the house had a really good vibe, which both my wife, Laura, and I could feel from day one. I also owe it a favour. One night, a tree fell down in the garden during a storm and the cost of having it chopped

up for firewood prompted me to buy a chainsaw—the ultimate boy's toy

Anything unusual?

Our dog, Pepper, would regularly wee at night if left alone in the kitchen, which had steps down to the cellar. It turned out that the cellar had once been used as the village morgue

Why did you sell?

It was always intended to be a stepping stone and was never going to be big enough for our whole family. I also really wanted

somewhere I could actually stand up in. We eventually found a derelict barn in Cropredy near Banbury, a bit closer to the foundry in which I used to cast my work. The property had trees growing out of a shed and an ancient Land Rover rusting in the yard, but when I walked to the perimeter and put up a snipe, I knew that it would be our next home

Hamish Mackie is an award-winning wildlife sculptor known for working in bronze, silver and any other castable metal using the lost-wax casting method (07971 028098; www.hamishmackie.com)

